



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student Services

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Tammy Jackson, Assistant Director

MEMORANDUM

October 2011

TO: Regional Administrators, Principals

CC: Superintendent, Chief of Staff, General Counsel, Director of Security Services, Executive Director of Human Resources, Chief Academic Officer, Risk Management Director, R.E.M.S. Coordinator, Executive Director of Community Involvement and Public Affairs, School Counselors

SUBJECT: District Emergency Counseling Support Team

While we all hope that a tragedy does not happen in any school community, it is good to be prepared with a communication strategy as well as with strategies to support students and staff members who do experience a tragedy. Student Services staff is available to assist you with building crisis planning. Included in the Crisis Management Workbook are recommended guidelines for responding in a crisis. The workbook and additional resources may be found on the Student Services department website.

In the event of a crisis or tragedy, activate your building crisis plan. Most tragedies are best handled by building staff, but Student Services staff is available for consultation and is responsible for coordinating the Emergency Counseling Support Team. Please call 503-347-1438, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to reach Student Services personnel.

Coordination:

The District Emergency Counseling Support Team Coordinator will:

- Serve as the general consultant to all schools and departments in the district for issues pertaining to tragedy, death, and grief and assist school administrators in assessing needs and the appropriate level of crisis response
- Coordinate the District Emergency Counseling Team's activities with the Principal and Regional Administrator, which may include:
 - Supporting existing building resources in providing individual and/or group counseling for students
 - Assisting in the set up of safe rooms for students
 - Assisting teachers in facilitating classroom conversations with students
 - Assisting principal in facilitating parent and community presentations

- Provide direction and guidance to the principal onsite during crisis response and via phone or email as follow-up
- Provide information about community resources for staff or parent meetings
- Maintain a file of letters, memos, etc., developed to communicate information about the tragedy and share with principals and Regional Administrators
- Provide resource materials on grief and loss for students and staff

The District Emergency Counseling Support Team provides support for student-related incidents that significantly impact more than an individual child or family. For smaller scale tragedies or those that impact individual students or families, Student Services staff is available to provide the administrator with consultation on appropriate community resources.

At the district level, when a tragedy occurs in any of the Portland Public Schools, the Regional Administrators, Director of Security Services, Executive Director of Community Involvement and Public Affairs, and Principals immediately begin notifying and supporting school personnel in responding to the tragedy. The Superintendent and Chief of Staff are kept informed by the appropriate Regional Administrator and the Assistant Director of Student Services.

Administrators are advised to have written building level crisis management plans, identified school level crisis teams, and annual reviews of plans with all staff. PPS staff may access the Crisis Management Workbook and additional resources here:

<http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/student-services/3433.htm>