

Book	Policy Manual
Section	100 Programs
Title	Trauma-Informed Approach
Code	146.1
Status	Second Reading
Adopted	March 28, 2022

Purpose

The Board recognizes the impact that trauma may have on the educational environment of the schools, individual student achievement, and the school community as a whole. The Board desires to address the effects of trauma in order to meet the academic, behavioral and professional needs of students and staff. The purpose of this policy is to direct district staff to develop and implement a plan for trauma-informed approaches to education throughout the district.

Definitions

Trauma - for purposes of this policy, includes effects of an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's cognitive functioning and physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual well-being.[1]

Trauma-informed approach - for purposes of this policy, includes a school-wide approach to education and a classroom-based approach to student learning that recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, professional learning, procedures and practices for the purposes of recognizing the presence and onset of trauma, resisting the reoccurrence of trauma and promoting resilience tailored to the district's culture, climate and demographics and the community as a whole.[1]

Secondary trauma - the impact of working with students experiencing trauma on a regular basis, which may cause traumatic responses and/or burnout on the individual providing support and care.

Authority

The Board directs district staff to develop and implement a trauma-informed approach plan that uses evidence-based practices and reflects the needs and resources of the district and school community.[2]

The Board shall review current district resources, programs, school climate measures, partnerships with outside agencies, procedures and Board policies through a trauma-informed lens, and shall make revisions or determinations as necessary to facilitate implementation of the district's trauma-informed approach plan.

This shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Student attendance policy and practices that focus on reasons for absence and school attendance improvement.[3]
2. Student disciplinary policies, practices and a Code of Student Conduct that incorporate restorative practices.[4][5][6][7]

3. Curriculum and planned instruction that embed social and emotional learning.[8][9]
4. Student services policies and programs that focus on development and support of students. [10][11][12][13][14][15]
5. Policies and training that focus on building and maintaining appropriate, supportive relationships between adults and students in the school community.[16][17][18][19]
6. School wellness policy, instruction and practices that promote healthy behaviors.[20]
7. Policies and practices that promote student safety and security, and build positive relationships with law enforcement agencies.[21][22][23][24][25]
8. Threat assessment policy and practices that focus on understanding a student's background in order to appropriately assess behavior and address the student's needs.[26]
9. Review of the annual budget to ensure fiscal resources for training and programs related to the trauma-informed approach plan.[27]
10. Review of the facilities and future facilities planning to provide environments that are attentive to the needs of students and staff with transition and sensory sensitivities.[28]
11. Culturally responsive practices that focus on identifying, valuing and integrating the cultures, languages, heritage and experiences of all students and staff to ensure a supportive school climate and community.[29]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Other Safety and Security (must be assigned to the school district) to oversee the implementation of the district's trauma-informed approach plan and integrate the coordination of services and professional development into the district's comprehensive plan. The Safety and Security shall serve as a member of the district's Student Assistance Program team.[2][13][15][16][21][30]

The Board directs the School Safety and Security Coordinator to include information regarding the district's implementation of the trauma-informed approach plan into the annual report to the Board on school safety and security practices.[23]

Guidelines

Training

The district's trauma-informed approach plan shall include provisions for evidence-based training and professional development, based on assigned roles and responsibilities, including but not limited to:[2]

1. Required training for newly elected/appointed or re-elected/appointed school directors on best practices related to trauma-informed approach, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[31][32]
2. Required training on trauma-informed approach for certificated administrative and professional employees as part of the professional education plan, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[16][33]
3. Training on trauma-informed approach and trauma-related topics for all district staff and contracted service personnel to increase knowledge and understanding of trauma's impact on students and staff.[16][34]

4. Training on trauma-informed approach for all school security personnel employed or contracted by the district, as well as invitation to training for local law enforcement agencies with which the district maintains a Memorandum of Understanding to increase knowledge and awareness in interacting with students who may have experienced trauma.[22][23]

Screening

The Board directs district staff to identify and implement evidence-based screening tools for students and the school community based on the trauma-informed approach plan, and in accordance with applicable law and regulations, including obtaining parental consent where appropriate or required. Screening tools may include, but are not limited to, those identifying the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), social-emotional needs, and school climate indicators. Screening shall be conducted by qualified district staff or community agencies with which the district has a contract or other agreement.[13][15][26][36]

The trauma-informed approach plan shall require that screening results are reviewed by appropriate district staff or other contracted providers, and referrals for individual educational and behavioral services or evaluation for such services are made when indicated by individual or universal screening. Identification and referrals for special education and related services evaluations shall comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and Board policy.[11][12][37][38]

Services

The district's trauma-informed approach plan shall include provisions for identification of student needs, a referral system for individual assessments and coordination of services among the student and student's family, the school, and county-based services, community care organizations, public health entities, nonprofit youth service providers, community-based organizations, before-school or after-school care providers, or other similar community groups.[2]

Coordinated student services shall be based on the district's approved trauma-informed approach plan, which shall address recognition and response to the effects of trauma on education and instruction, absenteeism and school completion, and the secondary impact of trauma on school employees.[2]

The district's trauma-informed approach plan shall be implemented within the current framework for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).

The trauma-informed approach plan shall address coordination with designated district staff and teams responsible for implementing the district's approved plan for K-12 student services and other district programs including, but not limited to, special education and related services, gifted education, guidance counseling, Student Assistance Program, threat assessment team, health services, and home and school visitor services.[10][11][12][13][14][15][26][30][37]

Parental notification and consent may be required prior to referral for or implementation of student services, in accordance with applicable law and regulations.[13][14][15]

The district shall develop partnerships with community-based services and organizations, public health entities, nonprofit youth service providers and other community groups to implement the trauma-informed approach plan and provide referrals and/or services to address and mitigate the impact of trauma for students and staff in accordance with the district's approved plan and framework for support.

The Board shall, where appropriate, review and approve a Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement with each partnering organization or entity for the provision of services, in accordance with the resources of the district and the approved trauma-informed approach plan.

Education

The district's trauma-informed approach plan shall integrate age-appropriate instruction for students related to trauma-informed topics and social-emotional learning as part of the district's approved curriculum. Instructional topics may include, but not be limited to [8][25]

self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness;

safe and healthy choices and behaviors;

seeking help for self or others;

Staff Wellness and Support

The district shall monitor and address the impact of trauma, including secondary trauma, on school employees as part of the trauma-informed approach plan. The plan shall include training and resources to identify the warning signs of trauma and provide confidential support and services to promote staff wellness, including but not limited to Employee Assistance Program,

Data Collection and Plan Review

The district shall review and revise the trauma-informed approach plan as part of the district's K-12 student services plan, based on a review of relevant data, district resources and programs, and the needs of students and staff. Such data may include, but not be limited to:

1. Results of school climate surveys and other student or staff surveys on school environment.
2. Aggregate data on student absences, Student Assistance Program referrals, health and school nurse services, student removal discipline and graduation rates.
3. Aggregate data on Employee Assistance Program use and staff feedback on training related to trauma-informed approach.
4. Office for Safe Schools reports.
5. Safe2Say Something aggregate data.

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 102
2. 24 P.S. 1311-B
3. Pol. 204
4. Pol. 113.1
5. Pol. 113.2
6. Pol. 218
7. Pol. 233
8. Pol. 105
9. Pol. 107
10. Pol. 112
11. Pol. 113

11. Pol. 113
12. Pol. 114
13. Pol. 146
14. Pol. 209
15. Pol. 236
16. Pol. 333
17. Pol. 824
18. Pol. 917
19. Pol. 918
20. Pol. 246
21. Pol. 805
22. Pol. 805.1
23. Pol. 805.2
24. Pol. 806
25. Pol. 819
26. Pol. 236.1
27. Pol. 602
28. Pol. 701
29. Pol. 832
30. Pol. 100
31. 24 P.S. 328
32. Pol. 004
33. 24 P.S. 1205.7
34. Pol. 818
35. Pol. 916
36. Pol. 235.1
37. Pol. 103.1
38. Pol. 113.3

PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency, School Safety and Security Committee - Model
Trauma-Informed Approach Plan: Guidelines for School Entities