

Your Question

You asked for information on policies on suicide prevention and response from other states.

Our Response

Suicide prevention and response

Below are state legislative examples plus a few resources. Most of the legislative examples and the resources I found focus on suicide prevention rather than school response to a suicide, although I did find one (highlighted below).

Legislation

Below are a few bills that states have passed over the past few years around suicide prevention efforts in schools. For a more comprehensive list of legislation passed in this area, see our state policy tracking page on [suicide prevention](#). (Hint: select the blue link “expand all summaries” just under the introductory paragraph to skim the summaries more easily.)

District of Columbia [L.B. 361](#) (2016) requires the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to 1) adopt a rule requiring all district teachers and principals in public and charter schools to undergo training on suicide prevention, intervention and post-intervention every two years and 2) develop and publish online written guidance to assist local education agencies in developing policies and procedures for handling various aspects of student mental and behavioral health.

Kansas [S.B. 323](#) (2016) enacts the Jason Flatt Act. The act requires the board of education of each school district to provide suicide awareness and prevention programming to all school staff. The programming must include at least one hour of training each calendar year based on programs approved by the Kansas State Board of Education, which could be satisfied through independent self-review of suicide prevention training materials and a building crisis plan developed for each school building, including steps for recognizing suicide ideation, appropriate methods of interventions and a crisis recovery plan.

Delaware [H.B. 90](#) (2015) requires all public school employees to receive 90 minutes of training each year on suicide prevention. In addition, public schools are required to establish a suicide prevention committee and local districts must create a suicide prevention policy.

Pennsylvania [H.B. 1559](#) (2014) requires school entities to adopt youth suicide awareness and prevention policies and education programs. Schools and districts may also develop a child exploitation awareness program for students in grades K-8. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, all teachers’ professional development plans must include four hours of training in youth suicide awareness and prevention. Teachers in grades 6-12 must receive this training every five years. In addition, the Department of Education must work with a youth suicide prevention organization in the state to:

1. Develop a model youth suicide awareness and prevention policy and post it on the Department’s website;

Additional data & links

- ✓ The [Suicide Prevention Resource Center’s](#) website has a section specifically addressing schools and their role in suicide prevention.
- ✓ [This 2014 report](#) from ECS is an overview of mental health legislation from 2013.

2. Develop a model youth suicide awareness and prevention curriculum and make the curriculum available to all school entities, including private schools;
3. Compile, develop and post on the Department's website recommended guidelines and educational materials for the professional development mentioned above, as well as recommended resources and age-appropriate educational materials on youth suicide awareness and prevention.

Nebraska [L.B. 923](#) (2014) requires all public school nurses, teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and administrators to receive at least one hour of training each year in suicide prevention. The training will be part of the existing in-service training framework or part of required professional development activities. The department will collaborate with expert organizations to develop a list of approved training materials.

Utah [H.B. 329](#) (2014) provides that the state board of education may distribute funds to a district or charter school to implement evidence-based suicide prevention practices and programs, and schools may select their own. The state board will distribute to schools at least \$500 per student in grades 7 and higher to implement these programs (actual amount subject to appropriation).

Existing law already required districts to offer a parent seminar on substance abuse, bullying, and suicide awareness (among other issues). This bill specifies that districts must also include suicide prevention in the seminar and districts must offer one seminar per year for every 11,000 students enrolled in the district.

Utah [H.B. 23](#) (2014) allows specific school staff or resource officers to intervene if they believe a student is at risk of suicide, self-harm, or harming others. The school staff may ask the students questions about their behavior to refer the student to prevention services and inform the student's parents. School districts and charter schools must develop policies for intervention measures, but policies must require the minimum intervention for school staff to direct the student to appropriate resources.

Other Resources

[Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention](#) (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention): While focused on the middle school and high school level, this is a helpful resource on understanding best practices in suicide prevention at the school level.

[Youth Suicide Prevention: Strengthening State Policies and School-Based Strategies](#) (NGA, 2005): This resource outlines strategies for suicide prevention at the school and state level, plus supports that policymakers can provide. Although it is somewhat dated, it provides a number of useful strategies plus a few state examples.

[Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

[After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#) (Suicide Prevention Resource Center)