



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

September 5, 2019

TO: Student Achievement Committee

FROM: Margaret Cox
Chairperson, Student Achievement Committee

AGENDA ITEM: Update on work ensuring Board policies support student mental and emotional wellbeing, particularly to prevent youth suicide (SAC Strategic Priority 2): Identification of working group members, work plan, and timeline

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In accordance with the Student Achievement Committee's ("Committee") directive, Committee Member Catherine Payne has identified and selected individuals to serve on the working group that will ensure Board policies support student mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Committee Member Payne is modifying the timeline for the strategic priority so that the indicators are completed February 2020 instead of December 2019.

II. 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[.]”¹

At its November 1, 2018 meeting, the Committee received a presentation on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for 2017.² 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.”

¹ Act 270, Session Laws of Hawaii, is attached to Governor’s Message 1390, available here: https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2019/bills/GM1390_PDF.

² 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.

- 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.”

III. WORKING GROUP AND TIMELINE

At its August 1, 2019 Committee meeting, the Committee designated Committee Member Payne as the Committee’s representative to and chairperson of the working group and authorized Committee Member Payne to identify and select individuals to serve on the working group as representatives from the following stakeholders, which may include:

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

Currently, Committee Member Payne has identified the following individuals, who have agreed to serve on the working group:

1. Cynthia Rice (Office of Student Support Services, Educational Specialist, Restraint and Seclusion)
2. Denise Darvel-Chang (Resource Teacher)
3. Sandy Linski (Parent, Grandparent, Retired Science Teacher)
4. Alison Colby, MSW (High School Social Worker)
5. Gwen Murakami, MSW (High School Social Worker)
6. High School student
7. Brylee Puchalski (recent public school graduate)
8. Deborah Spencer-Chun (Adult Friends for Youth, President)
9. Lisa Tamashiro (Adult Friends for Youth, Program Director)
10. The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz (Hawaii State Senator)

11. Allen Cardines (Community)
12. Lois Kim (Middle School Parent)
13. Danielle White (Board Student Representative)

Other members may be identified at a later date as needed or appropriate.

Under the original timeline, the working group would present a report to the Committee by November 7, 2019. After a public comment period, but by December 5, 2019, the Committee would recommend effective policy changes that sufficiently considered public comments for Board approval. The intent of this very aggressive timeline was to have a report with recommendations completed before the start of the 2020 Legislative Session, particularly in regards to any changes relating to Act 270. Subsequently, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, who introduced Act 270, agreed to serve on the working group. Because Senator Dela Cruz will be a member of the working group and assisting with legislative coordination, it is less essential to complete this work before the start of the 2020 Legislative Session. As such, the timeline will be modified as shown below:

- By ~~November 7, 2019~~ February 6, 2020, the Committee will approve all (100%) draft policy changes from the working group's comprehensive report for public comment.
- By ~~December 5, 2019~~ March 5, 2020, the Committee will recommend effective policy changes that sufficiently considered public comments for Board approval.

I will provide the Committee with regular updates on the working group's progress.