

NOAH WEBSTER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION MODEL POLICY

TO: TBD
FROM: Noah Webster Educational Foundation
RE: Mental Health Screening and Parental Consent Model Policy
DATE: TBD

This model policy seeks to inform parents of universal mental health screenings and allow them to opt their child out of participation.

Mental Health Screening and Parental Consent Model Policy

AUTHORS:

- Noah Webster Educational Foundation

BACKGROUND: Many states are taking steps to implement universal mental health screenings to better allocate school budgets and resources for student mental health. However, parents may not be aware of or agree with their student's participation. This policy seeks to encourage transparency between the school and parents by requiring schools to inform parents when a universal mental health screening will be performed and which classes are protected by the Protection of Pupils' Rights Amendment (PPRA), and by providing a way to opt their student out of participating in the screening. This policy relates to the NWEF training series '[Mental Health Matters: Navigating the Terrain of K12 Education](#).'

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Subject: Mental Health Screening and Parental Consent Model Policy

I. Description of Program

This School Board/School Division receives state, federal, and local funding for mental health resources in its schools. To better understand the need for these resources and which students may need them, the schools in this district may choose to conduct a universal mental health screening. If a school within [this district] intends to conduct a universal mental health screening, it should follow the procedures outlined in this policy to ensure that parents are notified of their student's participation and given a reasonable opportunity to refuse on their student's behalf. Immediately following the implementation of this policy, schools within this district are responsible for ensuring the following:

- A. Principals and vice-principals in [this] district must provide parents with a digital copy of the district's parental engagement plan.
- B. Teachers should not be made responsible for notifying, following up with, or meeting with parents regarding parental engagement plans.

All tenets of universal mental health screening should align with state and federal guidelines and follow professional best practices.

II. Procedures for Schools Regarding Parental Notification

Schools within [schoolboard district] should ensure that parents receive and understand the district's plans for performing universal mental health screenings by requiring a parent/guardian signature on a digital notification. If a child's parents/guardians do not return a signed notice to the school, the school administration is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure the parents/guardians are aware of the notice by obtaining a signature of verification. Reasonable steps might include emailing a second notice and reminder to parents/guardians, making a phone call to discuss the matter, or arranging a meeting between the school administrator and parents/guardians to resolve the issue.

III. Annual Notification

Parents/guardians should be notified annually of the district's plans for performing mental health screenings. The notification should be sent out at the beginning of each new school year, at the start of the quarter when the mental health screening will take place. The notification will include the date when the mental health screening will take place, information on how to opt out of the screening, and a list of protected classes under the Protection of Pupils' Rights Amendment. It will include a signature line for parents to acknowledge their awareness of the district's plans to conduct a universal mental health screening.

IV. Maintenance of Records

All information and records of signed parental engagement plans should be maintained in the student's records and made accessible to the parent or guardian in the future. School secretaries are responsible for maintaining signed notices in a records or data system for future reference.

and data collection/assessment. No information or record of this notification should be disclosed without parental/guardian consent or as otherwise provided by law.