

Jason Flatt Guidance (SB 323)

The Legislature has passed and the Governor has signed SB 323 which is known as the Jason Flatt Youth Suicide Awareness Act. The provisions of this bill relevant to suicide awareness and prevention are:

- (A) This section shall be known and may be cited as the Jason Flatt act.
- (B) The board of education of each school district shall provide suicide awareness and prevention programming to all school staff and shall notify the parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in such school district that the training materials provided under such programming are available to such parents or legal guardians.

Such programming shall include, at a minimum:

(1) At least one hour of training each calendar year based on programs approved by the state board of education. Such training may be satisfied through independent self-review of suicide prevention training materials;

and

(2) a building crisis plan developed for each school building. Such plan shall include:

(a) Steps for recognizing suicide ideation;

(b) appropriate methods of interventions; and

(c) a crisis recovery plan.

(d) On or before January 1, 2017, the state board of education shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

Guidance

Between now and January 1, 2017 KSDE will be providing guidance relative to the implementation of SB 323 as well as adding resources to our KSDE School Counseling Resources web page (<http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/Content-Area-M-Z/School-Counseling/School-Counseling-Resources>). KSDE encourages districts to develop partnerships with local and regional mental health centers and educational service centers to provide **evidenced based** training materials and technical assistance in developing crisis plans that meet the statutory requirements. This is also true for districts who plan on utilizing evidence based “independent self-review of suicide materials” that is intended to satisfy the requirements of the statute. An example of this is the curriculum available through the Jason Flatt Foundation located at <http://jasonfoundation.com/get-involved/educator-youth-worker-coach/professional-development-series/>.

Districts are also reminded that suicide ideation is tier 3 on a school-based mental health continuum. It is recommended that part of the training addresses tier 1 and tier 2 issues that may lead to a tier 3 suicide ideation.

Resources

In order to get you started here are some relevant resources for youth suicide prevention:

Jason Flatt Foundation: <http://jasonfoundation.com/>

Jason Foundation: <http://jasonfoundation.com/>

Infinitec is working on a 60 minutes training.

Kansas Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.kansassuicideprevention.org/>

National Suicide Prevention Life Line: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

SAMHSA Suicide Prevention Page: <http://www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.sprc.org/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention- Kansas Chapter: <https://www.afsp.org/local-chapters/find-your-local-chapter/afsp-greater-kansas>

Kansas Suicide Hotlines: <http://www.suicide.org/hotlines/kansas-suicide-hotlines.html>

Center for Disease Control (Suicide): <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/>

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention: <http://yellowribbon.org/about/>

American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org/>

Headquarters Counseling Center: <http://www.headquarterscounselingcenter.org/>

Johnson County Suicide Prevention: <http://www.jocogov.org/dept/mental-health/suicide-prevention>

Sedgewick County Suicide

Prevention: http://www.sedgewickcounty.org/comcare/suicide_prevention.asp

Greater Kansas American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Facebook

Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AFSPGreaterKC/>

The Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition has a web site with modules that align with the Kansas Jason Flatt Act. Their link can be found at: <http://www.texasuicideprevention.org/training/video-training-lessons-guides/ask-about-suicide-ask/>

The Trevor Project (for LBGQTQ students) <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/?gclid=CK2-2aeGIs0CFZODaQod-zoOzg>

Kansas Adjutant General's Suicide Prevention Program (designed for the military): <http://www.kansastag.gov/NGUARD.asp?PageID=506>

Spring Hill USD Suicide Prevention

Page: http://www.usd230.org/shhs/studentsparents/student_safety/suicide_prevention/

Chisolm Trail (Olathe) Middle School Student Support

Services: <http://schools.olatheschools.com/buildings/chisolmtrail/parent-info/student-support/>

HelpGuide.org: <http://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.htm>

SafeSchools: www.safeschools.com

SafeSchools has two modules: 1) the Jason Flatt Act Training 2) an in-house training developed by Dr. Scott Poland.

Youth Suicide Warning Signs

- Talking about or making plans for suicide
- Expressing hopelessness about the future
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. Specifically, this includes significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situations
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability

How to Respond

If you notice any of these warning signs in anyone, you can help:

1. Ask if they are ok or if they are having thoughts of suicide
2. Express your concern about what you are observing in their behavior
3. Listen attentively and non-judgmentally
4. Reflect what they share and let them know they have been heard
5. Tell them they are not alone
6. Let them know there are treatments available that can help
7. If you are or they are concerned, guide them to additional professional help.

Source: youthsuicidewarnings.org

Family Engagement and Youth Suicide Prevention

- No one person (parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, mentor, etc.) can implement suicide prevention efforts on their own.
- Collaboration, support, and active involvement of families, schools, and communities are essential when developing a suicide awareness and prevention program.
- Researchers have found that students who believe their parents and teachers care about them personally as well as about their success within the school and community are less likely to commit suicide. (*Center for Disease Control and Prevention*)

What can schools do?

- Hold annual trainings with various stakeholders to educate students, parents, and staff about suicide awareness and prevention.
- Include school personnel's contact information in the School Handbook for families to contact concerning suicide awareness and prevention.
- Establish open two-way communication and a school culture where students feel they can freely share their thoughts and families can advocate for their children.
- Help students feel more connected by implementing multiple programs which allow for communication between home and school.
- Utilize the Individual Plan of Study at the middle school and high school levels to develop a plan for the future by understanding the significance of the present.
- Develop protocols for helping students who are at risk to attempt suicide or who have attempted suicide and steps that should be taken if a student commits suicide. These protocols should be known by teachers, staff, parents and students.
- **Include youth suicide information in student and parent handbooks, web pages, etc.**

What does research say about family engagement?

When families, schools and communities partner, students:

- earn higher grades and test scores;
- enroll in higher-level programs;
- are promoted;
- attend school regularly;
- have better social skills and adapt well to school;
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education;
- display more positive attitudes toward school;
- behave better both in and out of school;
- make better transitions from elementary to middle to high school;
- develop realistic plans for the future;
- less likely to drop out;
- from diverse cultural backgrounds do better when families and schools join forces to bridge the gap between home and school cultures. (*Beyond the Bake Sale*, Henderson & Mapp, 2007).

For additional information and/or professional development opportunities contact the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center:

<http://www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc>

Recovery Plans

SB 323 requires schools to include information relevant to crisis recovery plans in their crisis management plans. Here are some items that could be included in said recovery plan:

- Notifications/dissemination of information
- Continued crisis management
- Addressing memorialization
- Teaching coping skills (resiliency)
- Community involvement moving forward
- Media coverage and social media
- Crisis/counseling response teams
- Suicidal contagion/clustering
- Identifying other at-risk students
- Connecting to local mental health resources