

A NOTE FROM CSBA CEO & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VERNON M. BILLY



School safety is complex work requiring the implementation of various strategies to address conventional bullying and cyberbullying, conduct behavioral threat assessments, develop infrastructure, facilitate community engagement, support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff, and much more. The safety of our schools is a shared goal that requires collaborative efforts from all partners — boards of education, administrators, teachers, parents, law enforcement, and the wider community.

The most effective approaches to creating safe and supportive school environments demonstrate a comprehensive, coordinated effort guided by values and policy established at the board level. Governance teams can impact the school environment and climate by setting direction, establishing effective organizational structures, providing support for implementation, holding the system accountable, and engaging in community leadership and advocacy.

CSBA has developed a suite of resources for governance teams to support your work and help you make timely and informed decisions on school safety policies, practices, and procedures. This work requires iterative processes to create, review, and assess policies and systems regularly. So, I encourage you to both read through the toolkit and share and discuss it with your colleagues.

To make this complex topic easier to navigate, CSBA felt it was important to break down the many components of school safety. To that end, our previous safe school guidebook has been revised and reformatted into a toolkit that provides data, resources, and strategies to help governance teams create positive school environments where students feel safe, supported, connected to others, and prepared to learn.

CSBA's Safe Schools Toolkit provides an introduction to school safety as it relates to school climate and the effects that disruptions or violence have on students, school staff, and the community. It details the board's role in fostering safe campuses and includes CSBA's Policy Pillars aligned with safety and learning. The toolkit presents a variety of effective prevention and intervention strategies for creating positive, safe school climates and preparing for disruptive incidents should they occur. The many topics covered in detail include Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSP), behavioral threat assessment, safety infrastructure, sexual exploitation and trafficking, Title IX, and alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (including fentanyl and vaping). New to this revision is a brief on crisis communications. Also included are several policy recommendations related to school safety. In addition to supporting the Association's advocacy, board members may wish to consult these recommendations in their work with other state, federal, and local policymakers.

It is my hope that the Safe Schools Toolkit helps board members gain valuable insights and understanding on the complexities of school safety and informs your work to foster a safe and supportive education system for all students.

Sincerely,

Vernon M. Billy
CEO & Executive Director, CSBA