

EDUCATIONAL



THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Report to the Education Interim
Committee

Student Support Team Pilot Program Report

November 2019

Rhett Larsen
School and Student Safety Specialist
Rhett.larsen@schools.utah.gov

Christy Walker
Safe and Healthy Schools Team Coordinator
Christy.walker@schools.utah.gov

Leah Voorhies
Assistant Superintendent of Student Support
Leah.voorhies@schools.utah.gov

Student Support Team Pilot Program

STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

House Bill 120, *Student and School Safety Assessment*

Intent language in this bill requires the Utah State Board of Education to submit a report to the Education Interim Committee on the development of the student support team pilot program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

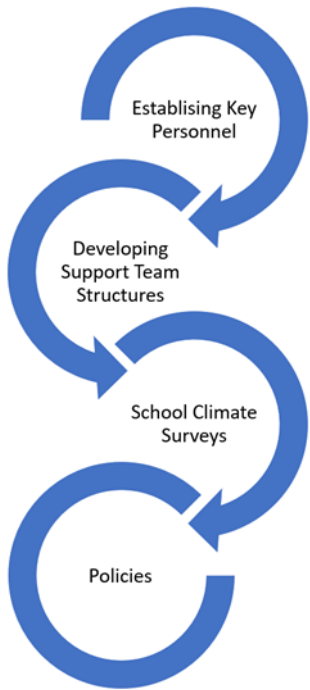
This report is provided to the Education Interim Committee to report on the development of the student support team pilot program as specified in intent language for House Bill 120, Student and School Safety Assessment, from the 2019 General Session. This report discusses the work the Board has done on developing the student support team pilot program including establishing critical personnel, work on developing support team structures, formation of school climate surveys, and work on relevant policies. We anticipate that the pilot program will be fully implemented by pilot schools in the 2020-2021 school year.

BACKGROUND

In the 2019 General Session, the Legislature passed House Bill 120, Student and School Safety Assessment. This bill created the State Safety and Support Program. This program includes the development of, in conjunction with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), model student safety and support policies for local education agencies (LEAs). The program also includes dissemination of information on effective school safety initiatives; technical assistance to LEAs in the development and implementation of school safety initiatives; in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the development of, and making available to LEAs, a model critical incident response training program that includes protocols for conducting a threat assessment, and ensuring building security during an incident; and State Board-provided training.

This instruction includes training:

- in school safety;
- in evidence-based approaches to improve school climate and address and correct bullying behavior;
- in evidence-based approaches in identifying an individual who may pose a threat to the school community;
- in evidence-based approaches in identifying an individual who may be showing signs or symptoms of mental illness;



- on permitted disclosures of student data to law enforcement and other support services under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); and
- on permitted collection of student data.

In conjunction with the bill, the Legislature provided \$480,000 ongoing from the Education Fund to the Board for the state safety program. As outlined in intent language in the bill, \$150,000 of the ongoing appropriation is to fund the development of a student support team pilot program for participating local education agencies, including support team structures, climate surveys, and policies. Since May 14, 2019, the bill’s effective date, the Board has begun work on developing the student support team pilot program including establishing critical personnel, work on developing support team structures, formation of school climate surveys, and work on relevant policies.

USBE SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS TEAM

The Utah State Board of Education, in coordination with all stakeholders, has made Safe and Healthy Schools a board priority. It is one of the four goals of the Board’s strategic plan. To this end, the Board has created the Safe and Healthy Schools Team which is depicted in the figure below. One foundational step toward the development of the student support team pilot program is ensuring that key personnel are in place including the Safe and Healthy Schools Team (in Figure 1 below).

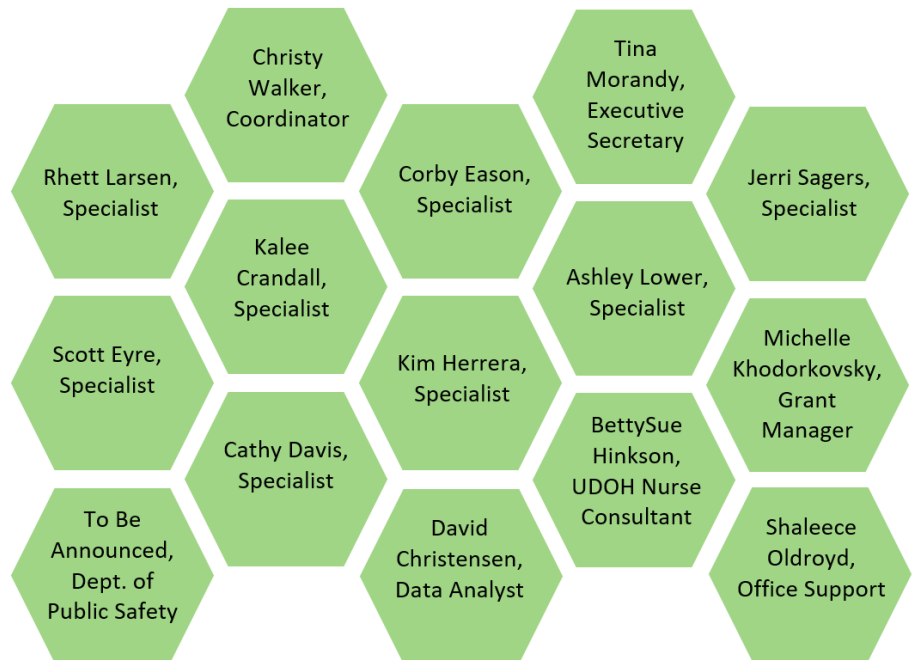


Figure 1. Safe and Healthy Schools Team

Part of the Safe and Healthy Schools Team includes the School Safety Center which includes individuals from the Board, DSAMH, and DPS as illustrated in the figure on the following page.

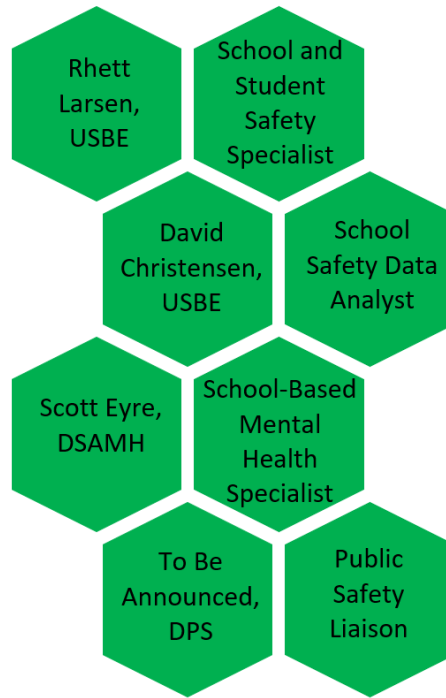


Figure 2. School Safety Center Individuals, Agencies, and Titles

SUPPORT TEAM STRUCTURES

Support teams are groups of individuals who assess and respond to school safety issues or student needs. These teams are also called multi-disciplinary teams because they typically include individuals with expertise in mental health, school administrators, law enforcement officers, and licensed educators. The teams provide guidance regarding recognition of behaviors that may represent a threat to the school community and/or the individual student himself or herself, and an appropriate response to the potential threat.

Initial steps in the development of support team structures within local education agencies are three-pronged. They include evidence-based and contracted trainings offered this fall, presentations and trainings by School Safety Center staff, and professional development for the Safe and Healthy Schools Team including the School Safety Center staff (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Development of Support Team Structures

Thus far, the contracted trainings included a one-day workshop on Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (C-STAG) offered at the end of October 2019. This workshop covered the rationale for threat assessment, how the team functions, what steps to follow in conducting an assessment and resolving transient and substantive threats. In early November 2019, the Board offered a SIGMA Threat Management Training. SIGMA is a partnership of experts in behavioral threat assessment, threat management, and violence prevention. This training included how to build and operate multi-disciplinary teams, helping LEAs develop their own ability to assess and manage threatening situations in accordance with best practices.

Beginning in spring 2019, School Safety Center members began offering trainings at a number of events as detailed in Figure 4 below. These trainings included presentations on threat assessment basics, integrating mental health into school safety and threat assessment basics, and school-based mental health.



Figure 4. School Safety Center Trainings

To further deepen team knowledge, Safe and Healthy Schools Team members have participated in several professional development opportunities including:

- the International School Safety Conference;
- site visits at the Virginia School Safety Center and C-STAG training;
- Equity Lab;
- Student Safety and Security Conference & Workshop;
- Indiana School Safety Conference;
- Community Awareness Briefing on Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention; and
- the 2019 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health.

Support team structures were further bolstered through the grant application for the school-based mental health qualified grant program from House Bill 373, Student Support Amendments. The grant program itself provides funding for qualifying personnel. Within the grant program application, LEAs had to identify how the qualifying personnel would be used in the LEA's care or support team.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

House Bill 120 requires the Board to create a model school climate survey to be administered to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school resource officers that may be used by an LEA to assess stakeholder perception of a school environment. The bill also requires the Board to adopt rules requiring an LEA to create (or adopt) and disseminate a school climate survey. Board staff has created R277-623, School Climate Survey, which will be heard in the Board's Standards and Assessment Committee in its November meeting. This rule went before the full Board in October, but it was sent back to committee for additional work.

The model school climate survey has been created and the Board has developed survey dissemination instructions including guidelines on survey time, preparation and accommodations, and sample language for survey administration introduction. The most recent draft of these instructions is available in Appendix A of this report.

RELEVANT POLICIES

The School Safety Center team has been undertaking work on policies important to the development of student support teams. In collaboration with the Department of Human Services, the Attorney General's Office, County Sheriff, Department of Public Safety, Chief of Police, and the Governor's Office, the Board established information sharing guidelines taking into consideration the requirements of FERPA, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS). For example, this group has discussed when it is permissible to utilize FERPA's health or safety emergency exception for disclosures and who are considered appropriate parties that may receive information under

the health or safety emergency exception.

This work has occurred in conjunction with work on reporting put in place by Senate Bill 198, Public School Disciplinary Action Amendments. This bill requires the Board, in collaboration with school districts, charter schools, and law enforcement agencies, to develop an annual report regarding incidents, including arrests of a minor, other law enforcement activities, and disciplinary actions, that occur on school grounds while school is in session or during a school-sponsored activity. Lastly, the Safe and Healthy Schools Team has been collaborating on the development of a model wellness policy which will also help support the student support team pilot program.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

While the above activities such as contracted and other trainings, professional development, and policy evaluations will continue, there are additional actions planned toward full implementation of the support team pilot program. These activities include:

- the Safe and Healthy Schools Conference, November 12-13, 2019;
- Board approval of the school climate survey rule, R277-623;
- projected identification of pilot schools for the program, December 2019;
- development and implementation of CANVAS training modules for support teams;
- anticipated distribution of the school climate survey, January 2020; and
- execution of pilot program, 2020-2021 school year.

As the Safe and Healthy Schools Team continues its work, additional information and resources can be found on the Board's website at: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/safehealthyschools>.

APPENDIX A

CLIMATE SURVEY DISSEMINATION INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

In House Bill 120: Student and School Safety Assessment Bill (HB120), the State Board of Education was directed to develop an anonymous School Climate Survey to be administered to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school resource officers. A school climate survey is to be administered every other year with a valid sample size of the lesser of 35% or 400 participants. The law states individuals are not required to complete a school climate survey.

Setting

Latitude is given to Local Education Agencies (LEA) to determine the best format to disseminate this online survey. Educational settings should secure access to sufficient devices to make the survey available to participants and maintain their anonymity. The survey may be administered in classrooms, small groups, or outside school hours in a private testing setting.

Testing Time

The survey varies in number of questions based on the version. The amount of time to finish the survey should be restricted to what is reasonable for completion based on the length of the survey and ability level of the participant.

Preparation / Accommodations

When conducting the survey in a school setting, survey administrators should assure that the following steps are taken:

- Settings are conducive to ensure participants' confidentiality.
- Students have been randomly selected in accordance with R277-623.
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 accommodations available as required by law.
 - Examples of accommodations include the use of an English-language translator for directions only, use of assistive technology, setting/scheduling modifications, survey moderator options, or any other accommodation as required.
- Paper copies, a blank sheet of paper, and a pencil available as needed.
- Students, or other participants, have the ability to opt out of the survey.
- Appropriate staff has been notified and made available in the main office for debriefing with students as needed (e.g. school counselors, school psychologists, or other qualified support staff).

Sample of Classroom Survey Administration Introduction

Today we will be taking a short, but important, survey about your experience at school. The information you provide in this survey will remain anonymous. Meaning, your answers cannot be linked back to you. Your complete honesty will help the school be a safe and welcoming place to be. If you need help understanding words, or questions, please feel free to raise your hand and an adult will assist you. After the survey, if you would like to talk about your thoughts or feelings, someone will be available in the main office.