

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD REPORT

To: Board of Trustees

From: Gregory Merwin, Associate Superintendent, Education and Support Services
Prepared by: Mike Beekman, Executive Director, Safety and Student Services

Date: May 4, 2022

Board Item: Second Reading – Board Policy 5141.52, Suicide Prevention

HISTORY

This is a subsequent item. In 2017, Pupil and Student Suicide Prevention policy was added to Education Code § 215. The policy stated that school districts were required to adopt policy on student suicide prevention for students in grades seventh to twelve. Recently, the code was revised which expanded the policy to include students in kindergarten, and grades first through sixth.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As staff was preparing for Federal Program Monitoring (FPM), it was discovered that Board Policy 5173, *Suicide Prevention*, did not include language addressing students in kindergarten, and grades first through sixth, or align with the California School Boards Association (CSBA) policy number.

CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS

Staff has revised Board Policy 5141.52, *Suicide Prevention*, to include language that includes students in kindergarten, and grades first through sixth. The revised policy has also been aligned to the CSBA sample Board Policy including changing the policy number from 5173 to 5141.52. Revisions align with California Education Code, Code of Federal Regulations, and with CSBA sample policy.

Trustees voted 5-0-1 to approve the policy on April 20, 2022; however, not all Trustees were present for a unanimous vote to waive the second reading. The Board then directed the policy be brought back for a second reading on consent at the May 4, 2022, meeting, as amended from the dais. Between the First and Second Reading, the FPM reviewer recommended adding specific statutory language for the kindergarten through 6-grade span. This language adds the additional requirement of consulting the county mental health plan. That language has been added to this version. That new language has been added to this version for the Second Reading. The new content is track changed in the Board Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial impact.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Following discussion, it is recommended the Board of Trustees approve Board Policy 5141.52, *Suicide Prevention*.

PREPARED BY: Mike Beekman, Executive Director, Safety and Student Services

APPROVED BY: Gregory Merwin, Associate Superintendent, Education and Support Services

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Board of Trustees recognizes that suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10–24. The Board finds it imperative that this tragic situation is openly addressed and that all staff, students, and parents/guardians are made aware of warning signs and procedures by which they may help students at risk for suicide in District schools.

The Board believes that school staff, students, and parents/guardians can contribute toward the prevention of adolescent suicide. The District shall, therefore, provide suicide prevention training for each of these segments of the school community.

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Protocol

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. In developing this protocol, the District will consult with school and community stakeholders, such as administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, and students; school-employed mental health professionals such as school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses; suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations; law enforcement; and, in developing policy for grades K-6, the county mental health plan, school-employed mental health professionals, and experts. ~~These protocols will be in place for students in grades transitional kindergarten-7-12, and for students in kindergarten and grades 1-6. For students in kindergarten and grades 1-6,~~ District staff will ensure that protocols are age appropriate, and delivered and discussed in a manner sensitive to the needs of young-all students. The District's Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Protocol shall act as a guide to support staff in identifying and intervening when a student is suspected to be at risk for suicide, and address school, staff, and community needs and appropriate responses during postvention. The District's Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Protocol shall be reviewed no less frequently than every five years to ensure it meets legal requirements and the needs of District schools.

Parent/Guardian Awareness

The Board believes parents/guardians should be aware of the severity of the youth-student suicide problem. The District will offer a meeting to parents to discuss suicide, and to help parents/guardians recognize warning signs of suicide, learn basic steps for helping suicidal youthsstudents, and identify community resources that can help teenagers in crisis. This meeting will be held annually through the Family Resource Center.

Staff Awareness

The Board recognizes having at least one supportive adult can reduce the risk of youth-student suicide. The Superintendent or Designee will provide teachers with the knowledge, tools, and resources to respond when a student comes to a teacher for help. The Superintendent or designee shall arrange suicide prevention training for appropriate certificated and classified school site staff members.

In this training, the District will provide copies of and review the District's Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Protocols. The professional learning shall include:

BP 5141.52 (b)

SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

- ~~1. How to identify appropriate mental health services, both at the school site and within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth students and their families to those services;~~
- ~~2. Guidelines to ensure that a school employee acts only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license; and~~
- ~~3. Information regarding addressing the needs of high risk students including, but not limited to all of the following:
 - ~~a. Youth Students bereaved by suicide~~
 - ~~b. Youth Students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders~~
 - ~~c. Youth Students experiencing homelessness or in out of home settings, such as foster care~~
 - ~~d. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth students~~~~

~~Professional learning shall be offered under the direction of trained District certificated staff or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies able to assist with District staff professional learning.~~

Student Awareness

~~The Board has determined it is appropriate to incorporate suicide prevention into instruction in an age-appropriate way and sensitive to the needs of students. For the seventh, ninth, and tenth grade curriculum the Board approved curriculum will support students in the following:~~

- ~~1. Understanding how feelings of depression and despair can lead to suicidal thoughts.~~
- ~~2. Providing strategies to increase and reinforce resiliency factors.~~
- ~~3. Recognizing the warning signs or suicidal intentions in their friends.~~
- ~~4. Learning to listen, be honest, share feelings and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent.~~

~~At other grade levels, students will be supported in identifying feelings, trusted adults, and available resources.~~

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students, as described in the accompanying administrative regulation
2. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and

appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students
4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
5. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
6. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan.

District employees shall act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging district employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so.

The Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the district's web site, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.

Policy
adopted: August 18, 1997
revised: August 23, 2017

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Juan Capistrano, California