



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/17/2021

Time: 03:20 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 0063 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A MODEL STATEWIDE SCHOOL POLICY ON STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION IN GRADES K-12.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SCR 0063, the purpose of which is to convene a working group to create a model statewide school policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in grades K-12; however, the Department would like to respectfully offer comments.

Protecting the health and well-being of all students is of utmost importance to the Department and is an ethical imperative for all educational professionals.

Given that the developmental trajectory for suicide risk can begin early in life, schools are uniquely positioned for building resilience among their students and developing a caring community within a positive school climate and culture necessary for the prevention of suicide.

The following Hawaii Board of Education (BOE) policies promote a positive school climate where students feel safe, supported and a sense of belonging.

Policy 101-7 School Climate and Discipline: "Schools shall create an environment where all members are respected, welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. When a school's data indicate significant concerns regarding school climate and discipline, the school shall develop school climate goals and take actions to improve school climate."

As part of the Department's effort to assess and support a positive safe school climate for the school year 2020-21, a social and emotional learning student assessment survey for grades 3 through 12 and teacher perception of student survey for grades K through 2 will be offered

through the Panorama Education, Inc. platform. The intent of the survey is to capture student/teacher perspectives on their understanding and application of Social and emotional learning competencies. Social and emotional learning is a way for schools to create healthy environments for students and provide them with lifelong skills for successfully navigating life's challenges, including how to cope with suicidal ideation and self-harming behaviors. Schools will be able to use the data to inform curricular, instructional, and intervention needs.

Policy E-3 NĀ HOPENA A'O (HĀ) "is a framework of outcomes that reflects the Department of Education's core values and beliefs in action throughout the public educational system of Hawaii. The Department of Education works together as a system that includes everyone in the broader community to develop the competencies that strengthen a sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total well-being and Hawaii ("BREATH") in ourselves, students and others."

Additional Board of Education policies are utilized to ensure the statewide implementation of a comprehensive, culturally responsive and equitable system that promotes prevention, intervention and responsive services to address the social-emotional, mental, and physical well-being of all students.

Policy E-101 Whole Student Development: "Effective instruction, in caring and supportive learning environments, ensures that all students develop the skills to become creative, capable, compassionate, and responsible members of society. The Department shall provide an educational experience that develops students' social, emotional, intellectual, creative, and physical skills and talents. The Department shall support schools in ensuring that students are connected to their school and community to develop a love of learning and contribute to a vibrant civic life."

Policy 101-5 Guidance, Counseling and Related Services: "All Department of Education schools shall provide a program of guidance, counseling, and related services as necessary for the academic, personal, social, and career development of each student. The program shall meet the common needs of all students as well as the unique needs of special populations."

The Department's School Based Behavioral Health professionals provide direct targeted and intensive services to address a student's prolonged stress and mental health needs. School Based Behavioral Health staff are often key members of a school's Crisis Response team trained in Quality Behavior Solutions. Crisis teams are activated when any student is in imminent danger to self or others. The Crisis team assesses, responds and works to de-escalate the situation. If de-escalation strategies are not enough, the Hawaii CARES hotline is called when a student presents continued risk of suicide, self-harm or harm to others.

Policy 101-6 Comprehensive Student Support System: "The BOE understands the importance of providing effective instruction in a safe, positive, caring and supportive learning environment. ... The [Department] shall provide a comprehensive student support system framework to support the implementation, with fidelity of ... appropriate student support through an array of services."

Policy 101-6 provides a clear direction for schools to implement a culturally responsive Hawai'i Multi-Tiered System of Support framework that integrates social, emotional, behavioral and mental wellness into a whole child approach. The Hawaii Multi-Tiered System of Support framework includes a focus on universal supports, prevention and a positive school climate (Tier I), targeted supports for at-risk groups and individuals (Tier II), and specialized supports and procedures for students in crisis or high risk (Tier III) allowing for vulnerable populations to receive early and appropriate intervention and support.

These policies collectively provide the guidance to engage and guide Department stakeholders

through a data driven process to reduce problem behavior and risk factors for various behaviors, including ones closely related to suicide, such as depression, internalizing behaviors, and substance abuse.

Department employees are required to follow all State and Federal laws designed to protect vulnerable populations, prevent violence and bullying, and to proactively address suicide prevention and awareness.

State of Hawaii Department of Education Code of Conduct: “It is the policy of the Board of Education that all employees, contractors, and volunteers of the public school system, public library system, and Board of Education shall conduct themselves in an ethical manner and comply with federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and departmental policies, procedures, regulations, rules, and guidance to promote public trust and confidence in public education. The Board’s policy requires that all personnel strictly adhere to the Hawaii State Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics for public employees of the State as prescribed in Chapter 84 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The employee, contractor, or volunteer shall make all reports required under Hawaii Administrative Rules, Chapter 19, Student Misconduct (HAR §8-19) and any other federal or state laws or DOE policies or procedures which require mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect.”

Policy 305-10 Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying, and Anti-Discrimination Against Student(s) by Employee(s): BOE Policy 305-10 prohibits discrimination/harassment on the basis of sex, as well as a student's gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. This is the policy that is applied when the Civil Rights Compliance Branch conducts student/employee protected class investigations.

Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 8, Chapter 89, Civil Rights Policy and Complaint Procedure for Student(s) Complaints Against Adult(s) delineates the steps the Department is to take for resolving student complaints of discrimination and harassment on the basis of a protected class (NOTE: Chapter 89 only pertains to student v. employee situations). Protected classes covered under Chapter 89 include gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Under Chapter 89, immediate interventions (supports) may be provided to the student complainant, as appropriate.

§302A-856 Hawaii Revised Statutes, Youth suicide awareness and prevention protocol: “The department, in collaboration with the department of health, shall develop a mandatory youth suicide awareness and prevention training program and a model risk referral protocol for complex areas and charter schools based on the department of health's existing suicide awareness and prevention curriculum and materials, which shall be provided to teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and counselors.”

In the January 6, 2020, *Act 270 (2019), Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Protocol* memorandum, all schools were introduced to Act 270 (2019) and provided the following five Suicide Prevention curriculum options:

- Question, Persuade, and Refer
- SafeTALK
- Suicide Prevention Foundation 101
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention

As noted above, Tier II interventions include select strategies targeting (1) groups who may be at higher risk and (2) those experiencing stressful life events that may put them at elevated risk.

The Department recognizes that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth are often at higher risk for being the target of bullying and have higher rates of suicide than their peers.

Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 19 Subchapter 8 outlines the complaint procedure for bullying, harassment (sexual harassment), discrimination and retaliation. Immediate interventions and remedies are provided to either or both the complainant and respondent as deemed necessary. All complaints that fall under this subchapter are inputted into the Infinite Campus Behavior Management System.

The Department's *Guidance on Supports for Transgender Students* provides direction and instruction to schools regarding educational supports that may be provided for transgender students.

Recognizing each student has their own unique and personal circumstances which influence how they are impacted by risk factors, the Department is committed to enhancing student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention supports.

By ensuring all students have access to a continuum of interventions and that all schools are implementing a comprehensive and inclusive social-emotional, mental health program, the Department is able to identify and address a range of risk and protective factors for suicidal behavior.

In light of the Department's ongoing work and commitment to promote positive mental health, provide suicide awareness and prevention training aimed to ensure student safety, and to create caring environments, the Department respectfully suggests that this resolution is not necessary at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

March 13, 2021

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
And members of the Committee on Education

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 63/SR 45 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A MODEL STATEWIDE SCHOOL POLICY ON STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION IN GRADES K-12

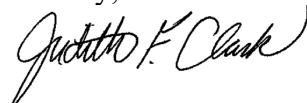
Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SCR 63/SR 45 Requesting the Department of Education to Convene a Working Group to Create a Model Statewide School Policy on Student Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention In Grades K-12.

According to the Youth Behavioral Risk Survey over the past 10 years, Hawaii's students have consistently had a rate of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts that is greater than the national average. In the Hawaii Street Youth Survey, 39.7% of homeless youth had suicidal thoughts. Among those who considered suicide, 58.3% had actually attempted suicide.

The stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on education and other stressors have increased mental health issues and may have increased suicide risks among our children and youth. We need a comprehensive suicide prevention and intervention plan now more than ever.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

SCR-63

Submitted on: 3/16/2021 2:20:56 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/17/2021 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Azuma Chrupalyk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Let it hereby be known that the root cause of addiction and suicide is disenfranchisement.