



Superintendent's Report - Threat Assessment

I share the concerns and fears of students, parents, staff, and the community around school violence. The surge in shootings in schools in the last few years is unsettling to all of us. This year alone, counting the recent incident in Atlanta, Georgia, there have been 46 school based shootings. Of those, 13 were on college campuses, and 33 were in K-12 schools leaving 24 fatalities. The frequency of these events are tragic and alarming for all of us. Knowing the fears we share, I want to take a moment to explain what the district does specific to school-based threats to try to prevent a horrific incident from occurring here.

Overview

Beginning in 2021, all school districts in Pennsylvania were required to have a Threat Assessment Team. For ELSD, this is an 8 member team including school administrators, school nurse, social services, school resource officer, and myself. Threat Assessment is a nationally recognized and research-based strategy designed to IDENTIFY, GATHER, ASSESS, and MANAGE potentially dangerous or violent situations. A key goal is to distinguish between an individual who MAKES a threat versus one who POSES a threat. To learn more about what Threat Assessment is and looks like in schools, please follow these links to the US Secret Service Threat Assessment Center (<https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac>) or the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) (<https://www.pccd.pa.gov/schoolsafety/Pages/Threat-Assessment.aspx>)

Each member of the core Threat Assessment Team is required by the state to complete a 12 module course and then has additional annual training requirements all relating to threat assessment. Links to the required trainings are below if you are interested in learning more:

<https://pak12threatassessment.org/>

<https://pak12threatassessment.org/training/>

ELSD Threat Assessment Team

Although the team members are not confidential, we don't in practice publish their names routinely. The reason is if you or someone else has a concern we want you to Call 911, call your school main office directly, or for students, use the Safe2Say app. This is done to ensure concerns about potential threats are received and handled immediately. An email to an individual team member very well may go unnoticed for most of the school day. As of now, the current core team is:

- Dr. Mark Stamm, Superintendent and District Safety Coordinator
- Officer Andrew Boyer, SRO Hughesville PD
- Denise Gorini and Lauren Farley, School Outreach Counselors - Lycoming County
- April Paulhamus, Director of Special Education
- Cori Cotner, Director of Curriculum
- Carolyn Easton, School Nurse
- School Psychologist (vacant)

The team expands to include building principals and school counselors specific to the student who is referred or who's case is being managed by the team.



Communication

At least annually, the district communicates the purpose, function, and people on the Threat Assessment Team. You may recall seeing this flier come home last summer. A new flier is currently in production and should be mailed to homes in the next few weeks. This year we are also including periodic notices on social media to try and expand community-wide awareness.

Reporting

In a 2023 report, the National Institute on Threat Assessment highlighted the importance of By-Stander Reporting stating that accessible and safe reporting is critical to creating a safe and secure environment. For students, the best way to do this is by immediately telling a trusted adult, calling 911, or using the Safe2Say App. For adults and the community at large, call 911, or call the school or district office directly. To prevent any delay, please do not use email.

Bystander Reporting

https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-05/cisa-ussc-k-12-bystander-reporting-toolkit-508_final_0.pdf

Case Management

When a case is referred to the team, we use a collaborative approach to work through the PCCD Threat Assessment Case Management Form (linked below). The form is a detailed flow chart to guide team deliberations, information collection, interviews, and notifications. Active cases require intensive data collection, monitoring, and discussions. When handling a case, even if not determined to present an immediate or credible threat, the team will meet 2-3 times a week to ensure the student is monitored and appropriately supported.

<https://www.pccd.pa.gov/schoolsafety/Pages/Act-18-Resources-for-PA-School-Entities.aspx>

Select "Threat Assessment Case Management Form"

At no point is any one administrator, myself included, making independent decisions. We work as a team to ensure all avenues are considered and explored to ensure we protect and help students. Sometimes discipline is appropriate as is counseling and other family based supportive measures.

I hope that this report provides you with a better understanding of how the district strives to ensure our schools and students are safe and how you can help be part of the solution through awareness and reporting.

Dr. Mark Stamm

Superintendent