

CHAPTER 83

AN ACT concerning the establishment of threat assessment teams in public schools and supplementing chapter 17 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.18A:17-43.4 Threat assessment team, establishment, policy; school district, charter school, renaissance school project.

1. a. The board of education of each school district and the board of trustees of each charter school or renaissance school project shall develop and adopt a policy for the establishment of a threat assessment team at each school. The purpose of a threat assessment team shall be to provide school teachers, administrators, and other staff with assistance in identifying students of concern, assessing those students' risk for engaging in violence or other harmful activities, and delivering intervention strategies to manage the risk of harm for students who pose a potential safety risk, to prevent targeted violence in the school, and ensure a safe and secure school environment that enhances the learning experience for all members of the school community.

b. A threat assessment team established by a board of education or a board of trustees under subsection a. of this section shall be multidisciplinary in membership and, to the extent possible, shall include the following individuals:

(1) a school psychologist, school counselor, school social worker, or other school employee with expertise in student counseling;

(2) a teaching staff member;

(3) a school principal or other senior school administrator;

(4) a safe schools resource officer or school employee who serves as a school liaison to law enforcement; and

(5) the school safety specialist designated pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2017, c.162 (C.18A:17-43.3), in the event that the school safety specialist is not already a school administrator or school employee required to be a part of the threat assessment team pursuant to this section.

Additional school employees may serve as regular members of the threat assessment team or may be consulted during the threat assessment process, as determined to be appropriate by the team.

c. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as affecting the provisions of any collective bargaining agreement or individual contract of employment in effect on this act's effective date.

C.18A:17-43.5 Alignment of threat assessment team policy.

2. a. Any policy developed by a school district, charter school or renaissance school project concerning the establishment of a threat assessment team, required pursuant to section 1 of this act, shall be aligned with guidelines developed by the Department of Education pursuant to section 3 of this act and shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) guidance for students, teachers, and all school staff regarding the recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior in a student that may represent a threat to the school community;

(2) the designation of members of the school community to whom threatening behavior shall be reported;

(3) the development and implementation of policies concerning the assessment and intervention of students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of the school community, and appropriate actions to be taken, including available social, developmental, and law

enforcement resources, for students whose behavior is identified as posing a threat to the safety of the school community;

(4) coordination and consultation with the school safety specialist designated pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2017, c.162 (C.18A:17-43.3); and

(5) a policy that the threat assessment team shall not disclose or disseminate any information obtained during their assessment beyond the purpose for which the information was provided to the threat assessment team, except that the threat assessment team is authorized to disclose the information to applicable agencies to pursue appropriate action pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection for any student whose behavior is identified as posing a threat to the safety of the school community.

b. When assessing a student whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school community, in the case of a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan, the threat assessment team shall consult with the IEP team or 504 team to determine whether the aberrant behavior is a threat to school safety and is being properly addressed in a manner that is required by N.J.A.C.6A:14 and all federal and State special education laws.

c. Each member of the threat assessment team shall participate in training provided by the school safety specialist designated pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2017, c.162 (C.18A:17-43.3) that is consistent with the guidelines developed by the department pursuant to section 3 of this act to ensure that the threat assessment team is able to accurately assess student behavior and to ensure that threat assessment teams do not have a disparate impact on students based on their race, ethnicity, homelessness status, religious belief, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. The training shall, at a minimum, include training on adverse childhood experiences, childhood trauma, cultural competency, and implicit bias.

C.18A:17-43.6 Guidelines developed; training provided.

3. The Department of Education, in consultation with State law enforcement agencies and the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, shall develop guidelines for school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects regarding the establishment and training of threat assessment teams pursuant to this act. The Department of Education shall provide training through the New Jersey School Safety Specialist Academy established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2017, c.162 (C.18A:17-43.2). The school safety specialist designated pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2017, c.162 (C.18A:17-43.3) shall provide training to school staff consistent with the training and guidelines provided by the department.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year next following the date of enactment.

Approved August 1, 2022.