

LEGISLATIVE RESOURCE SHEET | 2019 SESSION

Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association

ISSUE/LEGISLATION:

K-12 SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENTS

The MCPA supports legislation requiring school districts to establish a team of subject matter experts to examine and address school safety issues and specific threats to the students, staff and community. This legislation would move our state beyond physical school safety measures, such as infrastructure improvement grants, passed by the Legislature in 2018.

PROPOSAL STATUS

MCPA will actively support this proposal as part of its 2019 Legislative Agenda

- Bills have been introduced House as ([HF 566](#)) and Senate ([SF 177](#))
- A Senate hearing featured a lot of questions from members regarding the specifics of how these teams would be set up, what student data would be collected, how they would show safety results, how the reporting of any threat would work. The bill was ultimately passed with no recommendation to the Judiciary committee.

MCPA LETTER OF SUPPORT

Every year in Minnesota, we see hundreds of acts of youth violence in our schools. In the vast majority of these cases, the students display warning signs prior to the violent act. Following tragedies such as those at Sandy Hook Elementary School and Parkland High School, many schools have developed safety plans, practiced lockdown drills and made changes to the physical environment of their buildings to promote the safety of students and staff.

However, one area that still needs to be addressed is in detecting and preventing these acts of violence through behavioral threat or safety assessments. Such assessments are systematic, fact-based methods of investigation and examination that blends the collection and analysis of multiple sources of information with published research and practitioner experience. Threat assessments focus on an individual's patterns of thinking and behavior to determine whether, and to what extent, a person of concern is moving toward an attack.

Threat or Safety Assessment has been established as a best practice by the Department of Education, Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Association of School Psychologists

for mitigating risk of targeted violence in schools and can be used to promote a sense of psychological safety for students, staff and parents.

Senate File 177 would require that every school in the state of Minnesota create and maintain a threat assessment team. The schools would be mandated to create a process to assess, oversee and intervene with individuals who pose harm to students and staff.

Many Minnesota communities already have strong partnerships between school districts, law enforcement and social services and are working on threat assessments today. Many train together, receive joint grant funding and have developed detailed plans specific to their communities. All would benefit from the support of formal oversight and additional opportunities to partner with other school districts and communities involved in similar work.

BACKGROUND

Section 1. School Safety Assessment. Requires a school board to establish a school safety assessment team and to conduct school safety assessments.

Subd. 1. School Safety Assessment. Provides a definition for school safety assessments.

Subd. 2. Policy. Requires a school board to adopt a safety assessment policy and establish a safety assessment team, consistent with the school board's crisis management policy and guidance provided by the School Safety Center. Outlines requirements the school board must incorporate into the safety assessment policy.

Subd. 3. Oversight. Requires a district superintendent to task a committee or individual with oversight of the safety assessment team. Clarifies an existing school board committee may provide oversight.

Subd. 4. Safety Assessment Teams. Provides that members of a safety assessment team include, to the extent practicable, school officials with expertise in counseling, school administration, students with disabilities, and law enforcement. Clarifies that a safety assessment team may serve more than one school. Outlines the responsibilities of the safety assessment team which include providing guidance to staff and students on identifying and reporting threats, determining when a student poses a threat, implementing the school board's safety assessment policy, and reporting summary data on the team's activities. Provides procedures for a safety assessment team to follow upon determining a student poses a safety threat to self or others. Clarifies that the section does not prevent a district official or employee from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.

Subd. 5. Redisclosure. Prohibits a safety assessment team member from redisclosing any of an individual's records that were disclosed to the safety assessment team. Allows records to be disclosed for purposes of health, mental health, and safety emergencies in compliance with state and federal law