

***This issue of the Policy News Network+ (PNN+) addresses new requirements for Youth Suicide Prevention and Awareness.***

***Next month's issue of the PNN+ will include updates to the Assessment Policy.***

***Members of the PNN+ Service also received the following administrative regulations with this issue: 819-AR-0 Suicide Crisis Response Guidelines***

*The PNN is part of an annual subscription service providing information on current policy issues and newly developed and revised PSBA policy guides. The newsletter provides information about changes in federal and state laws and regulations; effects of court and arbitration decisions; and issues related to school governance, administration, student achievement and school liability. The policy guides provided by PSBA are intended to serve as a basis for drafting policy that meets the needs of your local school entity. Policy guides should be discussed, modified to meet your local needs and adopted by the Joint Operating Committee. Please send any newly adopted or revised policies to PSBA where we will review the language from a policy perspective, format and process the policy for your school entity.*

The policy guides provided by PSBA do not constitute the rendering of legal advice or services. The Joint Operating Committee is responsible for the final review and adoption of policies and for obtaining independent legal advice and review.

General policy questions: [policyprograms@psba.org](mailto:policyprograms@psba.org)  
Policy maintenance services: [polycymaintenance@psba.org](mailto:polycymaintenance@psba.org)  
Requests for sample policies: [polycysamples@psba.org](mailto:polycysamples@psba.org)

## **Policy 819. Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response – New Policy!**

*The PA Department of Education (PDE) is required to develop a model youth suicide awareness and prevention policy that may be adopted by your Joint Operating Committee. Exigent circumstances have delayed the issuance of PDE's model policy. PSBA recently forwarded the PSBA policy guide and administrative regulation to PDE for their information.*

*PSBA is issuing this policy guide and administrative regulation now because it is imperative for our policy members to have the necessary information to adopt the policy, review the resources and coordinate with experts in time for implementation by the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.*

Act 71 of 2014, codified as [Section 1526](#) of the Pennsylvania School Code, requires each school entity to adopt a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy, inform each school employee and the parent or legal guardian of each student of the policy, and post the policy on the school entity's website.

Specific policy requirements include:

- ✓ A statement on youth suicide awareness and prevention.
- ✓ Protocols for administering youth suicide awareness and prevention education to staff and students.

Please distribute to Joint Operating Committee members, administrators and school solicitor. Evaluate your needs and consult your school solicitor before adopting policy.

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- ✓ Methods of prevention, including procedures for early identification and referral of students at risk of suicide.
- ✓ Methods of intervention, including procedures that address an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.
- ✓ Methods of responding to a student or staff suicide or suicide attempt.
- ✓ Reporting procedures.
- ✓ Recommended resources on youth suicide awareness and prevention programs, including current contact information for those programs.

The recommended resources, compiled by the PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative (PAYSPI), are provided as an attachment to Policy 819. Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response. The attachment contains general information and useful websites, resources for a comprehensive school guide, policy recommendations, training for staff, materials for students and postvention assistance.

The policy also includes a section on Students With Disabilities to ensure that such students, identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, are assisted by the appropriate team and receive the necessary special education services and accommodations in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Joint Operating Committee policy.

Proper delegation of responsibility will assist in effective implementation of this policy and contribute to the safety, health and welfare of students and the school community. The policy includes a recommendation to designate an appropriate staff member to ensure effective planning and implementation of the policy and to serve as the point of contact. The policy refers to this designation as a Suicide Prevention Coordinator. The Suicide Prevention Coordinator can also assist with student re-entry and coordination to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.

If you have not done so already, please contact your community agencies and local experts to coordinate resources and establish an implementation process that meets the needs of your school entity.

*Policy 819 is required.*

### **Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response Webinar - May 13, 2015**

*Please join us during your lunch hour on May 13 for a PSBA Webinar on the topic of Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response. The Webinar will be a panel discussion using a question and answer format. Comprehensive perspectives will be provided from an esteemed panel including Legal Counsel, a Board Member, a Superintendent, and experts on the topic of suicide.*

*Please check the Daily Edition and PSBA's website for additional information on times and registration – coming soon!*