MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
Charter School Leaders

FROM: Scott R. Strauss, Vice Chancellor
Office of Safe Schools

DATE: June 9, 2023

SUBJECT: Florida’s New Threat Management Standard Operational Process

On April 3, 2023, Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill (HB) 543 into law, and further bolstered safety and security in Florida’s K-12 schools. Included in HB 543, the legislature required the Department’s Office of Safe Schools (OSS) to create a Florida-specific uniform threat management process to aid public schools in identifying, assessing, managing, and monitoring potential and real threats.

Tasked with this responsibility and with the goal of creating a robust process to manage threats that is practical, streamlined, and effective, OSS collaborated with teachers, administrators, mental health experts, and law enforcement officers throughout the state. We are pleased to inform you that this process is near its completion.

It is imperative that every district is prepared to implement Florida’s threat management process by January 2024. To ensure a smooth transition for all districts and schools (public and charter), OSS strongly encourages you to start planning now and be mindful of the important dates associated with this transition.

• By July 1, 2023, each school district school superintendent, or lead administrator, if there is no superintendent, must report the name, phone number, and email address of the District Threat Management Coordinator (DTMC) to OSS at SafeSchools@fldoe.org. Districts must update OSS within one school day if there is a change in the information provided. This requirement originated with Emergency Rule 6AER23-02, which was approved by the State Board of Education on May 24, 2023.

• OSS will provide in-person training for your DTMC on July 19-20 and on July 26-27, 2023, in Orlando, Florida. OSS will provide details on this training soon.

Scott R. Strauss
Vice Chancellor for the Office of Safe Schools
• By August 1, 2023, OSS strongly encourages every superintendent or designee to appoint their District Threat Management Team (DTMT), which must include the DTMC, staff from the school district administration, law enforcement, people with expertise in counseling, and people with school instruction experience.

Similarly, OSS strongly encourages every school principal to appoint their School-Based Threat Management Team (SBTMT). At minimum, the SBTMT must comprise of four members at each school to include a school administrator (other than the principal), someone with expertise in counseling, someone with expertise in school instruction, and a sworn law enforcement officer. Of those required four members, the school principal must appoint a chair and vice-chair. If a school exclusively uses Guardians and does not have a School Resource Officer or other law enforcement officer assigned to the campus, the school must coordinate with a law enforcement agency to assign an officer to the SBTMT. Calling a patrol officer to serve ad hoc on a SBTMT is not permitted.

Please note that Guardians, including armed school security officers do not meet the statutory requirements of a law enforcement officer, but they may advise the SBTMT given their roles on campus, personal knowledge of the student, and assessment of whether the student’s actions warrant concern.

• By December 15, 2023, OSS strongly encourages all DTMT and SBTMT members to complete their training on Florida’s Threat Management instrument and process. OSS will provide additional details on training opportunities as they are finalized.

• By January 1, 2024, OSS strongly encourages every district and school to be prepared to begin implementing the Florida-specific threat management instrument and process.

We will be sharing more information on the Florida-specific threat management process as it becomes available, and we look forward to working together with you in this process. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns that you may have.

These changes, once again, reinforce Florida’s commitment to providing a superior education, while ensuring that educators and students learn in a safe and secure environment.

Thank you,

Scott R. Strauss
Vice Chancellor