

## Northgate School District

Book	Policy Manual
Section	100 Programs
Title	Trauma-Informed Approach
Code	146.1 Vol III 2021
Status	First Reading

*2nd & final***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. Curriculum and planned instruction that embed social and emotional learning.[8][9]
3. Student services policies and programs that focus on development and support of students.[10][11][12][13][14][15]
4. Training that focus on building and maintaining appropriate, supportive relationships between adults and students in the school community.[16][17][18][19]
5. School wellness policy, instruction and practices that promote healthy behaviors.[20]
6. Policies and practices that promote student safety and security, and build positive relationships with law enforcement agencies.[21][22][23][24][25]
- 7. Threat assessment practices that focus on understanding a student's background in order to appropriately assess behavior and address the student's needs.[26]**
8. Review of the annual budget to ensure fiscal resources for training and programs related to the trauma-informed approach plan.[27]
9. 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]
10. 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 Superintendent, Director of Student Services, school psychologist, and guidance counselor 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 Guidance Counselor 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, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[16][33]
3. Opportunities for volunteers, parents/guardians and other community members to obtain resources or attend training or information sessions on trauma-related approach and trauma-related topics impacting the school community.[18][19][35]

#### **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).

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, and health 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]

resilience;

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

safe and healthy choices and behaviors;

coping strategies, and

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, and work environment that provides space for separation and self-regulation.

### Data Collection and Plan Review

The district shall review and revise the trauma-informed approach plan periodically, 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. Anecdotal information from staff and students related to trauma and secondary trauma impact in the school environment.
2. Results of school surveys.
3. Aggregate data on student absences, Student Assistance Program referrals, health and school nurse services, student removal discipline and/or graduation rates.
4. PBIS inventories and surveys.

This policy will serve as the district's written plan.

**PSBA Revision 6/21 © 2021 PSBA**

## 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
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