



**STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

August 1, 2019

TO: Student Achievement Committee

FROM: Margaret Cox  
Chairperson, Student Achievement Committee

AGENDA ITEM: Committee Action on identification and selection of individuals for a working group tasked with work ensuring Board policies support student mental and emotional wellbeing, particularly to prevent youth suicide (SAC Strategic Priority 2)

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**I. BACKGROUND**

At its July 18, 2019 general business meeting, the Board of Education (“Board”) adopted committee strategic priorities for the 2019-2020 school year. Among the adopted priorities, the Student Achievement Committee (“Committee”) is to “ensure Board policies under [the Committee’s] jurisdiction support student mental and emotional wellbeing, particularly to prevent youth suicide as Act [270] (SB383) intends and recent data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey illustrates as an issue.” The following indicators will determine the Committee’s success in achieving this priority:

- By August 1, 2019, the Committee will sufficiently identify and select individuals from the Board, Department of Education, Department of Health, and any other relevant stakeholders to a working group tasked with:
  1. Thoroughly reviewing Board Policies E-103 and 103-1 through 103-8; and
  2. Generating a comprehensive report that adequately describes any policy changes necessary to support student mental and emotional wellbeing, particularly to prevent youth suicide.
- By November 7, 2019, the Committee will approve all (100%) draft policy changes from the working group’s comprehensive report for public comment.
- By December 5, 2019, the Committee will recommend effective policy changes that sufficiently considered public comments for Board approval.

The Committee's strategic priority references Act 270, 2019 Session Laws of Hawaii, and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Act 270 took effect on July 1, 2019 and applies to the current school year. It requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health, to "develop a mandatory youth suicide awareness and prevention training program and a model risk referral protocol for complex areas and charter schools based on the [D]epartment of [H]ealth's existing suicide awareness and prevention curriculum and materials[.]"<sup>1</sup>

At its November 1, 2018 meeting, the Committee received a presentation on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for 2017.<sup>2</sup> The relevant data from the survey results show the following findings:

- 27.2% of responding middle school students "ever felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities," and of these students, 47.2% "never or rarely got the kind of help they needed."
- 29.5% of responding high school students "ever felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities in the past 12 months," and of these students, 54.9% "never or rarely got the kind of help they needed."
- 23.1% of responding middle school students "ever seriously thought about killing themselves" while 16% of responding high school students "seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months."
- 16.3% of responding middle school students "ever made a plan about how they would kill themselves" while 13.8% of responding high school students "made a plan about how they would attempt suicide in the past 12 months."
- 12.4% of responding middle school students "ever tried to kill themselves" while 10.0% of responding high school students "attempted suicide in the past 12 months."
- 11.8% of responding middle school students "tried to kill themselves and attempt resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse" while 2.4% of responding high school students had a "suicide attempt [resulting] in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse in the past 12 months."

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<sup>1</sup> Act 270, Session Laws of Hawaii, is attached to Governor's Message 1390, available here: [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2019/bills/GM1390\\_.PDF](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2019/bills/GM1390_.PDF).

<sup>2</sup> The presentation is attached to Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's memorandum dated November 1, 2018, available here: [http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/SAC\\_11012018\\_Presentation%20on%20Youth%20Risk%20Behavior%20Survey.pdf](http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/SAC_11012018_Presentation%20on%20Youth%20Risk%20Behavior%20Survey.pdf).

## **II. WORKING GROUP**

The strategic priority requires the Committee to create a working group consisting of representatives of stakeholders with interest and expertise in student mental and emotional wellbeing and youth suicide prevention. The working group will be responsible for reviewing the following Board policies:

Board Policy E-103	Health and Wellness
Board Policy 103-1	Health and Wellness
Board Policy 103-3	Emergency Care for Sick or Injured Students
Board Policy 103-4	School Health Services
Board Policy 103-5	Sexual Health Education
Board Policy 103-6	School Food Services
Board Policy 103-7	Food Sales
Board Policy 103-8	Prophylactics in the Public Schools

After reviewing the aforementioned policies, the working group is responsible for generating a report to the Committee with recommended policy changes to better support student mental and emotional wellbeing and youth suicide prevention. The Committee will review and approve draft policy changes for public comment. After the public comment period, the Committee will consider the comments received, determine if it needs to revise the draft policy changes, and make final policy recommendations to the Board.

## **III. RECOMMENDATION**

I recommend that the Committee designate Committee Member Catherine Payne as the Committee's representative to and chairperson of the working group. I recommend that the Committee authorize Committee Member Payne with identifying and selecting individuals to serve on the working group as representatives from the relevant stakeholders, which may include:

- Department of Education state administration;
- School administrators;
- Teachers;
- School counselors;
- Charter schools;
- Department of Health;
- Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task force;
- Students;
- Parents;
- Legislators; and
- Community/non-profits.

### **Proposed Motion**

**Move to:**

- 1. Authorize Committee Member Catherine Payne to identify and select individuals to serve on a working group tasked with:**

- a. **Reviewing Board Policies E-103 and 103-1 through 103-8; and**
  - b. **Generating a comprehensive report to the Committee that describes and recommends any policy changes necessary to support student mental and emotional wellbeing, particularly to prevent youth suicide; and**
2. **Designate Committee Member Payne as the Committee's representative to and chairperson of the working group.**