



Pennsylvania
**Commission on Crime
and Delinquency**

SCHOOL SAFETY &
SECURITY COMMITTEE

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria - Leveled

Revised 2025

Introduction

The School Safety and Security Committee within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) is responsible for developing and regularly reviewing school safety and behavioral health-related assessment criteria, including criteria for assessment of student assistance, behavioral health, and school climate within a school entity.

Section 1303-B of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (PA Public School Code) requires the development of assessment criteria in the areas of student assistance, behavioral health support, and school climate to assess a school entity's safety and security. This assessment must provide an analysis of the school entity's climate, including the availability of Student Assistance Programs and behavioral health professionals and services to provide assistance to the school entity. Additionally, the PA Public School Code requires a review of recommendations by behavioral and physical health professionals and consideration of their recommendations.

For purposes of this guide, the student assistance and behavioral health assessment criteria are meant to be utilized by individuals at the school entity or outside assessors to evaluate and make recommendations regarding improving behavioral health support and school climate. The qualifications of a person with the expertise to conduct school safety and security assessments with respect to this criterion differ greatly from the qualifications of a person who can assess the physical safety of a school. As such, it is recommended that school entities visit PCCD's Provider Registry webpage to review the behavioral health assessor registration criteria and identify qualified assessors.

Note: Section 1303-B of the PA Public School Code requires the development of assessment criteria in the areas of policy and training to evaluate a school entity's policies/procedures and practices and their impact on the school entity's safety and security. The assessment criteria for policies/procedures and training **related to student assistance, behavioral health, and school climate** have been incorporated into these criteria, in the appropriate sections, to meet the requirements of the law and to streamline the assessment process.

The term "policy/procedure" in these criteria is used as a general term denoting written documentation and could include a board-approved policy, internal procedure or administrative regulation, or plan, based on requirements of law and regulations and the advice of legal counsel.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

These student assistance, behavioral health, and school climate criteria have been aligned with the Revised [Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria](#) established by PCCD's School Safety and Security Committee under [Section 1302.1-B](#) of the PA Public School Code and in accordance with the School Safety and Security grant program.

The Committee recognizes that every school is unique. Each school entity will have its own set of priorities, resources, and building characteristics that will determine which, if any, of these options for consideration may be applicable. Levels have been applied to each of the statements to align with the School Safety and Security Committee's adopted Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria. These levels, Level 1, 2, and 3 (L1, L2, L3), organize information on the types of services and programs that may occur in each school. Level 1 represents the baseline, what would be considered the most basic level of services to be met, with Levels 2 and 3 being considered additional services that build upon and strengthen the foundations of student assistance, mental and behavioral health, and school climate. Assessors should consider each Level when reviewing a school entity or school building's programs and services.

Throughout the document, helpful notes and links to additional information have been added. Assessors should review these notes and links as part of the assessment process. Each of the criteria items have been numbered consecutively throughout the entire document for reference purposes. These reference numbers do not indicate an order of priority; they are provided solely for ease of reference by staff or assessors completing an assessment.

All assessors **must consider** each of the criteria below when conducting a school safety and security assessment for student assistance and behavioral health support. The assessor's resulting report should provide an analysis based on the criteria that will assist the school entity in prioritizing projects and decision-making regarding student assistance, behavioral health support, and school climate. [Section 1303-B](#) of the PA Public School Code requires that the assessment of the policy and training criteria consist of an evaluation of the school entity's policies/procedures and practices and requires discussions with the school entity's employees.

For the purposes of PCCD's School Safety and Security Grant Program funding, school entities may address gaps identified as part of a recent student assistance, behavioral health, and school climate assessment conducted by an individual recognized to perform such assessments on the [PCCD approved School Safety and Security Assessor Registry](#) as a Level 1 Baseline Criteria item for the purposes of their grant funding application.

The following criteria can be used by assessors to complete the assessment. This document is designed for use by internal school staff assessors, and there is a checkbox provided that can be marked to designate criteria fulfillment. External, approved assessors should use and modify these criteria as part of their official assessment but should include specific notes, instructions, and recommendations for the school entity as part of their comprehensive assessment.

School Entity Name: _____

Building Being Assessed: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

As defined in 22 Pa. Code §12.16, Pennsylvania’s Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to assist school personnel in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD) and behavioral/mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student’s success. Pennsylvania requires public school entities to have SAP programs, in accordance with 22 Pa. Code §12.42.

This criterion represents best practice guidelines for teams to consider, and aligns with existing information provided in key SAP documents (i.e., SAP Guidelines for Teams, SAP Best Practices by Phase, and SAP FAQ and Best Practice Responses), which should be familiar to school entities. While SAP team composition, roles, and functions vary across schools throughout the Commonwealth, these existing SAP documents were developed by the Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS) to highlight minimum expectations and best practices for teams to work toward.

PNSAS Regional Coordinators are available to assist SAP teams with these assessments and provide technical assistance to support schools in meeting the criteria outlined below. Additional resources and information about SAP in Pennsylvania are available at www.pnsas.org.

SAP Considerations

General School Processes		
✓	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	1. School entity provides a Student Assistance Program (SAP) in accordance with <u>Section 1547</u> of the PA Public School Code.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	2. School entity has a process in place for coordination of services and referrals as part of SAP.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	3. All K-12 students, including students in special education and specialized programs, have access to the services of a SAP team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. Students in grade levels K-6 have access to the services of a SAP team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. Students in grade levels 7-12 have access to the services of a SAP team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	4. School entity has policy and/or procedures for implementation of SAP process.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	5. School entity's SAP teams work closely with their SAP liaison agency (e.g., Single County Authority for drug and alcohol (SCA), behavioral health agency, or other designated provider), and/or coordinate with community providers of behavioral health services and other child-serving agencies to assist students in removing barriers to their education.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	6. SAP team members are trained to coordinate with other school-based processes, procedures, and/or policies to address the needs of students (e.g., <u>threat assessment team</u> , <u>Safe2Say</u> , <u>Act 71 suicide prevention</u> , <u>Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</u> , <u>Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII)</u> , <u>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)</u> , <u>bullying prevention</u> , etc.). <i>Note: Assessor should identify which of these processes, procedures, and programs are present in the school and how SAP teams are trained locally by administration to coordinate.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	7. School entity administrators and SAP team members can identify their <u>Regional Coordinator</u> and engage them as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	8. School entity regularly evaluates its SAP process in consultation with key internal and external stakeholders (including parents/families, students, etc.) to identify any gaps or areas for improvement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	9. School entity annually identifies all in-school and community-based supports available to the SAP team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	10. School entity has a process in place to identify potential barriers to a student accessing services (lack of insurance, cost for services, transportation, etc.) and develop professional relationships in the community to address them.

Team Processes

✓	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	11. Each SAP team consists of at least four members. The size of each team is sufficient to effectively handle the caseload.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	12. SAP team members include representatives from any or all of the following groups: administrator, teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school nurse, or other related professional staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. A building level administrator with SAP training serves as an essential member of the SAP team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	b. A central office administrator with SAP training serves as an ad-hoc member of the SAP team to ensure that the SAP teams are operational.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	13. The SAP team meets at least once per week/cycle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. The amount of time allocated for SAP teams is sufficient to discuss new and ongoing referrals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	14. SAP Teams include representative liaisons from county/community provider drug and alcohol and behavioral/mental health services as standing members.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	15. Team maintenance meeting(s) are held during the school year to evaluate and address team functioning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	16. The SAP team coordinates with the school entity's threat assessment team to provide follow-up and support in the threat assessment process.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	17. The School Safety and Security Coordinator understands the SAP process in the school entity and attends SAP meetings when necessary.
Community Services Collaboration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	18. The school entity has a written and signed cooperative agreement, a memorandum of understanding (MOU), or a letter of agreement with each service provider system, SCA, county behavioral/mental health, and county ATOD agencies. <i>Note: Assessor should review these documents.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. These agreement documents outline each party's respective roles, responsibilities, referral processes, services, and expectations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. These agreement documents contain details regarding the release and sharing of information between the entities involved, in accordance with applicable law and school policies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	c. There is a process in place for resolving conflicts between the school entity and service providers' agencies outlined in the MOU or agreement. <i>Note: The PNSAS Regional Coordinator may also assist with conflict resolution.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	19. The cooperative agreement, MOU, or letter of agreement with each service provider is reviewed and updated annually.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	20. The SAP team works with the SAP liaison agency (e.g. SCA , county behavioral/ mental health agency, and private providers) and/or coordinates with community providers of behavioral health services and other child-serving agencies to provide updates to school staff on trends in ATOD use, signs and symptoms, and prevention education.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	21. If the parent/guardian provides consent, recommended supports are provided for students who receive services from any school and/or community child-serving agency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	22. SAP teams assist referred students who are transitioning between educational placement settings (e.g., alternative education for disruptive youth (AEDY), residential treatment facilities, youth detention centers, behavioral health placement settings, etc.).
Training and Professional Development		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	23. All members of the SAP team have successfully completed the Pennsylvania SAP K-12 training provided by a Pennsylvania Approved SAP Training Provider. <i>Note: Copies of the team members' training certificates should be reviewed by the assessor.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	24. SAP members receive periodic training updates, informational sessions, and other related in-service trainings in order to stay current on issues pertaining to SAP.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	25. The School Safety and Security Coordinator has received SAP training.
SAP Process		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	26. The process for initiating SAP services and the steps in the SAP referral process are published and made available to school staff, board members, students, parents/guardians, and the school community. <i>Note: See <u>SAP Best Practices by Phase</u>.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	27. Confidentiality guidelines for the SAP process are clearly communicated in all SAP policies, procedures, and materials.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	28. The school entity requires informed, written parent/guardian consent for SAP services, and parents/guardians are invited to be an integral part of the SAP process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	29. Parents/Guardians are notified that participation in SAP services are voluntary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	30. When the SAP team has been unable to obtain parental consent for referred students to begin the SAP process, schools take and document additional steps to engage families in order to identify and address potential barriers (e.g., logistical concerns, student attendance improvement plan, lack of information, transportation concerns, distrust, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	31. The SAP team uses multiple sources of data (e.g., behavior checklists, school data, parent/guardian conversations, student conversations, etc.) to determine appropriate school and/or community resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	32. If a screening/assessment is recommended, the SAP Team coordinates to ensure a separate, written parental consent prior to the screening/assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	33. The SAP team identifies and recommends implementation of appropriate school-based interventions and/or supports for all student referrals, especially for students with repeat referrals and referred students whose parents/guardians decline consent for the SAP process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	34. The SAP team develops an action plan and monitors progress towards goals by checking in with the student, family, and referral resource at established checkpoints.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	35. The SAP team closes all cases at the end of the school year and re-refers students at the beginning of the next school year, as appropriate.

Data and Reporting

✓	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	36. The school entity annually submits non-identified referral data to the PA Department of Education (PDE) Online Reporting System (PDE 4092).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	37. Aggregate SAP referral data is provided to the school board as part of the School Safety and Security Coordinator’s annual board report.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	38. SAP teams review their annual data to analyze trends, improve procedures, and identify gaps in services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	39. The effectiveness of the SAP team process is measured through anonymous student surveys or parental feedback. <i>Note: The <u>SAP Satisfaction Survey</u> is a sample tool available that may be completed by staff, parents/guardians, and students. (See https://pnsas.org/Teams for links to additional tools for SAP team members to monitor and assess their functioning.)</i>

Additional Resources

- [PNSAS SAP Fidelity Checklist, Satisfaction Survey, Implementation Checklist](#)
- [PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs \(DDAP\) Prevention Resources](#)

Behavioral Health Services

This criterion represents best practice standards for assessing the availability of behavioral health services in the school. These best practices are drawn from research and established guidelines from national organizations focused on school-based behavioral health, and they are aligned with existing state and federal law. Within this guide, the term behavioral health encompasses mental health and wellness, as well as substance use.

Approximately half of all mental illnesses have an onset during or prior to adolescence, and there is a well-established relationship between students’ behavioral health and their academic, social, and emotional outcomes. Schools have an essential role in the prevention, early identification, and intervention of student behavioral health concerns.

School-based behavioral health approaches should incorporate prevention strategies to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors among all students, provide mechanisms by which to identify at-risk students, and support those students with known behavioral health concerns. While MTSS and PBIS are mentioned where applicable, it is recognized that not all schools may be fully utilizing such frameworks for all of their students. Regardless of specific programming, school-based behavioral health efforts should be both comprehensive and multifaceted and must be integrated with other aligning school-based initiatives (e.g., SAP, school climate improvement).

Behavioral Health Considerations

Behavioral Health Personnel/Providers and School Processes		
✓	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	40. School entity has met statutory requirements related to the provision of certified school nursing services (see Section 1402 of the PA Public School Code). <i>Note: Assessors should inquire about what nursing services are provided at the building(s) being assessed and the qualifications of individuals providing services.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	41. School entity has a school counseling program in place to ensure all students have access to qualified services, when needed (see 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 , Chapter 12: Section 12.41 , and Chapter 339). <i>Note: Assessors should review the student services plan components related to the school counseling program and the qualifications of individuals providing services.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	42. School entity has a student services plan in place that includes access to a qualified school psychologist. <i>Note: Assessors should review the student services plan components related to school psychologist(s) and the qualifications of individual(s) providing services.</i>

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	43. School entity has a student services plan in place that includes access to qualified social work services. <i>Note: Assessors should review the student services plan components related to social work services and the qualifications of individuals providing services.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	44. School entity provides age-appropriate prevention education for students aligned with state and federal requirements (e.g., <u>youth suicide awareness and prevention</u> , <u>opioid misuse prevention</u> , <u>threat assessment</u> , etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	45. School entity has adopted universal programs or strategies (e.g. Tier 1 MTSS) to educate students on behavioral health issues and support general mental wellness, including as part of the formal curriculum (e.g., in health, career classes, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. School entity offers age-appropriate programming on behavioral health, mental wellness and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) that are evidence-based and/or in alignment with established best practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	46. School entity has school nursing services provided by a qualified individual consistently available for all students (e.g., a school nurse is present in school buildings on a regular basis to address health needs of students in that building).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	47. Dedicated school counseling services are placed in each school building to address and support students' developmental needs and growth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	48. School entity has at least one full-time/dedicated school psychologist employed/contracted to provide academic, behavioral, and mental health support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	49. School entity has at least one full-time/dedicated licensed social worker, licensed clinical social worker, and/or certified school social worker employed/contracted to provide both macro-level support and direct services to students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	50. School entity has processes in place to identify potential barriers to a student accessing behavioral health services (lack of insurance, cost for services, transportation, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	51. School entity provides prevention education at all school levels (e.g., character education, resiliency building, equity), and aligned with school climate work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. School entity provides prevention education through assemblies or large group instruction using evidence-based/informed programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	b. School entity provides prevention education in the classroom, through curriculum infusion, using evidence-based/informed programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	52. Each school building has a full-time school nurse (<i>see American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement on the Role of the School Nurse in Providing School Health Services, July 2023</i>).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	a. The school entity's school nurse to student ratio does not exceed 1:750 regular education student population, 1:225 for mixed regular and special education student population, and 1:125 for students with severe or profound disabilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	53. School entity has a school counselor for every 250 students (<i>see American School Counselor Association – School Counselor Roles and Ratios</i>).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	54. School entity has a full-time/dedicated school psychologist assigned for every 500 students (<i>see National Association of School Psychologists – 2020 Professional Standards Adopted</i>).

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	55. School entity has a full-time, certified school social worker for every 250 students (or less for students with more intensive needs) (<i>see School Social Work Association of America – <u>National School Social Work Model</u></i>).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	56. The school measures its programs and works to effectively integrate the components of the <u>PA Quality Indicators of Emotional Support Services and Programs</u> as applicable to the needs of students, including those with emotional support needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	57. School entity has mechanisms to track impact of SEL and other prevention programs (e.g., reductions in school discipline incidents, attendance improvement, <u>PA Youth Survey (PAYS)</u> data, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	58. School entity has processes in place to monitor student outcomes for the intervention(s) implemented.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	59. School entity has resources (funding) available to provide behavioral health services. <i>Note: Assessor should review what funding is available for this purpose.</i>
Trauma-Informed Approach		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	60. School entity has a policy/procedure and/or a plan in place for trauma-informed approaches to education.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	61. School entity has policies/procedures on how to respond in the aftermath of a traumatic event, including communication and the presence of a crisis response team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	62. As required in <u>Section 328</u> of the PA Public School Code, new school directors completed five hours of training within their first year, including instruction and academic programs with one hour on best practices related to trauma-informed approaches; personnel; fiscal management; operations; governance; and ethics and open meetings. <i>Note: Assessor should request to see copies of training certificates or documentation of completion.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	63. As required in <u>Section 328</u> of the PA Public School Code, re-elected/re-appointed school directors completed three hours of advanced training within one year of their renewed term, including information on relevant changes to federal and state public school law and regulations, fiscal management, trauma-informed approaches, and other information deemed appropriate by PDE. <i>Note: Assessor should request to see copies of training certificates or documentation of completion.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	64. As required in <u>Section 1205.1</u> of the PA Public School Code, the school entity's professional education plan includes a minimum of one hour of required training in trauma-informed approaches. <i>Note: Assessor should request to see this section of the professional education plan or documentation of staff completion of training.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	65. School entity has a trauma-informed approach plan developed for each school level (elementary, middle, high), including training and implementation procedures of the plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	66. School entity has a trauma-informed approach plan developed and adopted school entity-wide that addresses each school level.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	67. School entity's trauma-informed approaches responsive to the adopted plan have been implemented and monitored for impact, ongoing needs, etc.
Student Services and Community Collaboration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	68. School entity has a written plan for the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated K-12 program of student services based on the needs of its students (see 22 Pa. Code Section 12.41). The plan includes the following:
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. Developmental services addressing students' developmental needs throughout their enrollment, including counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services, and social work services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. Diagnostic services to identify barriers and intervention and referral services to mitigate barriers for students who are experiencing problems attaining educational achievement appropriate to their learning potential.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	c. Consultation and coordination services for students who are experiencing chronic problems that require multiple services by teams or specialists.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	69. Information on available services, both in the school and in the community, is accessible in multiple languages by parents/guardians and school personnel.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	70. The school entity coordinates to ensure informed, written parental consent is provided for community-based behavioral health services, and parents/guardians are invited to be an integral part of the process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	71. Group or individual interventions (e.g., strategic and intensive, Tier 2/Tier 3 MTSS) are available for students identified as at-risk for behavioral health concerns or with identified areas of need. This includes mechanisms for linkages with community-based resources. <i>Note: Assessor should identify what is available, including supports for students affected by trauma.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	72. School utilizes the proper releases and referral forms to enable students to access agency services and complies with confidentiality laws and guidelines. <i>Note: Assessor should review release and referral forms.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	73. Schools have conducted a "resource mapping" process to determine what services, supports, and interventions are available and what may be needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	74. School staff utilize a referral flowchart to guide where students can be referred based on their needs or situation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	75. Schools have developed professional relationships with providers and other resources in the community to mitigate barriers to a student accessing services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	76. School entity has a cooperative agreement, MOU, or formal letter of agreement in place between providers and the schools to provide students with access to needed mental/behavioral health services that are available in the community. <i>Note: Assessor should review this agreement; these agreements may overlap with SAP programming.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. The agreement delineates the provision of services and the level of responsibilities of the entities involved.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	b. The agreement provides information regarding the level of ongoing communication and sharing of information between the entities involved, in accordance with applicable law and school policies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	c. The cooperative agreement, MOU, or letter of agreement with each service provider is reviewed and updated annually.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	77. Students 14 years and older seeking community mental/behavioral health services whose parents/guardians are not in agreement should be provided with information related to applicable laws and community services.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	78. School entity has a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy/procedure, as required by <u>Section 1526</u> of the PA Public School Code (Act 71 of 2014).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. The policy/procedure includes protocols for administering youth suicide awareness and prevention education to employees.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. School entity provides at least four hours of training in youth suicide awareness and prevention every five years for professional educators in buildings serving students in grades 6-12, in accordance with <u>Section 1526</u> of the PA Public School Code.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	c. The policy/procedure includes protocols for administering age-appropriate youth suicide awareness and prevention education to students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	d. School entity employees and the parents/guardians of all enrolled students have been informed of this policy/procedure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	e. The policy/procedure is publicly posted on the school entity's website.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	f. School entity has designated a suicide prevention coordinator(s), crisis response/intervention team, and/or methods for prevention, intervention, and response/postvention.

Training and Professional Development

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	79. School mental health professionals, administrators, and/or SAP team members are provided with opportunities for targeted training to support students at risk or with identified behavioral health concerns through school-based interventions and supports, as well as on crisis response and trauma-informed approaches to education.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	80. All school entity employees who work directly with student information receive training in appropriate handling of confidential student information and student records, in accordance with law and school policy/procedure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. The training addresses how to balance potential safety concerns with student confidentiality and privacy.

Data and Reporting

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	81. School entity uses multiple sources of data to identify the needs of students and the school community (e.g., universal screening, analysis of attendance, office disciplinary referrals, school climate, school nurse visits, PAYS data, etc.).

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	82. School entity has mechanisms to track impact of SEL and other prevention programs (e.g., reductions in school discipline incidents, attendance improvement, PAYS data, etc.).
--------------------------	----	---

Additional Resources

- [PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency Model Trauma-Informed Approach Plan](#)
- [PA Department of Education \(PDE\) Trauma Resources](#)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
- [PDE Self-Care Resources for Educators](#)
- [PDE Mental Health Resources for Schools](#)
- [Youth Suicide Warning Signs](#)
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: **Call 988** or visit [988 Lifeline](#)
- Crisis Text Line: **TEXT HOME to 741-741** or [Crisis Text Line for Mental Health Support](#)
- [The Trevor Project Lifeline](#) for LGBTQ+ Youth: call **1-866-488-7386** or text **678-678**
- [Prevent Suicide PA](#)
- [Services for Teens at Risk \(STAR-Center\)](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#)
- [PA Department of Human Services: Suicide Prevention](#)
- [PA Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan](#)

School Climate

This criterion represents best practice standards in school climate and related areas, documented in research, and reflected in state and federal resources and the PDE school climate improvement process.

School climate is multi-faceted and reflects the school community's norms, goals, and values. It is based on students', parents'/guardians', and school staff's perceptions of school life. Research has found that a negative school climate is associated with higher rates of school violence and disorder. A positive school climate is recognized as a protective factor supporting positive youth development.

School climate improvement strategies should be led by building level teams empowered to engage the broader school community in identifying needs and implementing improvement strategies. Climate assessments should involve multiple data sources and include, at minimum, surveys of students' and other stakeholders' perceptions of the school climate. Quality climate

assessments are psychometrically sound and include multiple domains informed by research, such as: safety, school connectedness, positive relationships, engagement, social-emotional learning, and student supports.

School Climate Considerations

General Survey and Data Guidelines		
✓	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	83. School entity conducts a survey that includes or addresses school climate-related questions at least every two years.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. The selected survey is age and population appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. The selected survey is psychometrically sound.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	84. The survey collects information on stakeholders' perceptions of the school climate across multiple domains which tap into quality of students' relationships at school, social-emotional learning, student supports, teaching practices, and safety.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	85. The survey collects data from multiple stakeholder groups (e.g., students, teachers/staff, parents/guardians).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	86. The survey collects information about the shared values, unwritten norms, traditions, and expectations in the school. <i>Note: Assessor may make recommendations that this be addressed through another method if it is not collected via the survey (e.g., a building-wide audit, focus group, other survey questions).</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	87. School entity reviews SAP survey data and its relationship to other behavioral and climate-related data in planning MTSS supports, as well as the school community's perceptions of SAP.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	88. School entity has a team in place to review climate-related data and develop an improvement plan that addresses training, systems, and practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	a. The team includes representatives of stakeholders in the school community, including administrators, teachers, school-based professionals, parents/guardians, students, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	89. Data is able to be disaggregated (to the extent that individual student level data cannot be identified) to look at various sub-populations of students, allowing examination of disproportionality in school climate experiences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. Data disaggregation includes grade level, race, gender, ethnicity, and English Learner status (i.e., to the extent that individual student level data cannot be identified).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	b. Data disaggregation provides information on special populations (i.e., to the extent that individual student level data cannot be identified).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	90. School entity implements specific recommendations from school climate-related data to address student conduct, build skills, and foster positive relationships among students.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	a. School entity utilizes information available from other existing reports (e.g., federal Civil Rights Data Collection, etc.) in review and implementation of school climate data.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	91. The survey includes questions about how youth/families perceive accessing services and the potential barriers they face around perceived stigma, confidentiality, accessibility (e.g., schedules, transportation), etc.
General School Policies, Procedures and Processes		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	92. School entity has policies/procedures regarding controlled substances, alcohol, and tobacco/vaping use.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	93. School entity has policies/procedures in place that comply with state and federal civil rights requirements to respond to discrimination and promote a safe and supportive learning environment for all (including students, staff, and others supported by the school environment).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	94. School entity has policies/procedures in place that address the appropriate student use of technology and social media, including educating students on appropriate online behavior, social networking, and cyberbullying (47 U.S.C. §254).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	95. School entity provides adequate opportunities in the school for pro-social student involvement (e.g., clubs, sports, activities, music/arts, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. Evidence demonstrates that students are proportionally engaged in the curriculum and school activities. <i>Note: Assessor should document what type of evidence is presented.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	96. School entity has policy/procedure regarding the Student Code of Conduct that is readily available to all students and parents/guardians.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. Policy/Procedure and the Student Code of Conduct is reviewed annually by administration.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	b. School-wide expectations regarding student behavior are clearly defined, taught, and reinforced to students through the Student Code of Conduct.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	97. School entity has policies/procedures in place that promote respect for differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, personality, skills and abilities, etc.), support civil rights, and respond to discrimination.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	98. School entity uses universal strategies to prevent discipline problems, build skills, and foster positive relationships among students (e.g., restorative practices, PBIS, character education, SEL programs, etc.). <i>Note: Assessor should identify what strategies are used and be prepared to offer recommendations or resources, as needed.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	99. School entity uses strategies to support students of diverse backgrounds and students affected by trauma (e.g., utilizing trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices). <i>Note: Assessor should identify what strategies are used.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	100. School entity is responsive to changes in technology and/or the environment and amends its policies/procedures related to appropriate student use of technology and social media accordingly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	101. School entity has policies/procedures in place addressing maintaining professional adult/student boundaries.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	102. School entity provides training and professional development on respecting differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, personality, skills and abilities, etc.), supporting civil rights, and responding to discrimination.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	103. School entity actively encourages students to respect differences by allowing and supporting clubs and organizations in schools that promote diversity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	104. School entity solicits input from teachers, administrators, students, and parents/families, who review and recommend modifications to the technology and social media policies and procedures based on technological developments and/or the current environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	105. School entity has a process in place to assess the impact of school crisis events on school climate after they occur.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	a. School entity reviews and assesses the plan, protocols, procedures, and communication plans that are in place to assist students and other members of the school community during a crisis event, to determine impact on school climate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	b. School entity has a post-incident or postvention review process in place for school crisis events (e.g., emergencies, emergency drills, fire/smoke or chemical exposure, suicide or suicide attempts, intruders, accidental death, etc.).
Behavior Support		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	106. School entity has a policy/procedure addressing positive behavior support of students with disabilities, which includes sharing of procedures and information in handling students with disabilities with local law enforcement agencies, in accordance with applicable law (22 Pa. Code Sections 10.23 , 14.133 , 711.46).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. The policy/procedure directs the school entity to invite representatives of each local law enforcement agency to participate in training on the use of positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques, and appropriate responses to student behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	107. Where required by state or federal law, school entity has specialized staff training programs in place in the use of de-escalation techniques and appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. (e.g., training aligned with 22 Pa. Code Sections 10.23 , 14.133 , 711.46 , and Section 1310-B of the PA Public School Code).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	108. School entity has specialized staff training programs in the use of positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques, and appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. <i>Note: This training could be made available to all school entity staff who work with students, not just those that are required to undergo training as part of statutory mandates.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	109. All school professional staff, para-educators/support staff, and other individuals working with students receive training in the use of positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques, and appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	110. Training for support staff and other individuals addresses working with youth for appropriate developmental stages.

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	111. Implementation fidelity of training is regularly assessed/monitored.
Bullying and Hazing		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	112. School entity has policy and strategies in place to address incidents of bullying and has made that information available as required, in accordance with <u>Section 1303.1-A</u> of the PA Public School Code.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. The policy identifies the appropriate school staff to receive incidents of alleged bullying.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. Bullying reporting procedures are reviewed annually with students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	c. The policy/procedures delineate(s) disciplinary consequences for bullying.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	d. The policy/procedures has/have been reviewed within the past three years.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	e. Review of bullying reports indicates compliance with the school entity's policy/procedures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	f. Appropriate interventions and supportive practices are present for both the targeted student and the student suspected of bullying.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	113. School entity has a policy/procedure prohibiting hazing in connection with any student activity or organization, in accordance with applicable law (<u>18 Pa. C.S. 2808</u>). <i>Note: Hazing policies are only required for secondary schools by law.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. The policy/procedure addresses reporting, investigation, and consequences for hazing incidents.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. Students, staff, and parents/guardians are notified regarding the policy/procedure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	114. School entity has implemented a bullying prevention program at one or more school levels.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	115. Bullying prevention programs have been implemented school entity-wide and are integrated with other prevention and wellness efforts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	116. School entity has established mechanisms to track impact of bullying prevention program.
Safe2Say Something		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	117. School entity has procedures in place for assessing and responding to reports received from the <u>Safe2Say Something</u> program (<u>Section 1303-D</u> of the PA Public School Code).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	118. School entity has an established Safe2Say Something team/designee to respond to reports received from the Safe2Say Something Program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	119. School entity provides age-appropriate informational materials to students, staff, and parents/guardians about the Safe2Say Something or similar reporting program, including how to report, what to report, and overcoming potential

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

		barriers to reporting.
Threat Assessment		
✓	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	120. School entity has established at least one threat assessment team and developed policies/procedures for assessing and intervening with students whose behavior may indicate a threat (in accordance with <u>Section 1302-E</u> of the PA Public School Code).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	a. The policy/procedures address(es) membership of the threat assessment team and annual team training that is consistent with nationally recognized best practices, including responsibilities of team members; the process of identifying, reporting, assessing, responding to, and intervening with threats, including identifying and avoiding racial, cultural, or disability bias; and confidentiality requirements under the law.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	b. The policy/procedures address(es) scope of activities the team is directed to engage in based on statutory requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	c. The policy/procedures require documentation of the threat assessment process and recommendations/referrals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	121. School entity provides age-appropriate awareness education for students, parents/families, and community members related to threat assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	122. School entity provides awareness education for staff related to threat assessment, including notification of which individuals serve on the threat assessment team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	123. Threat assessment team members are trained to coordinate with other school-based processes, procedures, and/or policies (e.g., SAP, IEP/Section 504, Safe2Say, Act 71 suicide prevention, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	124. Threat assessment team(s) work closely with community-based partners (e.g., law enforcement, mental/behavioral health, juvenile justice, etc.) as part of their established threat assessment process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	125. Threat assessment documentation is regularly reviewed by the designated threat assessment team lead.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	126. School entity's threat assessment team(s) is/are integrated within a comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	127. School entity has a school-entity wide, consistent mechanism in place for documentation and/or case management of threat assessments that is regularly reviewed by the threat assessment team(s).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	128. School entity's threat assessment team(s) include(s) standing members representing community-based partners (e.g., law enforcement, mental/behavioral health, juvenile justice, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	129. School entity's threat assessment team(s) conduct(s) collaborative tabletop exercises and/or scenario-based training.

☐	L3	130. School entity’s threat assessment team(s) meet(s) regularly, at least once every two months, to review or discuss behavioral threat assessment practices (i.e., case management discussions, training, tabletop exercises or scenarios, literature review).
Training and Professional Development		
✓	Level	Statement
☐	L1	131. School entity provides professional training to all employees pursuant to state and federal requirements on topics related to student safety and well-being.
☐	L1	<p>a. This includes the following training, in accordance with <u>Section 1310-B</u> of the PA Public School Code:</p> <p>Two hours of training annually in one or more of the following areas (online or in-person):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Situational awareness. ii. Trauma-informed approaches. iii. Behavioral health awareness. iv. Suicide and bullying awareness. v. Substance use awareness.
☐	L1	<p>b. One hour or more of training annually in both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Emergency training drills, including fire, natural disaster, active shooter, hostage situation, and bomb threat (in-person only). ii. Identification or recognition of student behavior that may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others (online or in-person). <p><i>Note: Act 55 of 2024 amended <u>Section 1310-B</u> of the PA Public School Code to allow a cyber charter school to waive or provide an alternative training opportunity to address the in-person training required for Emergency Training Drills for any employee who is not physically located in this Commonwealth and exclusively provides instruction remotely. The cyber charter must report this information in the annual School Safety and Security Coordinator report.</i></p>
☐	L1	<p>c. This includes training on child abuse recognition and reporting, in accordance with <u>Section 1205.6</u> of the PA Public School Code:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Recognition of the signs of abuse and sexual misconduct. ii. Mandatory reporting requirements. iii. School entity’s policies/procedures related to reporting of suspected abuse and sexual misconduct. iv. Maintenance of professional, appropriate relationships with students.
☐	L1	<p>d. This includes other required training related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Emergency drills (Sections <u>1517</u> and <u>1518</u> of the PA Public School Code). ii. Title IX sexual harassment training. iii. CPR/Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training, as applicable (Sections <u>1205.4</u>, <u>1410</u> and <u>1424</u> of the PA Public School Code).

Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, & School Climate Assessment Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	132. School entity provides ongoing professional development and training opportunities for all employees on topics related to student safety and well-being that are responsive to school and/or community-specific needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	133. All teachers and administrators receive training in SEL.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	134. School entity provides ongoing professional development and training opportunities for all employees and other individuals who work with students on age-appropriate and role specific topics responsive to needs identified through school climate-related data and other relevant metrics. <i>Note: "Other individuals" include, but are not limited to, coaches, School Resource Officers/school police/school security guards, volunteers, contracted staff, and other community-based partners.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	L3	135. All para-educators/support staff and students receive instruction in the concept of SEL, and training/information is also offered to parents/families. <i>Note: "Support staff" may include non-professional school personnel who provide direct and/or supportive infrastructure services, such as food service, custodial, secretarial, and information technology personnel (may be employed or contracted). "Para-professional staff" may include supportive personnel who assist professional staff in working directly with students, such as an education aide, nurse aide, therapeutic support staff, etc. (may be employed or contracted, or from an external agency).</i>

Coordination with Law Enforcement

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L1	136. The school entity's MOU with each law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over school property includes direct contact information for school administrators to facilitate communication about possible student needs or concerns.(See Section <u>1306.2-B</u> of the PA Public School Code and the model MOU in 22 Pa. Code <u>Chapter 10</u> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	137. The school entity regularly communicates with law enforcement agency(ies) that hold(s) an MOU with the school entity and exchanges contact information when staffing changes occur.
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	138. At least annually, the school entity meets with law enforcement agency(ies) that hold(s) an MOU with the school entity.

Data and Reporting

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Level	Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	139. If the school entity employs or contracts school security personnel (School Resource Officers, school police officers, or school security guards), the school entity has processes in place to collect feedback regarding school security personnel from staff, students, parents/guardians and school community members (i.e., school climate survey questions, feedback forms, public comment opportunities, etc.). <i>Note: School districts are required by <u>Section 1316-C</u> of the PA Public School Code to have at least one full-time school security personnel who has completed the required training on duty during the school day.</i>

<input type="checkbox"/>	L2	a. The data collected for this purpose is maintained confidentially and is able to be disaggregated to allow for review and analysis.
--------------------------	----	---

Additional Resources

- [PA Department of Education School Climate Resources](#)
- [A Multi-Tiered Approach to Bullying Prevention](#)
- [StopBullying.gov](#)
- [PCCD Threat Assessment Information and Resources](#)
- [United States Secret Service: National Threat Assessment Center](#)
- [Up End Hate: Warning Signs](#)
- [Act 55 School Safety and Security Employee Training](#)

Assessor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Date reported to school administration: _____

**Note: External assessors should include specific notes, instructions, and recommendations for the school entity as part of their comprehensive assessment.*