
Creating Safe Environments for Learning

The Board's Vital
Role in Enhancing
Student Outcomes



Prepared for NMSBA



May 30, 2024

Introduction



Purpose: To highlight the crucial role of the local school board in creating safe and supportive learning environments for all students.

Key Objectives:

- 1. Understand the board's specific responsibilities in safety and security**
- 2. Explore policy strategies to address social media and cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, physical safety, bullying prevention, and mental health**
- 3. Learn about promoting a culture of safety**

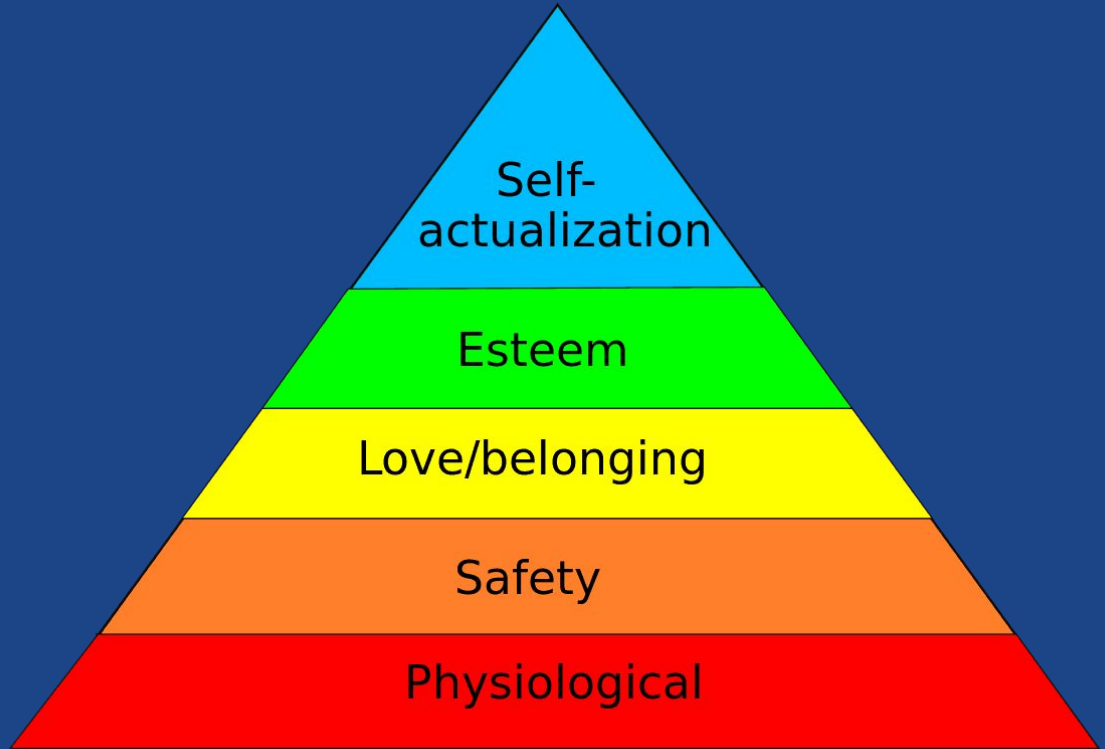
Engaging Activity

With a focus on learning, what are key safety opportunities and challenges in your school district?

Research Findings

“It’s only when students and staff are safe that learning can happen”

School safety is correlated with learning outcomes. Research shows that school boards can positively impact student performance when they make that their core focus. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:



Engaging Activity

How is safety impacting student learning in your school district?

The School Board's Responsibilities



1. **Policy Development:** Creating and updating policies that address: cybersecurity, physical safety, mental health, bullying prevention, threat assessments and violence prevention
2. **Budgeting:** allocating resources for safety and training
3. **Oversight:** Monitoring implementation of safety policies, plans. and procedures
4. **Advocacy:** Supporting adequate funding for safety initiatives, lobbying for state/federal policies, and engaging with the community

Engaging Activity

Where is your school board in policy development, budgeting, monitoring implementation, and advocacy?

Addressing Social Media and Cybersecurity



Social Media Policy: Free Speech vs. School Safety, Preventing Cyberbullying and Harassment, Encouraging Digital Citizenship (responsible online behavior and digital etiquette)

Key terms: personally identifiable information (PII), third party applications, phishing, and 2-step verification

Successful cyberattacks and ransomware have a **detrimental effect** on NM schools

Large-scale
data breaches
of personally
identifiable
information

Costly payouts -
average cost of
\$812,000, a five
times increase
from 2020

Lengthy
disruptions to
instruction
and school
operations

Developing policies to **keep students and staff safe online** and to **protect information**

Your district
owns it's data

FERPA, COPPA
and IDEA
compliant

Data safeguards with email
encryption and identity
access management

Policies or regulations for secure

Passwords ***

11062015

Wildcat123

elihaw1106

Policies or regulations for **Email Security**

paypal@scam.edu

Hi!

You have received a refund from one of your payees. Please [click here](#) to claim your refund of \$3,345

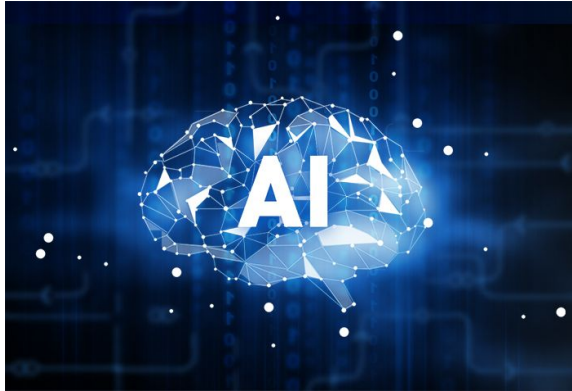
Artificial Intelligence



School board policy considerations for AI in schools are complex and multifaceted, requiring careful thought and discussion to ensure responsible and ethical implementation.

- **Equity and Access:** Ensure that AI tools are accessible to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background or learning needs.
- **Academic Honesty:** Establish clear guidelines on the acceptable use of AI tools in coursework and assessments. Prohibit the use of AI for cheating, plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty.
- **Bias and Fairness:** Address the potential for bias in AI algorithms and ensure that AI tools are used fairly and equitably for all students. Implement measures to identify and mitigate biases in AI-driven decision-making processes.
- **Transparency and Explainability:** Promote transparency in the use of AI tools. Clearly communicate to students, parents, and educators how AI is being used and how it impacts their learning experiences. Strive for explainability in AI algorithms to ensure that decisions made by AI systems are understandable and justifiable.

Artificial Intelligence



Educational Considerations

- **Teaching and Learning:** Integrate AI tools into the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning. Train educators on how to effectively use AI to support instruction and personalize learning experiences for students.
- **Professional Development:** Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff to stay abreast of advancements in AI and learn how to responsibly integrate AI into their practices.
- **Digital Literacy:** Incorporate digital literacy skills into the curriculum to equip students with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world and use AI tools responsibly.

By carefully considering these factors, school boards can develop comprehensive policies that promote the responsible and ethical use of AI in schools, ensuring that AI technologies are used to enhance teaching and learning while safeguarding the interests of students and the community.

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**Are your school board cybersecurity
and social media policies
up-to-date?**

Addressing Physical Safety



Board Policy Components:

- Secure Infrastructure and Access Control
- Emergency Preparedness
- Threat Assessment and Prevention
- School Climate and Culture
- Collaboration and Communication

Secure Infrastructure and Access Control

- **Perimeter Security:** Ensure fences, gates, and other barriers are well-maintained to deter unauthorized entry.
- **Building Access:** Control entry points with secure doors, locks, and visitor management systems (e.g., sign-in procedures, visitor badges).
- **Surveillance:** Strategically place security cameras inside and outside the school to monitor activity and deter potential threats.
- **Alarm Systems:** Install and maintain alarms (fire, intrusion) that are linked to appropriate response systems.
- **Lighting:** Ensure adequate lighting in hallways, parking lots, and other areas to enhance visibility and deter criminal activity.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Emergency Plans:** Develop detailed, up-to-date plans for various emergencies (e.g., fire, active shooter, natural disasters) and train staff and students on procedures.
- **Drills:** Regularly conduct drills to practice emergency response and ensure everyone knows what to do in a crisis.
- **Communication Systems:** Establish reliable communication systems (e.g., PA systems, two-way radios, emergency notification apps) to disseminate information quickly.
- **First Aid/CPR Training:** Ensure staff members are trained in basic first aid and CPR to respond to medical emergencies.

Threat Assessment and Prevention

- **Threat Assessment Teams:** Formulate a team of trained professionals (e.g., school administrators, counselors, law enforcement) to assess and address potential threats to school safety.
- **Reporting Systems:** Establish confidential reporting mechanisms (e.g., hotlines, online forms) for students and staff to report concerns.
- **Early Intervention:** Implement programs to identify and support students who may be at risk of harming themselves or others.
- **School Resource Officers:** Consider the presence of school resource officers (SROs) to provide security, build relationships with students, and deter crime. (This is a debated topic, and the decision to use SROs should be made carefully in consultation with the community.)

School Climate and Culture

- **Positive School Climate:** Foster a positive and inclusive school climate where students feel safe, supported, and connected.
- **Bullying Prevention:** Implement comprehensive bullying prevention programs that address all forms of harassment and create a culture of respect.
- **Mental Health Support:** Provide accessible mental health services and support to students struggling with emotional or behavioral issues.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Teach students social-emotional skills (e.g., conflict resolution, empathy) to help them manage emotions and build positive relationships.

Collaboration and Communication

- **Community Partnerships:** Build strong partnerships with local law enforcement, mental health agencies, and other community organizations to address safety concerns.
- **Parent/Community Engagement:** Regularly communicate with parents and community members about safety initiatives and encourage their involvement.
- **Staff Training:** Provide ongoing training for staff on safety procedures, threat assessment, de-escalation techniques, and trauma-informed care.

Engaging Activity

What are some current challenges or concerns regarding physical safety in your schools, buses, and facilities?

Addressing Bullying Prevention



Key Components:

- Clear definitions of bullying and harassment
- Reporting procedures that students and staff feel comfortable using
- Effective investigation and intervention strategies
- Consider restorative justice practices

Restorative Justice



- Restorative justice is an approach that aims to repair the harm done to victims
- Offenders take responsibility for their actions, to understand the harm they have caused, to give them an opportunity to redeem themselves, and to discourage them from causing further harm
- For victims, the goal is to give them an active role in the process, and to reduce feelings of anxiety and powerlessness

Engaging Activity

What are some successful bullying prevention strategies used in your schools or in other districts?

Addressing Mental Health



Key Components:

- Mental Health First Aid class for all staff
- Comprehensive counseling services
- Mental health education for students, parents, and staff
- Early identification and intervention
- Partnerships with mental health providers

**CHILDREN'S
MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS DAY**



Engaging Activity

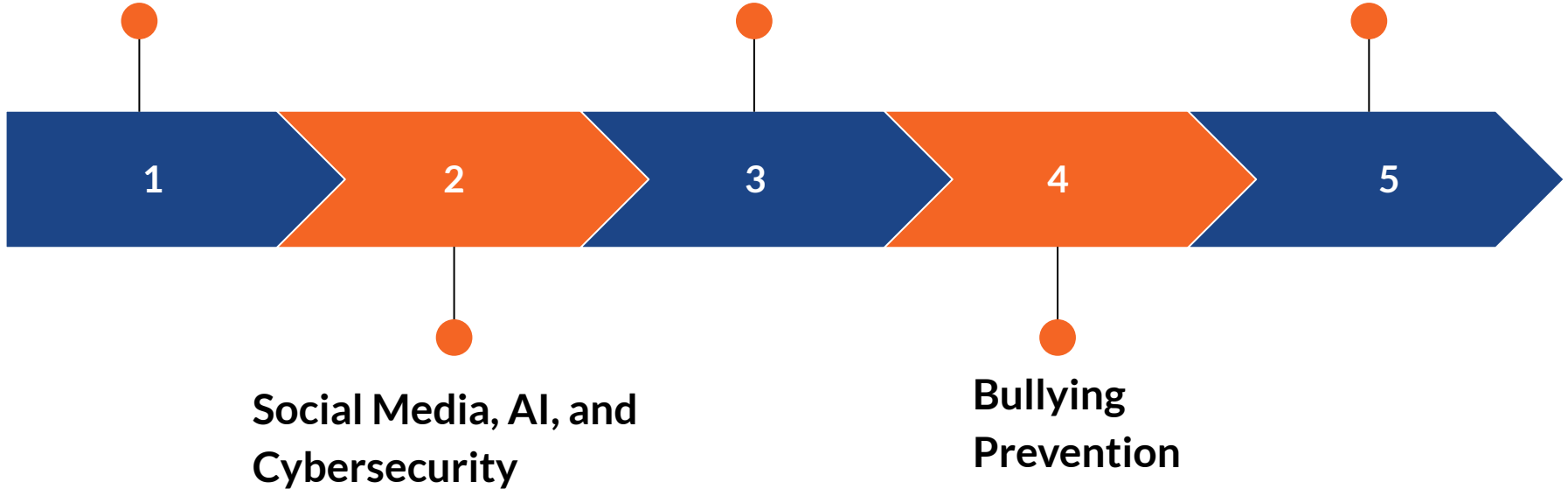
**How can we better support the
mental health needs of our students
and staff?**

School Board's Role in Safety and Learning

Policy development,
oversight, budgeting,
and advocacy

Physical
Safety

Mental
Health



Wrap-up

Thanks and Follow-up

- We appreciate your time and active engagement
- Feel free to reach out with any comments or questions:
 - Dr. Kurt Steinhaus
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Overall

- School safety is correlated with learning outcomes
 - School Boards can have a positive impact on creating safe learning environments for students and staff
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