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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
School District School Principals
School District Student Services Directors

FROM: Jacob Oliva

DATE: August 30, 2019

SUBJECT: Suicide Risk Assessment and “Suicide Prevention Certified Schools” – Senate Bill 1418

Contact Information:

Dr. David Wheeler
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DPS: 2019-117

The 2019 Florida Legislature passed [Senate Bill 1418](#) and Governor Ron DeSantis signed the bill into law on June 25, 2019 ([Chapter 2019-134, Laws of Florida](#)). SB 1418 amends section (s.) 1012.583, Florida Statutes (F.S.), by requiring the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) to develop a list of approved suicide screening instruments and establish additional criteria and posting requirements for “Suicide Prevention Certified Schools.”

The FDOE, in collaboration with the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention and suicide prevention experts, identified two suicide risk screening instruments appropriate for assessing suicide risk in school-age youth:

- Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
- Suicide Assessment Five-Step Evaluation and Triage (SAFE-T)

These instruments and additional resources on suicide awareness and prevention are posted on the web pages of the [Student Support Services Project](#) and the [Office of Safe Schools](#).

The FDOE recommends that youth suspected of suicide risk be referred to a school-based mental health services provider (i.e., FDOE-certified school psychologist, school social worker, school counselor or licensed mental health provider) for a suicide risk assessment using one of the approved instruments. The FDOE also recommends that each district adopt a policy requiring a suicide risk assessment by a school-based mental health services provider prior to the initiation of an involuntary examination (Baker Act).

SB 1418 establishes additional criteria for the “Suicide Prevention Certified School” designation. In order to be considered a “Suicide Prevention Certified School,” the school must take the following actions:

JACOB OLIVA
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August 23, 2019

Page Two

- 1) Incorporate two hours of suicide awareness and prevention training for all instructional personnel (see <http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/suicide/index.html> for a list of FDOE-approved trainings);
- 2) Adopt a policy mandating the use of an approved suicide risk assessment instrument prior to an involuntary examination; and
- 3) Identify at least two school-based staff members certified to administer the C-SSRS and SAFE-T risk assessment instruments.

Schools that meet the criteria for a “Suicide Prevention Certified School” must report compliance to the FDOE by completing the attached form – *SPCS Certification* – and submitting the completed form to SuicidePreventionSchools@fldoe.org. The FDOE will post the list of “Suicide Prevention Certified Schools” on the Office of Safe Schools web page at <http://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/>.

SB 1418 also requires districts to post a list of “Suicide Prevention Certified Schools” on the district website and each school to post their “Suicide Prevention Certified School” status on the school website. The FDOE will provide additional guidance on school and district reporting and posting requirements, and will be providing technical assistance and developing rules to support the implementation of s. 1012.583, F.S., for approval by the State Board of Education.

If you have questions regarding suicide risk assessment or “Suicide Prevention Certified Schools,” please contact Dr. David Wheeler at David.Wheeler@fldoe.org or 850-245-7847.

JO/dw

Attachment

cc: School District Staff Development Coordinators
School District School Safety Specialists