# School Based Threat Assessment Procedure

## Definitions

For purposes of district or school-based threat assessments of students, the following definitions will apply:

- A **school-based threat assessment** means the formal process, established by a school 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 student or other actor is likely to carry out the threat.
- **School-based threat management** means the development and implementation of a plan to manage or reduce the threatening, or potentially threatening, behavior of a student in a way that increases the physical and psychological safety of students, staff, and visitors, while providing for the education of all students.
- A **threat** is an expression of an intent to cause physical harm to self/others. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party; and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat. Threats may be direct, such as "I am going to beat you up." or indirect, such as, "I'm going to get him."
- A **low risk threat** is one in which it is determined that the individual/situation does not appear to pose a threat of serious harm to self/others, and any exhibited issues/concerns can be resolved easily.
- A **moderate risk** threat is one in which the person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence, or serious harm to self/others, at this time; but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent and potential for future violence or serious harm to self/others; and/or exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention.
- A **high risk threat** is one in which the person/situation appears to pose a threat of violence, exhibiting behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm self/others and efforts to acquire the capacity to carry out the plan; and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that requires intervention.
- An **imminent threat** exists when the person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward self/others that requires containment and action to protect identified or identifiable target(s); and may also exhibit other concerning behaviors that require intervention.

## Principles

Six principles form the foundation of the threat assessment process. These principles are:

- Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior.
- Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.
- An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
- Effective threat assessment is based upon facts rather than on characteristics or "traits."
- An "integrated systems approach" should guide threat assessment inquiries and investigations.
- The central question in a threat assessment inquiry or investigation is whether a student *poses* a threat, not whether the student has made a threat.

**Identifying and Reporting Threats**

Timely reporting of expression to harm is crucial to an effective school-based threat assessment program.

Anyone, including students, families, and community members may report communication or behavior that appears to be threatening or potentially threatening to any school or district administrator.

All school district employees, volunteers, and contractors should report immediately to any school or district administrator, any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence.

Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses an *imminent* threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify school security and/or law enforcement.

**Assessing Threats**

A School-based threat assessment is distinct from law enforcement investigation (if any). The goal of the threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment, to protect and support potential victims, and to provide assistance, as needed, to the individual being assessed. School-based threat assessment is also distinct from student discipline procedures. However, the functions of school-based threat assessment may run parallel to student discipline procedures.

<u>Triage</u>

The superintendent will designate the district lead counselor as the primary threat assessment team leader to work with building principals and their staff. The director of special education will act as secondary team leader when primary is unavailable. The team leader will work with each building principal to determine threat response, and if needed, identify the appropriate staff to form the threat assessment team for that incident.

<u>Imminent</u>

Upon notification of threatening behavior or communications, if the school administrator, determines the individual appears to pose an imminent threat of serious violence, the

administrator shall notify law enforcement and assistant superintendent. The building administrator will then contact the district threat assessment team. If the team determines a threat of self harm, they will refer to policy and procedures 3423 – Suicide Awareness and Prevention.

Moderate or high risk threat

If the threat assessment team cannot determine with a reasonable degree of confidence that the alleged threat is a not a threat, or is a low risk threat, then the threat assessment team will undertake a more in-depth assessment to determine the nature and degree of any safety concerns and to develop strategies to prevent violence and reduce risk, as necessary.

The threat assessment team's review may include but is not limited to, reviews of records; interviews and consultations with staff, students, family members, community members, and others who know the individual; and interviews of the individual and the target/recipient of the threat(s). The threat assessment team will also screen for risk of self-harm and suicidal ideation, regardless of whether the alleged threat also included possible self-harm. If the team determines a threat of self harm, they will refer to policy 3423 – Suicide Awareness and Prevention.

Upon a determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm, a threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the assistant superintendent. The building principal shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. The district will ensure that the notice is in a language the parent and/or guardian understands, which may require language assistance for parents or guardians with limited-English proficiency under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In instances where the threat is deemed moderate risk or high risk, or requires further intervention to prevent violence or serious harm, the school administrator shall notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who is the target/recipient of a threat as well as the parent and/or guardian of any student who made the threat. See Policy and Procedure 3144 – Notification and Dissemination of Information about Student Offenses and Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm. The district will ensure that the notice is in a language the parent and/or guardian understands, which may require language assistance for parents or guardians with limited-English proficiency under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

If the threat assessment team determines that an individual poses a threat of violence, based on the information collected, the threat assessment team develops, implements, and monitors intervention strategies to address, reduce, and mitigate the threat and assistance to those involved, as needed. If these strategies include disciplinary consequences, the district will provide notice to the student and their parents or legal guardian consistent with Student Discipline Policy and Procedure 3241.

The threat assessment team may assist individual(s) within the school to access appropriate school and community-based resources for support and/or further intervention. This includes assisting those who engaged in threatening behavior or communication, and any impacted staff or students.

In cases where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, the threat assessment team must align 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.

No identifiable threat or low risk threat
If the threat assessment team concludes that no further assessment is necessary to determine the reported possible threat is not identifiable or constitutes a low threat of violence or harm to self or others, the threat assessment team need not intervene or take further steps.

**Data Collection, Review and Reporting**
The district will submit all completed threat assessment documentation to the district risk manager for collecting and submitting data related to the school-based threat assessment program that comply with OSPI's monitoring requirements, processes, and guidelines.
The building principal will set a legal MBA alert (gavel) in PowerSchool for any student with a completed threat assessment and place a completed Notice of Threat Assessment form (3225F1) in the student's cumulative file.

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