

GUIDANCE ON JULY 1, 2025 IMPLEMENTATION OF SF 583



SF 583, signed by Governor Reynolds on May 6, 2025, with an effective date of July 1, 2025, allows for the free flow of information within multidisciplinary school safety assessment teams (often referred to as school threat assessment teams). The United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center defines behavioral threat assessment as a behavior-based approach to proactively prevent incidents of targeted violence. A required element of these assessment teams is open lines of communication and a collaborative approach between established multidisciplinary team members. This nationally recognized approach is a best practice for the prevention of school violence.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

The bill allows for the formation of multidisciplinary school safety assessment teams pursuant to Iowa Code § 280.36. If a school chooses to establish a multidisciplinary school safety assessment team, that team coordinates resources and assesses and intervenes with students **before** they become an active and imminent threat. The purpose of these teams is to identify students who may be struggling or otherwise on the pathway to destructive behavior, such as violence or self-harm, and implement and manage targeted intervention strategies to provide support to the student so they do not cause harm to themselves or others.

Each school district and nonpublic school that chooses to create or become involved with a multidisciplinary school safety assessment team may have any combination of the following involved:

- **Local law enforcement**
- **Representative(s) from juvenile court services**
- **Mental health professional(s)**
- **Social services representative(s)**
- **School official(s)**

These teams may share and request information from team members and request records from the state court administrator. The information shared must be reasonably necessary to ensure the safety of students or others and may only be used within the school safety assessment team. Without consent of the student, specific information shared about that student cannot be shared outside of the school and the multidisciplinary school safety assessment team unless some other exception for release of the information is present.

WHAT THE BILL DOES NOT DO

The bill does not mandate the creation of teams or set specific requirements for teams. Schools maintain the ability to create a team fitting to their own area and resources.

The bill does not allow law enforcement to target students for enforcement purposes. The bill does not lower the standards needed for law enforcement to take action against a student, but rather, allows law enforcement to share information with the team to hopefully prevent the need for law enforcement intervention with a student.

Lastly, the bill is not intended to invade students' privacy. The bill facilitates information sharing between team members and ensure K-12 students who are in need, at risk, or who pose an articulable threat to the health and safety of any person will receive necessary and appropriate services.

WHAT ABOUT FERPA?

According to the US Department of Education, FERPA permits the sharing of education records with outside law enforcement officials, mental health officials, and other experts in the community who serve on a school's threat assessment team. In establishing a threat assessment team, the school must follow the FERPA provisions in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B) concerning outsourcing this function if team members will be privy to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from students' education records. While not a requirement of FERPA, one way to ensure that members of the team do not re-disclose PII obtained from education records would be to have a written agreement with each of the team members specifying their requirements and responsibilities. There are several form MOUs available online that schools can use as templates in creating their teams that schools can enter into, but schools should consult with their legal counsel for further guidance.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

The Governor's School Safety Bureau is taking steps towards the development of a statewide school safety assessment team and protocols. These statewide professionals will serve in this capacity as a collaborative body providing guidance, recommendations, and services to school districts who have unique or special circumstances requiring additional professional assistance. School districts are welcome to develop their own teams and protocols independent of the statewide protocols being developed. Members of these assessment teams may be formed from a variety of professional backgrounds. Juvenile court services, mental health professionals, social services, school representatives, and law enforcement will proactively work to establish appropriate interventions and resources to address the factors driving a student towards violence.

