



**TO:** BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**FROM:** Maurene Stanton, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning

**SUBJECT:** First Reading Policy 5515 Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress

**DATE:** December 7, 2021

This is the first reading of the new Personnel Policy 5515 Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress. It has been identified as an essential policy by the Washington State School Directors Association.

This policy will come before the Board for second reading on January 4, 2022. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact me.

## Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress

### Purpose

The Stanwood-Camano School Board is committed to preventing and addressing secondary traumatic stress for District personnel by supporting mental health in the workplace. Every day, school staff work with students experiencing trauma and loss. As a result, teachers, school counselors, administrators, and other school staff many experience secondary traumatic stress. When secondary traumatic stress is left unaddressed, it may lead to staff turnover, burnout, adult chronic absenteeism, and health issues that negatively impact everyone in the school community.

### Secondary Traumatic Stress

The Board acknowledges that secondary traumatic stress, also called compassion fatigue, is a natural but disruptive set of symptoms that may result when one person learns firsthand of the traumatic experiences of another. Symptoms of secondary traumatic stress may include feelings of isolation, anxiety, dissociation, physical ailments, and sleep disturbances. In addition, those affected by secondary traumatic stress may experience: Changes in memory and perception; alterations in their sense of self-efficacy; a depletion of personal resources; and disruption in their perceptions of safety, trust, and independence.

### Policy Statement

The District will promote a positive workplace climate that includes a focus on diversity and inclusion.

The Board hereby establishes a district-wide workforce mental health committee with the following functions:

- Share secondary traumatic stress, stress management, and other mental health resources and supports available through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Educational Service District, and the School Employees' Benefits Board;
- Share links to a secondary traumatic stress self-assessment tool and any associated resources;
- Report to the Board at least once per year with a summary of committee activities.

The District will regularly assess district-level and school building-level implementation of this policy and procedure. The assessment will include input from the District's workforce. The District will provide appropriate resources and training to schools and staff for continuous improvement.

### Cross References:

Legal References:                   28A.300 RCW  
  28A.400 RCW

Adoption Date: **012.21**

Classification: **Essential**

Revised Dates:

## Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress

### District-wide Workforce Mental Health Committee

- A. The District will establish a diverse and inclusive Workforce Mental Health Committee. The District will seek committee members who have the interest and skills to best serve the committee. The District's Workforce Mental Health Committee will consist of at least the following:
- One teacher and classified staff member from the elementary level;
  - One teacher and classified staff member from the secondary level;
  - One staff member from student services and/or support staff (e.g., school counselors, social workers, liaisons, etc.);
  - One central office administrator who has funding authority and one central office administrator who can represent Human Resources, this can be the same person;
  - One elementary building administrator and one secondary building administrator.
- B. The committee will seek resources related to secondary traumatic stress from OSPI, the ESD, and the School Employees' Benefits board. OSPI will link to resources on its website. The committee is encouraged to consider resources supporting comprehensive staff well-being. Additionally, the committee may seek input regarding resources from District personnel and the community;
- C. Materials and resources related to secondary traumatic stress will be shared district-wide via: The Stanwood-Camano School District website and staff links page—Employee Assistance Program.
- D. The duties of the committee will include:
- Sharing supports available through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Educational Service District, and the School Employees' Benefits Board;
  - Sharing links to a secondary traumatic stress self-assessment tool and any associated resources;
  - When possible the committee should use a continuous quality improvement process, which can include a staff climate survey (see OSPI webpage for resources). This should include:
    - Offering an opportunity for staff to give anonymous feedback; and
    - Reviewing the data collected;
  - Utilizing the data collected, report to the Board at least once per year with a summary of committee activities, the status of staff well-being, and an assessment and recommendations for the implementation of this policy and procedure.

Adoption Date: **12.21**  
Classification: **Essential**  
Revised Dates: ;