



Provo City School District

Policy Series: 3000 Students

3235 P1

Student Threat Assessment

A student threat assessment is a prevention strategy which has the primary goals of preventing violence and resolving conflicts or problems that influence threatening behavior. Student threat assessment guidelines allow a multi-disciplinary team to distinguish non-serious threats (transient) from serious (substantive) and very serious (substantive) threats and to resolve threats appropriately. A multi-disciplinary team uses an evidence-based student threat assessment process consistent with Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Rules R277-400 and R277-736 to identify, assess, and manage threats and prevent behaviors or conflicts from escalating into violence.

Definitions

The term "evidence-based" is defined in Utah Code Annotated 53G-18-211(1) .

“Evidence-based” means a program or practice that has: 1) had multiple randomized control studies or a meta-analysis demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for a specific population; 2) been rated as effective by a standardized program evaluation tool; or 3) been approved by the state board.

"Multi-disciplinary team" means a group of professionals from multiple disciplines who meet to pursue the common goal of evaluating and triaging the academic, social, emotional, physical, and/or behavioral needs of a student or group of students; creating individualized strategies and interventions to address the identified needs.

Multi-disciplinary teams are sometimes referred to as CARE teams, Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) teams, Student Threat Assessment (STA) teams, Student Assistance Teams (SATs), Student Success Teams or Student Support Teams (SSTs), etc. A school may have more than one multi-disciplinary team for different purposes.

"Threat" means an expression of intent to harm someone that is direct, indirect, or implied and may be spoken, written, or expressed in some other way.

A threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, verbally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party.

"Student Threat Assessment" means a prevention strategy that involves: (a) identifying student threats including to commit a violent act, (b) determining the seriousness of the threat, and (c) developing intervention plans that protect potential victims and address the underlying problem or conflict that stimulated the threatening behavior.

Training

The student threat assessment teams within the Provo City School District will receive training from a qualified professional (e.g., a Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) trainer, or other professionals trained in student threat assessment approved by a local school board regarding the student threat assessment process.

This training will address:

1. The function of a multi-disciplinary team;
2. The violence prevention plan and strategies;
3. The evidence-based student threat assessment process;
4. The reporting process for threats;
5. The documentation and notification of threats;
6. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 USC. Sec. 1232g;
7. The steps to cultivate a safe school climate; and
8. Student Privacy and Data Protection.

The student threat assessment team members will receive the training outlined above prior to beginning work with the team.

Information for Students, Parents/Guardians and Staff

The district shall notify students, staff, and parents/guardians about the existence and purpose of the student threat assessment team through posting information on the district website, publishing in handbooks, and through other appropriate methods.

The student threat assessment team shall make available age-appropriate informational materials to students regarding recognition of threatening or at-risk behavior that may present a threat to the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others and how to report concerns, including through the Safe UT program application and other district reporting hotlines or methods. Informational materials shall be available for review by parents/guardians.

The student threat assessment team shall make available informational materials for school employees regarding recognition of threatening or at-risk behavior that may present a threat to the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others and how to report concerns, including through the Safet UT program application and other district reporting hotlines or methods. Information for school employees shall include a list of staff members who have been appointed to the student threat assessment team.

Structure of the Student Threat Assessment Team

The Provo City School District student threat assessment teams (who uses an evidence-based student threat assessment model) may include:

- A. School administrative personnel;
- B. Local law enforcement or a school resource officer;
- C. A mental health professional (i.e., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or contracted mental health professional); and
- D. An instructional coach, general education, or special education teacher.

Although parents, guardians, or family members are often interviewed as part of the student threat assessment process, neither the student nor the student's family member are part of the student threat assessment team. This does not diminish the district's commitment that school personnel will make every reasonable attempt to involve parents/guardians and the student in the resolution of the student's behavioral violations, consistent with Provo City School District Policy and Procedure 3310 - Safe Schools.

The Function of the Student Threat Assessment Team Members

Each student threat assessment team member, whether a teacher, counselor, school administrator, 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 student threat assessment team access to educational records as specified by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). No member of a student threat assessment team, including district/school-based members and community resource/law enforcement members, shall use any student record beyond the prescribed purpose of the student threat assessment team or re-disclose records obtained by being a member of the student threat assessment team, except as permitted by FERPA.

In general, the student threat assessment team:

1. 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 unaccompanied by threats of harm to others should be promptly evaluated.
2. Gathers and analyzes information about the student's behavior to determine a level of concern for the threat. The student threat assessment team may conduct interviews of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or targets 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 student 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.
3. Conducting searches of lockers, storage spaces, and other possessions on school property as applicable, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.
4. Examining outside resources such as social media sites, in coordination with law enforcement, or contacting law enforcement, juvenile probation, or community agencies

to request additional information about the student(s) of the report, in accordance with laws, regulations and Board policies.

5. 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 student threat assessment team will not base a determination of threat on generalizations or stereotypes. Rather, the student threat assessment makes an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, best available objective evidence, or current medical evidence as applicable;
6. Communicates lawfully and ethically with each other, school administrators, 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
7. Timely reports its determination to the superintendent or designee.

In cases, where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, the student threat assessment team aligns intervention strategies with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or the student's Equal Education Opportunity Plan (EEOP) developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, by coordinating with the student's IEP team or Section 504 Plan team. The student threat assessments remain distinct from those teams and processes.

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

The student 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:

- A. Providing guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of behavior that may represent a threat to students, staff, school, the community, or the individual;
- B. Providing informational resources for community service providers or health care providers for medical evaluation or treatment, as appropriate;
- C. Assessing individuals other than students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of students or staff and notify the superintendent or designee of such an individual.

When assessment of a student's behavior determines that it is not a threat to the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, the student threat assessment team shall document the assessment and may refer the student to other appropriate district resources, supports and services.

Roles for Specific Student Threat Assessment Team Members

Multi-disciplinary team members shall work collaboratively with each other, the school staff, and community agencies (as appropriate) to support the team's purposes and maintain safety for all students and staff members.

- A. School administrative personnel role:
 1. Serves as the designated team leader;

2. Supports and holds team members accountable for roles and responsibilities;
 3. Assists the team with required training and resources;
 4. Supports parents/guardians, teachers, and other staff members regarding student threat assessments;
 5. Oversees the team's documentation of student threat assessment(s); and
 6. Ensures documentation is consistent with Student Privacy and Data Protection and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 USC. Sec. 1232g.
- B. Local law enforcement or School Resource Officer role:
1. Determines if a threat constitutes a criminal offense;
 2. Addresses the threat(s) that require immediate notification to law enforcement; and
 3. Assists in monitoring and supervising the student and determining the need, if any, for law enforcement action.
- C. Mental health professional role:
1. Conducts a mental health interview, as needed;
 2. Provides mental health supports as determined by the provider's credentials; and
 3. Links the team to community resources to support the parents/guardians and student(s);
- D. Instructional coach, general education teacher, and special education teacher role(s):
1. Supports the team with understanding academic and social-emotional data and needs;
 2. Assists students' classroom teachers in understanding the academic needs of students.

Actions Required if Threats Are Reported

- A. All stakeholders (including students, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, support staff, and community members) will understand the importance of reporting threats and know the following:
1. Individual roles and responsibilities to report concerns;
 2. What critical information to report;
 3. Where and how to report it.
- B. Each reported threat will include:
1. The name of the complainant;
 2. The name of the alleged offender (if known);
 3. The date and location of the threat(s); and
 4. A statement describing the threat(s), including names of witnesses (if known).
- C. Each reported threat will be promptly investigated/triaged by a school administrator, and, in consultation with the multi-disciplinary team, the seriousness of the threat(s) will be determined.
- D. The multi-disciplinary team shall develop, implement, and monitor an individualized plan to intervene with, address, and mitigate the risk.
1. The team shall assist the individual(s) who reported the threat, and any impacted staff or students, in accessing appropriate school and community-based resources for support and/or further intervention.
- E. Verified threats shall result in interventions and/or consequences. Interventions and/or consequences include, but are not limited to:
1. Implementation of best-practices that:
 - a. De-escalate, contain, control, and redirect the student away from plans and preparation for violence;

- b. Support the student with skills to engage with others, problem-solve, adapt, and improve coping skills and well-being;
 - 2. Application of steps in a discipline plan consistent with USBE Rule R277-609;
 - 3. Implementation of restorative justice practices consistent with USBE Rule R277-613;
 - 4. Obtaining consent from the involved student(s) and their parents/guardians before including the victim(s) in the process;
 - 5. Notification of the involved students' parent/guardian of restorative justice practices;
 - 6. Support for involved students using trauma-informed practices;
 - 7. Suspension or removal of a student from a school-sponsored team or activity; including school-sponsored transportation;
 - 8. Suspension or expulsion of a student from school or lesser disciplinary action as outlined in school policy; and
 - 9. Suspension or termination of an employee for cause or lesser disciplinary action consistent with Utah Code Annotated 53G-11-512.
- F. Provo City School District will notify the student's parents/guardians if the student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others or if the student is a potential victim.
- 1. Provo City School District will produce and maintain a record that verifies the parents/guardians were notified of the threat.
 - 2. Provo City School District will not disclose the record to anyone unauthorized to receive it and will not use the record for purposes not allowed under the law.
- G. The multi-disciplinary team shall maintain thorough documentation, including information gathered during incident management and ongoing monitoring.
- 1. The documentation shall comply with the LEA's policies, federal and state laws.
 - 2. The documentation shall demonstrate the team's reasonable good faith efforts to identify, investigate, assess, and manage threatening situations.

Additional Reporting Actions

Multi-disciplinary team members must also include the following in reporting, as appropriate:

- A. Procedures for the victim(s) and other involved individuals regarding:
 - 1. Protection from further concerning communication or behavior;
 - 2. Supports for potential victims; and
 - 3. Assistance for the individual(s) who are being assessed.
- B. Law enforcement reports of any threats that may constitute a criminal offense;
- C. Procedures for a fair and timely opportunity for the accused to explain their actions; and
- D. Procedures for providing due process rights:
 - a. Licensed staff and local employee discipline policies before employee discipline (Utah Code Annotated 53G-11-501);
 - b. Local policies (students) before long term (more than 10 days) student discipline (Utah Code Annotated 53G-8-202).

Records Access and Confidentiality

In order to carry out their duties and facilitate the timely assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may indicate a threat, the student threat assessment team shall have access to the following student information to the extent permitted under applicable law and regulations:

1. Student health records
2. Prior school disciplinary records
3. Records related to adjudication under applicable law and regulations
4. Records of prior behavioral or mental health or psychological evaluations or screenings maintained by the district
5. Other records or information that may be relevant to evaluating a threat or determining resources or referral options for a student that are maintained by the district

The student threat assessment team shall use all information or records obtained in fulfilling the team's duty in accordance with law to evaluate a threat or to recommend disposition of a threat. Team members shall not redisclose any record or information obtained or otherwise use any record of a student beyond the purpose for which the disclosure was made to the team, in accordance with law.

Student threat assessment members whose other assignments and roles require confidentiality of specific student communications, in accordance with the law, shall ensure that all confidential communications and information are addressed in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.