
3225 School-Based Threat Assessment

The Seattle School Board is committed to creating healthy, supportive, and culturally responsive environments from the classroom to the central office. This policy establishes a school-based threat assessment program to provide for timely and methodical school-based threat assessment and management. “School-based threat assessment” means the formal process, established by the District, of evaluating the threatening, or potentially threatening, behavior of a student, and the circumstances surrounding the threat, to uncover any facts or evidence that the threat is likely to be carried out.

School-based threat assessment programs will be supported by District level threat assessment staff in both the school-based threat assessment process and the management of plans created by school-based teams to manage or reduce the threatening, or potentially threatening, behavior of a student.

A safe and healthy school climate is important in promoting a sense of belonging and supporting excellence for each and every student. Threat assessment best occurs in school climates that rely on trusting relationships between family, student, and staff, which are built with cultural humility, safety, respect, honesty, accountability, and with an eye towards equity. Student behavior, rather than a student’s demographic or personal characteristics, will serve as the basis for a school-based threat assessment. In addition, an equity lens will be applied to each school-based threat assessment. The lens also identifies concerns for bias that may lead to overreaction or unnecessary discipline.

The threat assessment process is distinct from student discipline. The mere fact that the District is conducting a threat assessment does not by itself necessitate suspension or expulsion, and the District will not impose suspension or expulsion, including emergency removal, solely for investigating student behavior or conducting a threat assessment. Further, suspension, or other removal from the school environment may create the risk of triggering either an immediate or a delayed violent behavioral response, unless such actions are coupled with containment and support. However, nothing in this policy precludes District staff from acting immediately to address an imminent threat, including an emergency removal, if the District has sufficient cause to believe that the student’s presence poses an immediate and continuing danger to other students or school staff or an immediate and continuing threat of material and substantial disruption of the educational process. If a disciplinary response is imposed, the District will follow all conditions and limitations set forth in the Washington Administrative Code and outlined in the Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools document, which includes, but is not limited to, parent/guardian notification and disciplinary grievance and appeal rights.

Structure of School-Based Threat Assessment Teams

The Superintendent shall establish and ensure the training of a multidisciplinary, multiagency threat assessment team or more than one such team to serve District schools. As the threat assessment team must be multidisciplinary and multiagency, and must have received training to address implicit bias and challenge systemic racism, it may include persons who have relationships or knowledge of the student and/or relevant expertise, such as:

- School leadership, such as a principal or other school leader
- District threat assessment team member
- Counseling, such as a school counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker
- Community resources
- Special education teachers
- Practicing educational staff member
- Other District or school staff

Not every multidisciplinary team member need participate in every threat assessment. When faced with a potential threat by, or directed towards, a student receiving special education services, the threat assessment team must include a team member who is a special education teacher.

Although parents, guardians, or family members are often interviewed as part of the threat assessment process, neither the student nor the student's family members are part of the threat assessment team. This does not diminish the District's commitment that school staff will make every reasonable attempt to notify the parents/guardians of the alleged threat and to involve parents/guardians and the student in the resolution of the student's behavioral violations, consistent with Board Policy No. 3240, Student Behavior and Disciplinary Responses, and the Seattle Public Schools' Student Rights and Responsibilities document.

Function of School-Based Threat Assessment Team

Each threat assessment team member, whether a teacher, counselor, school leader, other school staff, contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other individual, functions as a "school official with a legitimate educational interest" in educational records controlled and maintained by the District. The District provides the threat assessment team access to educational records as specified by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). No member of a threat assessment team shall use any student record beyond the prescribed purpose of the threat assessment team or re-disclose records obtained by being a member of the threat assessment team, except as permitted by FERPA.

The threat assessment team:

- Identifies and assesses the behavior of a student that is threatening, or potentially threatening, to self, other students, staff, school visitors, or school property. Threats of self-harm or suicide unaccompanied by threats of harm to

others should be promptly evaluated according to Board Policy No. 2145, Suicide Prevention;

- Gathers and analyzes information about the student's behavior to determine a level of concern for the threat. The threat assessment team may conduct interviews of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or target(s) of the threat, other witnesses who have knowledge of the threat, and where reasonable, the individual(s) who allegedly engaged in the threatening behavior or communication. The purpose of the interviews is to evaluate the individual's threat in context to determine the meaning of the threat and intent of the individual. The threat assessment team may request and obtain records in the District's possession, including student education, health records, and criminal history record information. The purpose of obtaining information is to evaluate situational variables, rather than the student's demographic or personal characteristics;
- Determines the nature, duration, and level of severity of the risk and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk. The threat assessment team will not base a determination of threat on generalizations or stereotypes. Rather, the threat assessment team makes an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, best available objective evidence, or current medical evidence as applicable;
- Makes notification of threats of violence or harm as required under Board Policy No. 3143, Notification and Dissemination of Information about Student Offenses and Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm;
- Communicates lawfully and ethically with each other, school leaders, and other school staff who have a need to know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, its students, and its staff; and
- Reports its determination to the Superintendent or designee in a timely manner.

Depending on the level of concern determined, the threat assessment team develops and implements supports and intervention strategies to shape and change the student's behavior in ways that promote a safe, positive, consistent, and predictable teaching and learning environment, without excluding the student from the school.

In cases where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, the threat assessment team aligns supports and intervention strategies with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or the student's plan developed under Section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973 (Section 504 plan) by coordinating with the student's IEP team or Section 504 plan team. Although some of the functions of a school-based threat assessment may run parallel to the functions of a student's IEP team or Section 504 plan team, school-based threat assessments remain distinct from those teams and processes.

Data Collection, Review, and Reporting

The Superintendent shall establish procedures for collecting and submitting data related to the school-based threat assessment program that comply with OSPI's monitoring requirements, processes, and guidelines.

Other Tasks of School-Based Threat Assessment Team

The threat assessment team may also participate in other tasks that manage or reduce threatening or potentially threatening behavior and increase physical and psychological safety. This may include:

- Providing guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of behavior that may represent a threat to students, staff, school, the community, or the individual;
- Providing informational resources for community services boards or health care providers for medical evaluation or treatment, as appropriate;
- Assessing individuals other than students whose behaviors pose a threat to the safety of students or staff and notifying the Superintendent or designee of such an individual.

The Superintendent or their designee is granted the authority to develop procedures to implement this policy.

Superintendent Procedure:

- 3225SP – School-Based Threat Assessment

Policy Cross References:

- 0030 – Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity
- 2140 – Advising and School Counseling
- 2145 – Suicide Prevention
- 2161 – Special Education
- 2162 – Education of Students with Disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- 3143 – Notification and Dissemination of Information About Student Offenses and Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm
- 3207 – Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying of Students
- 3208 – Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited
- 3210 – Nondiscrimination, Acts of Hostility and Defamation
- 3231 – Student Records
- 3240 – Student Behavior and Disciplinary Responses
- 3248 – Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Prohibition for Students
- 3432 – Emergencies
- 4200 – School Visitations and Maintaining Safe and Orderly Environments
- 4210 – Weapons Prohibition for Adults and Visitors

- 4310 – Relations with Law Enforcement, Child Protective Services, and the County Health Department
- 4311 – School Safety and Security Services Program

Previous Policies:

Legal References:

- Chapter 28A.300 RCW Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- RCW 28A.300.640 School-based threat assessment program—Model policy and procedure.
- Chapter 28A.320 RCW Provisions applicable to all districts.
- RCW 28A.320.123 School-based threat assessment program.
- CFR 34, Part 99, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations.

Management Resources:

- Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools
- *WSSDA Policy & Legal News*, December 2019

Last Board Review:

Revisions:

- March 7, 2025 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)
- September 3, 2024 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)
- September 7, 2023 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)
- August 22, 2023 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)

Adopted by the Board:

- March 16, 2022