

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
AGENDA STATEMENT

No. 8 a

MEETING OF January 27, 2021

REVIEWED BY:

ITEM TITLE:

**PUBLIC HEARING - POLICY**

Approval of revisions to Board Policy 5141.52  
Suicide Prevention in first reading

Superintendent  
 Policy Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Beth Lougee, Superintendent

CONTACT PERSON/TELEPHONE:

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:

Superintendent Lougee      247-2109  
Phone

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Superintendent

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The School Board is being asked to approve Board Policy 5141.52 revisions, Suicide Prevention.

ISSUE:

Board Bylaw 9300 states that "The formulation and adoption of written Board policies shall constitute the basic method by which the Board shall govern the school district." Board Policy 0500 and Board Bylaw 9311 both address the ongoing review of district policies and programs by the School Board.

BACKGROUND:

Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States and the second leading cause of death for people aged 10 to 34; suicide is a serious public health problem (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). Knowing the risk factors and recognizing the warning signs for suicide can help prevent suicide. Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District counselors, psychologist, and community partners are holding ongoing meetings to address awareness and training in the following areas: Parent/Guardian Awareness, Staff Awareness & Training, Curriculum and Peer Counseling.

At its December 9, 2020 meeting, the Board postponed consideration of the revisions and referred the policy to the policy committee. The policy committee met on January 6, 2021.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Proposed revisions to Board Policy 5141.52

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

"I move that the Board of Education approve revisions to Board Policy 5141.52– Suicide Prevention in first reading."

## Suicide Prevention (Recommended Changes DRAFT Form)

BP 5141.52

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

*Note: Effective July 1, 2016, AS 14.30.362 requires suicide awareness and prevention training for specific school personnel. AS 14.30.362 also provides civil immunity for districts and employees from a death or personal injury that results from an act or omission in providing or obtaining that training. The training provided or failure to provide training cannot be construed to impose a specific duty of care on any person.*

The School Board finds it important that the tragic situation of ~~adolescent~~ **student** suicide be openly addressed and that staff, students and parents/guardians be made aware of warning signs and procedures by which they may help ~~suicidal students at this especially vulnerable age.~~ **prevent student suicide.**

The Board recognizes that all suicide threats must be taken seriously. The Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate staff members with procedures for intervening in low-risk and in high-risk crisis situations. These procedures shall include guidelines by which staff members may assess the seriousness of a student's risk for suicide and **and develop an appropriate intervention plan to better serve the student and preserve safety."**

The Board believes that school staff, students and parents/guardians all can contribute significantly towards the prevention of ~~adolescent~~ **student** suicide. The district shall make available suicide prevention training for each of these segments of the school community ~~using the Threat Assessment and Intervention Tool.~~

### Parent/Guardian Awareness

*Note: The following parent/guardian involvement paragraph will affect school principals' responsibilities.*

The Board believes all parents/guardians should be aware of the severity of the ~~youth~~ **student** suicide problem. Before suicide prevention is taught in classrooms, parents/guardians shall be advised and invited to review the curriculum goals and the district suicide prevention policy. Parent/guardian information may be provided, and meetings may be held, to help parents/guardians recognize warning signs of suicide, learn basic steps for helping ~~suicidal youths,~~ **youth who may be suicidal** and identify community resources that can help ~~teenagers~~ **students** in crisis.

### Staff Awareness & Training

*Note: Effective July 1, 2016, AS 14.30.362 requires districts to provide training on a schedule adopted by the Board on youth suicide awareness and prevention to the following staff: each teacher, administrator, counselor, and specialist who is employed by the district to provide services to students. The training must be approved by the Commissioner of Education and provided to teachers at no cost. Training may be offered through video conferencing or an individual program of study.*

*(cf. 4131- Staff Development)*

The Board strongly encourages teachers to help students of all ages develop both a positive self-image and a realistic attitude towards potential accomplishments.

In order that district staff may learn suicide prevention strategies, to recognize the warning signs of suicidal crisis, to understand how to help suicidal youths, and to identify helpful community resources, the Superintendent or designee shall arrange annual suicide awareness and prevention training as required by law. Additional certificated and classified staff may also be included. The district suicide prevention policy and procedures shall be thoroughly reviewed at this time. Staff shall be expected to learn to identify potentially suicidal students, to assess the degree of risk, to take preventive precautions and to report suicide threats to the appropriate authorities.

### **Curriculum**

The Board finds it appropriate that suicide prevention instruction be incorporated into the curriculum. This instruction shall help students:

- Understand how feelings of depression and despair can lead to suicide.
- Identify alternatives to suicide and develop new coping skills.
- Recognize the warning signs of suicidal intentions in their friends.
- Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent.
- Identify community resources where teenagers can get crisis intervention help.

### **Peer Counseling**

The Board endorses the use of peer counselors who can provide an effective support system for students who are uncomfortable communicating with adults. Peer counselors shall be expected to have completed the suicide prevention curriculum and demonstrated that they are able to identify the warning signs of suicidal behavior, make contact rapidly, and get a suicidal student to adult help.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

*14.30.362 Suicide awareness and prevention training*

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Adoption Date: 9/14/2016**

**Revision Date: 12/14/2016**