



March 2012

Policy Brief

Conditions of Children Advisory: Safe Schools

Sexual misconduct allegations at schools across the state remind us of how important school climate can be to student safety and success. Providing a safe school environment that ensures both the physical and emotional safety of students creates the conditions that are necessary to foster academic achievement.

For governance teams wanting to examine the climate, safety policies and strategies in their districts, CSBA offers *Safe Schools: Strategies for Governing Boards to Ensure Student Success*. The guidebook is designed to help boards, in collaboration with other school and community leaders, develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach to ensuring school safety, and provides information, guidance and support on multiple prevention and intervention strategies and considerations, including:

- The importance of parent engagement and involvement in developing strategies, procedures, programs and curricula
- School staff education and development
- Appropriate and effective reporting mechanisms for students, staff and parents
- Clear and effective investigation procedures
- Considerations for responding to crises at school sites, including communication and community engagement

A vital component of a governing board's job is to consistently connect all of the district's activities back to an overarching focus on improving student achievement. Districts are increasingly embracing prevention and intervention strategies to improve student safety and the school climate as they recognize the correlation between a safe school environment and student achievement. As elected leaders in the community, board members play a critical role in ensuring that the schools in their communities are safe for students and staff.