

# Understanding Behavioral Safety Assessment (BSA) Operations in Oregon

Perspectives From Districts Within the  
Northwest Regional Education Service District

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**Prepared by: Andre' Spence**

**School Safety Technical Assistance Specialist  
WestEd**

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# Executive Summary

This report presents findings from focus group interviews conducted with Level 1 and Level 2 Behavioral Safety Assessment (BSA) team members within the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESD). The purpose of this effort was to better understand how BSA processes are implemented across the region, identify strengths and challenges, and inform strategic recommendations to improve statewide support, sustainability, and fidelity of BSA systems in Oregon.

## Key Findings and Thematic Insights

### 1. BSA Team Structure and Escalation Process

Level 1 BSA teams are built around flexibility, collaboration, and responsiveness to school-based needs. Teams commonly include administrators, counselors, psychologists, and School Resource Officers (SROs).

Level 2 BSA teams function with more formal coordination, often facilitated by NWRESD or district-level safety staff, and involve cross-agency collaboration with law enforcement, mental health providers, and other community partners.

### 2. Policy Foundations and Procedural Consistency

The Salem-Keizer Cascade model is the most widely adopted framework. However, formal documentation and policy adoption vary by district. Many districts rely on informal agreements or internal guidance. Efforts to streamline and digitize procedures are ongoing, with strong interest in clearer templates and board-approved protocols.

### 3. Common Practices and Strategies

Teams routinely conduct interviews, review academic and behavioral records, and consult with internal and external partners. Trauma-informed approaches are emphasized. Tools used include customized screeners, Salem-Keizer forms, individualized education program (IEP) documentation, and digital reporting systems. Collaboration with local law enforcement and open-source investigation tools are common, especially among Level 2 BSA teams.

#### 4. Challenges and Implementation Barriers

Districts face consistent obstacles, including

- lack of staff time and supervision capacity, especially among Level 1 BSA teams;
- inconsistent documentation and procedural fidelity;
- difficulty aligning with community-based supports; and
- technology gaps in managing digital threats.

Rural and smaller districts, in particular, expressed concerns about limited resources and access to consultation.

#### 5. Lessons Learned and Practices That Work

Participants affirmed the value of a structured, team-based approach. Many reported success from

- adding dismissal/inquiry forms to reduce unnecessary assessments,
- conducting simulation training to build staff capacity, and
- maintaining stable and collaborative Level 2 teams.

Key enablers of success include strong relationships, clinical expertise, and clear distinctions between BSA and discipline procedures.

#### 6. Final Reflections and Emerging Needs

Participants highlighted the importance of

- ongoing consultation and training opportunities,
- increased awareness of what BSA is (and is not),
- expansion of support for managing digital threats and younger students, and
- continued investment in interdistrict collaboration and system building.

### Recommendations for the Oregon Department of Education

Based on focus group feedback, the following strategic recommendations are provided to support system improvement, sustainability, and equity across Oregon:

- **Support Consistent BSA Documentation Platforms**  
Encourage individual districts to adopt a data management tool (beyond Level 1 and Level 2 forms) to support internal fidelity, track trends, and improve local case management. This platform should not facilitate cross-district information sharing but enable local consistency.



- **Assist Districts With Policy and Implementation Tools**  
Provide templates and implementation guidance for district-level policies, procedures, and communication protocols. Consider partnerships with agencies such as WestEd for technical assistance.
- **Expand Training Opportunities and Regional Learning Networks**  
Offer more accessible, ongoing training, including simulation-based workshops and interdistrict communities of practice—especially for rural districts with limited resources.
- **Develop a Repository for Mental Health and Community Resources**  
Create or support a centralized hub of local and regional services (e.g., mental health evaluations, community programs) to support cross-agency referrals and interventions.
- **Reinforce Fidelity of Practice**  
Communicate clear expectations for fidelity to the adopted model and discourage procedural drift. Provide supportive oversight, not punitive measures.
- **Establish an Ongoing Statewide BSA Network**  
Create a formal network of BSA practitioners and leaders across regions to encourage collaboration, consistency, and continuous learning.
- **Invest in Digital Threat Assessment Resources**  
Provide funding, training, or technical assistance to help districts respond to threats involving technology and online behavior.

This executive summary reflects the lived experiences, challenges, and expertise of practitioners implementing BSA practices across the NWRESD. The findings and recommendations aim to inform strategic planning at the state level and guide ongoing efforts to enhance safety, equity, and effectiveness in Oregon’s school threat assessment systems.



# Table of Contents

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                      | <b>iii</b> |
| Key Findings and Thematic Insights                            | iii        |
| Recommendations for the Oregon Department of Education        | iv         |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>1</b>   |
| Background and Context  | 1          |
| Purpose of the Focus Groups                                   | 1          |
| Research Objectives   | 2          |
| <b>Methodology</b>  | <b>2</b>   |
| Research Design   | 2          |
| Participant Selection and Recruitment                         | 2          |
| Focus Group Structure   | 3          |
| Interview Protocol and Thematic Framework                     | 3          |
| Data Collection and Analysis                                  | 4          |
| <b>Key Findings and Themes</b>                                | <b>4</b>   |
| Thematic Section 1: Team Structure and Roles/Responsibilities | 4          |
| Thematic Section 2: Policy and Procedure Development          | 7          |
| Thematic Section 3: Common Activities and Strategies          | 10         |
| Thematic Section 4: Implementation Challenges                 | 13         |
| Thematic Section 5: Lessons Learned and Successes             | 17         |
| Thematic Section 6: Final Reflections                         | 20         |
| <b>Discussion/Analysis</b>                                    | <b>23</b>  |
| Interpretation of Findings and Implications for Practice      | 23         |
| Cross-Thematic Implications for Research and Practice         | 25         |
| Conclusion  | 26         |



|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Strategic Recommendations</b>  | <b>27</b> |
| Promote the Use of a Consistent BSA Documentation Platform Within Districts | 27        |
| Support Districts in Developing Board-Approved Policies and Procedures      | 27        |
| Expand Training Opportunities and Peer Learning Networks                    | 28        |
| Increase Funding and Access to Community-Based Resources                    | 28        |
| Promote Procedural Fidelity and Model Integrity                             | 28        |
| Create and Sustain Regional and Statewide BSA Networks                      | 28        |
| Strengthen Response to Digital and Technology-Based Threats                 | 28        |
| <b>Limitations</b>  | <b>29</b> |
| <b>Appendix A. Focus Group Interview Protocol</b>                           | <b>30</b> |
| Purpose   | 30        |
| Interview Focus Group Format  | 30        |
| Introduction/Opening Remarks  | 30        |
| Interview Questions   | 31        |
| Closing   | 33        |
| <b>Appendix B. Email Invitation for Participation</b>                       | <b>34</b> |



# Introduction

In recent years, Behavioral Safety Assessment (BSA) has emerged as a critical approach to identifying and responding to concerning student behaviors in schools with the goal of preventing harm and supporting student well-being. In Oregon, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is working to strengthen BSA practices across the state by developing a deeper understanding of how BSA teams operate at both the school and regional levels. As part of this effort, the ODE partnered with WestEd to design and pilot a research protocol aimed at capturing qualitative insights from BSA teams within the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D).

## Background and Context

To facilitate this work, the NWRES D was selected as the pilot site for the project. A site liaison was designated to coordinate participation among BSA teams and support communication between the NWRES D, Level 1 and Level 2 BSA team members, and WestEd. Level 1 BSA teams represent school-based personnel who are directly involved in the implementation of safety assessment practices, while Level 2 teams are typically composed of district- or regional-level staff who provide coordination, oversight, or support functions.

The research was guided by a structured interview protocol developed by WestEd in collaboration with the ODE. The protocol was designed to capture operational insights from both levels of BSA teams, recognizing the importance of gathering perspectives across implementation tiers.

## Purpose of the Focus Groups

The primary purpose of the focus groups was to systematically gather qualitative data that would inform a comprehensive understanding of how BSA teams function within the NWRES D. Specifically, the focus groups aimed to explore how team members define and carry out their roles, how policies and procedures are developed and applied, what strategies and activities are commonly used, and what challenges and successes teams have encountered. Two virtual focus group interviews were conducted—one with Level 1 BSA team members and one with Level 2 BSA team members—to ensure representation across both operational levels.



## Research Objectives

The following research questions guided the design of the focus group protocol and data collection process:

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of Level 1 and Level 2 BSA team members?
2. How are BSA-related policies and procedures developed, implemented, and revised?
3. What common strategies and activities are conducted by BSA teams?
4. What challenges do teams face in implementing BSA processes?
5. What lessons have teams learned, and what practices have proven most effective?
6. What factors contribute to the success and sustainability of BSA efforts at both the school and district levels?

These questions provided the thematic foundation for the focus group interviews and informed subsequent analysis. The resulting insights will contribute to a final report prepared for the ODE that will offer recommendations for improving BSA implementation and scaling effective practices statewide.

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# Methodology

## Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using focus group interviews to explore the structure, practices, and experiences of BSA teams within the NWRESD. The primary objective was to gather in-depth insights from both Level 1 and Level 2 BSA team members. This approach was selected to ensure representation of diverse perspectives and to support a comprehensive understanding of BSA operations at multiple levels.

## Participant Selection and Recruitment

Participants were recruited through email invitations sent to school personnel currently serving on BSA teams across the NWRESD region, which includes Columbia, Tillamook, Clatsop, and Washington counties. The recruitment email, developed collaboratively by the ODE and WestEd, outlined the purpose of the study, the focus group structure, and session details.

Participation was voluntary, and invitees were encouraged to nominate colleagues who might also be interested.

A total of 17 individuals responded to the email invitation to participate in the focus group interviews. This included 11 Level 1 BSA team members and 6 Level 2 BSA team members. Of those who expressed interest, 12 individuals ultimately attended the scheduled virtual sessions: 8 participants in the Level 1 focus group and 4 participants in the Level 2 focus group.

Participants represented a wide range of professional roles, including school psychologists, counselors, school administrators, mental health coordinators, nurses, and district-level safety specialists. Notably, although participants came from Washington, Columbia, and Tillamook counties, there was no participation from Clatsop County.

## Focus Group Structure

Two 60-minute focus group sessions were conducted via Zoom and hosted and moderated by Andre' Spence from WestEd. Each session was designed to elicit detailed information from participants regarding their BSA practices and experiences:

- Session 1 (May 19, 2025): Level 1 BSA Team Members—focused on school-based and frontline implementation.
- Session 2 (May 22, 2025): Level 2 BSA Team Members—focused on regional and system-level coordination.

Each session consisted of 4–8 participants and followed a consistent structure, beginning with an introduction, an overview of the session format, and a reminder that the sessions would be recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation.

## Interview Protocol and Thematic Framework

The interview protocol was developed collaboratively with the ODE to establish a systematic and replicable process for collecting data across both focus groups. The protocol was organized into six thematic sections, each addressing a core component of BSA operations:

### 1. Team Structure and Roles/Responsibilities

*“Please describe your current role and your responsibilities within your BSA team.”*

### 2. Policy and Procedure Development

*“What policies and procedures guide your team’s BSA work? Who is involved in developing or revising these policies and procedures?”*

### 3. Common Activities and Strategies

*“What are the most common activities your team engages in as part of the BSA process?”*

#### 4. Implementation Challenges

*“What would you say are the biggest challenges your team faces in carrying out BSA work?”*

#### 5. Lessons Learned and Successes

*“What have been the most effective practices or changes your team has implemented?”*

#### 6. Final Reflections

*“Is there anything we didn’t ask that you think is important to share about your BSA work?”*

These thematic sections were designed to allow participants to reflect on both the operational and experiential dimensions of their work, promoting consistency in data collection while allowing for open-ended responses.

## Data Collection and Analysis

All focus group sessions were recorded (with participants’ permission) and transcribed to ensure accuracy in data capture. Transcripts were used to conduct a thematic analysis to identify patterns, commonalities, and differences across Level 1 and Level 2 BSA teams. This analysis will inform a final report that includes findings and recommendations for supporting the sustainability and improvement of BSA operations statewide.

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# Key Findings and Themes

## Thematic Section 1: Team Structure and Roles/Responsibilities

This section explores how BSA teams are structured at the Level 1 (school-based) and Level 2 (district or regional) tiers and how team members define their responsibilities. Participants responded to the following questions:

*“Please describe your current role and your responsibilities within your BSA team.”*

*“What is the process for coordination between Level 1 and Level 2 team members?”*



## Level 1 BSA Teams: School-Based, Collaborative, and Flexible

Participants from Level 1 BSA teams described team structures that were collaborative in nature, often lacking rigid role assignments. Most teams include school administrators, school psychologists, counselors, nurses, and in some cases School Resource Officers (SROs). Across the region, participants emphasized teamwork and shared responsibility.

In the Neah-Kah-Nie School District, a BSA team member described a rotating approach to roles:

*“We don’t have specific roles—whoever is on-site or best suited steps in. One person takes notes, another leads the process. We work through our steps as a team.”*

A nurse from the same district noted that her role spans multiple schools:

*“I participate in threat assessments across the district. If I’m at the school when something happens, I usually take notes and handle documentation.”*

A counselor, also from Neah-Kah-Nie, added the following:

*“Depending on the case, I often conduct student interviews, especially if I have a connection to the student.”*

In the Sherwood School District, the behavior and mental health coordinator shared that Level 1 teams are led at the building level:

*“The principal, counselor, and case manager typically lead the process. I support when needed. We also involve SROs—each school has access to one—and conduct interviews with the student of concern, parents, and witnesses before the team meeting. We use a standard assessment tool to guide our safety planning.”*

In St. Helens and Clatskanie School Districts, school administrators described roles that involve both leading and gathering data:

*“When we receive a report, I start the information-gathering process—parent and student interviews, teacher questionnaires. Then we meet with the school counselor to go through the protocol.”*

A BSA team member from the Gaston School District described the coordination between the principal, counselor, and special education staff, emphasizing that the decision to proceed with a full Level 1 assessment is based on an initial screening process.

Overall, Level 1 team members across districts reported consistent adherence to district-specific protocols, though structures vary depending on available staff, district procedures, and school size. Most emphasized using a combination of interviews and documentation prior to convening the BSA team.

## Coordination Between Level 1 and Level 2: Decision-Making and Escalation

Across all districts, participants described a clear process for determining when to escalate a case from Level 1 to Level 2. The primary criterion is whether the school-based team feels confident in developing and implementing a safety plan without additional support.

In Neah-Kah-Nie, participants shared the following:

*“If certain criteria are met in the Level 1 process, we transition to Level 2 and work with our ESD safety specialist to facilitate that meeting.”*

As a participant in Sherwood explained,

*“We ask: can the team confidently implement a plan? If not, it becomes a Level 2. I facilitate those meetings and coordinate with Northwest Regional ESD, the county mental health department, SROs, and other partners.”*

A participant from St. Helens shared that their district has only infrequently escalated cases to Level 2:

*“We haven’t had to do Level 2s often. When we do, we reach out to the ESD for help with coordination.”*

In the Northwest Regional ESD, which supports students from multiple districts, escalation requires interdistrict coordination:

*“Our students come from Beaverton, Hillsboro, and other districts. If a case goes to Level 2, we work closely with the sending district and the ESD to coordinate the response.”*

## Level 2 BSA Teams: Regional, Multiagency, and Systematically Coordinated

Level 2 teams are more formalized and involve broader system level coordination, often facilitated by district safety officers or the Northwest Regional ESD. These teams are activated for more serious or complex cases and include partners such as law enforcement, juvenile services, and community mental health agencies.

A participant from the Hillsboro School District described their coordination role:

*“I organize Level 2 meetings and represent both our security and law enforcement interests. We use an online form, though it’s been scaled back from the original Salem-Keizer model and we’re exploring ways to strengthen the process again. I also manage the threat database and follow up with building teams as needed.”*

In the Beaverton School District, Level 2 coordination was recently transitioned back to the Public Safety Office:

*“We brought threat management back under Public Safety and just hired a new threat management specialist. We’re aligning documentation, clarifying access to sensitive info, and supporting transitions between grades. We want to ensure students don’t fall through the cracks, especially in vulnerable years like 5th to 6th or 8th to 9th.”*

The NWRESD plays a key facilitation role for districts across Columbia, Tillamook, Clatsop, and Washington counties:

*“Most districts use our Level 2 team, which includes law enforcement, DHS, juvenile justice, mental health, and school staff. The school presents the case, we go through the Level 2 questions together, and I share notes and follow up later to check on the implementation of recommendations.”*

## Summary of Thematic Section 1

Across all participating districts, BSA team structures at the Level 1 tier are built around collaboration, flexibility, and a shared understanding of the district’s protocol. Roles are generally defined by function and availability, with teams consistently including school administrators, counselors, psychologists, and SROs.

The escalation process from Level 1 to Level 2 follows a clear decision-making pathway centered on the team’s ability to manage the case independently. Level 2 teams are more formal and involve structured, cross-agency collaboration, typically coordinated by the NWRESD or district-level public safety staff. The effectiveness of these teams hinges on strong partnerships between schools, ESD staff, and community agencies.

## Thematic Section 2: Policy and Procedure Development

This section explores how BSA teams across the NWRESD utilize, develop, and communicate policies and procedures that guide their work. Participants were asked the following questions:

*“What policies and procedures guide your BSA team’s work?”*

*“Who is involved in developing or revising these policies and procedures?”*

*“How are these policies and procedures communicated to school staff?”*

## Level 1 Teams: Variability in Formalization, Consistent Use of Established Models

Level 1 participants indicated a range of approaches to policy and procedure development. Several districts, such as St. Helens and Sherwood, reported using established external models, particularly the Salem-Keizer Cascade model and elements of the Dewey Cornell Virginia Model, as the foundation for their BSA procedures.

In St. Helens, a school administrator described their process:

*“We follow the Salem-Keizer protocol step-by-step. It’s very structured, and our goal is always to ensure students are safe and supported.”*

In Sherwood, a participant explained the development of a customized screening tool:

*“We blended the Salem-Keizer model with Dewey Cornell’s model and developed our own screener. This has been in place for about three years and better reflects our district’s needs. The protocol is clearly outlined in our Level 1 and Level 2 documentation.”*

However, other districts acknowledged that while they reference external frameworks, internal policies may still be evolving or lack detail. In Neah-Kah-Nie, a participant described the district’s board policy in the following terms:

*“Pretty vague—it confirms we have a BSA team and outlines their purpose but doesn’t go into procedural detail.”*

Some participants also reported adapting materials to fit their specific educational contexts. For instance, in the NWRESA’s Social Emotional Learning programs, educators collaborate to customize threat assessment forms based on available staff capacity and school structure:

*“Our school is small, and we have high staffing levels, so we can provide more interventions than a typical setting. We’ve worked with the ESD to add specific elements to the forms to reflect our environment.”*

When asked about who is responsible for establishing and approving policy, several Level 1 participants cited district leadership and school boards:

*“Ultimately, it’s up to the administration and school board to decide which procedures we follow, with input from school-based teams.”*

## Communication and Training: Annual Reviews and Staff Handbooks

In terms of implementation and communication, participants from Neah-Kah-Nie and St. Helens described annual training and documentation review practices:



*“Each year, during a staff meeting, we review the threat assessment procedures. It’s also included in the staff handbook.”*

This suggests that while detailed policy documentation may vary between districts, there is a shared understanding of the need for annual procedural review and internal communication to ensure consistent application of threat assessment practices.

## **Level 2 Teams: Emphasis on Interagency Collaboration Over Formal District Policy**

Level 2 BSA team members generally acknowledged a lack of formal, written district-level policy guiding BSA practices at the regional or district level. Instead, their work is often structured through interagency agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs).

One Level 2 participant provided the following explanation:

*“We don’t have any specific threat assessment policy at the district level yet, but we do have MOUs with key partners—juvenile justice, county mental health, DHS, and law enforcement.”*

Across districts such as Hillsboro and Beaverton, participants expressed a desire to move toward formalizing policy at the board or district level to increase procedural consistency and compliance:

*“I would love to see more formal policies—right now, it’s hard to get building-level staff to complete documentation thoroughly or consistently. A board-approved policy could help with accountability.”*

In Beaverton, the Level 2 process is guided by the Salem-Keizer model, supported by a newly hired threat management specialist, and enhanced through digital tools:

*“We’re uploading the forms into Raptor’s StudentSafe platform. This allows us to track threat assessments separately from students’ academic records while still maintaining accountability.”*

While policies are still developing, participants emphasized the importance of maintaining confidentiality within the Level 2 process. One participant from the NWRESD shared the following:

*“Before every Level 2 meeting, we reaffirm our confidentiality agreement. Information discussed is strictly for ensuring school and community safety and isn’t shared outside the meeting unless the full team agrees.”*



## Summary of Thematic Section 2

Across the NWRESD region, most BSA teams—both Level 1 and Level 2—rely on the Salem-Keizer Cascade model as a foundational framework, and they often adapt it to fit local needs. However, the degree to which policies and procedures are formally documented or board approved varies by district.

Level 1 teams are increasingly customizing assessment tools and procedures based on local context, though formal district policies may still be limited in scope. Communication of procedures typically occurs during annual staff meetings and through handbooks.

Level 2 teams rely more heavily on MOUs and informal agreements with community agencies, and while formal district-level policy is lacking in many cases, there is a strong desire among participants to establish clearer procedural guidance and documentation standards. Ongoing efforts to digitize, streamline, and formalize these processes are underway in several districts.

## Thematic Section 3: Common Activities and Strategies

This section examines the daily practices and intervention approaches of BSA teams across the NWRESD. Participants were asked the following questions:

*“What are the most common activities that your team engages in as part of the BSA process?”*

*“What tools or resources do you regularly use to support your work?”*

*“Are there specific strategies or frameworks that guide your assessment or intervention process?”*

### Level 1 Teams: Prioritizing Student Safety and Early Intervention

Across districts, Level 1 BSA team members described a range of common activities that align closely with initial threat response and student-centered support. These activities typically include the following:

- conducting student interviews and witness interviews
- reviewing academic, behavioral, and special education records
- contacting parents or guardians
- consulting with school counselors or external mental health providers
- collaborating with local police when necessary

As one Level 1 team member from the NWRESD explained,



*“We start with interviews, reviewing records, and consulting with law enforcement if needed. The goal is always to get a full picture of the student’s situation without shutting them down.”*

Another Level 1 participant from Sherwood emphasized the dual focus on intervention and safety:

*“Whether it’s the student who made the threat or the student who received it, we try to identify mental health needs, do check-ins, and assess what support services may help.”*

Threat assessments also frequently include logistical safety measures, such as removing students from general population settings or checking belongings, when there is an immediate concern.

A consistent framework guiding these practices is the Salem-Keizer Cascade Model, which most Level 1 teams reported using as their foundation, often alongside trauma-informed and empathy-based interview techniques. A participant from Neah-Kah-Nie shared the following:

*“We start by determining how viable the threat is. If necessary, we immediately involve local police to help conduct home visits or gather more information.”*

In terms of tools and documentation, teams reported using the following:

- Salem-Keizer BSA forms and screening tools
- customized threat assessment screeners tailored to district needs
- IEPs and special education plans (for students with disabilities)
- trauma-informed interviewing practices

One participant noted the following:

*“Most of our students are on IEPs, so we reference their special education documentation to ensure we are meeting their needs during the process.”*

## **Level 2 Teams: Escalated Review and Multiagency Collaboration**

Level 2 teams become involved when a case exceeds the capacity of the school-based Level 1 teams—either due to the severity of the threat, lack of internal resources, or complexity of the situation. Activities at the Level 2 stage often include the following:

- reviewing the full Level 1 documentation
- contacting juvenile justice, mental health providers, or Department of Human Services (DHS)



- performing additional criminal background and DHS history checks
- consulting with district psychologists or behavior specialists
- creating or revising formal safety plans

A Level 2 participant offered the following explanation:

*“Level 1 teams do the interviews and gather the background. Then at Level 2, we review that information, add any missing pieces—like mental health or criminal history—and put together a comprehensive plan.”*

Some districts have condensed their Level 1 process into digital forms to streamline submission due to time constraints. However, this streamlining has also resulted in documentation inconsistencies. In Hillsboro, one Level 2 participant provided the following reflection:

*“Getting administrators to do a full team meeting rather than operating in silos is tough. Sometimes Level 1 forms come through without safety plans, which is a big concern.”*

Level 2 participants also emphasized the importance of training and professional development. One larger district (Beaverton) required all administrators to participate in condensed training led by John Van Dreal. This was seen as a step forward in building consistent understanding of what constitutes a threat and how to differentiate between normative behavior and significant concern.

*“We are focusing on educating administrators about what is an actual threat versus expressive behavior. Compliance is essential—not just for safety, but legally, because people are being held personally accountable if the process is skipped or done poorly.”*

## Tools, Technology, and Community-Based Supports

Both Level 1 and Level 2 BSA teams reported using a range of tools and community partnerships to support their threat assessment work.

Technology platforms included the following:

- Google Forms for rapid Level 1 summaries
- StudentSafe by Raptor Technologies for managing threat documentation
- Nintech (a basic documentation platform used by some teams)

In Beaverton, the team reported handling over 350 assessments in a single year, making data tracking and tool functionality critical.



External partners played a key role in expanding the capacity of BSA teams:

- SROs conducted home visits and checked on firearm safety
- Safer Schools Together was contracted for digital open-source investigations
- City and County Threat Assessment Teams provided additional expertise

A Hillsboro-based team member highlighted how personal and professional relationships strengthen outcomes:

*“The relationships we’ve built—especially from my law enforcement background—really help us move quickly and access resources. That collaboration is one of our strongest tools.”*

Similarly, a participant from the NWRES D noted the following:

*“In smaller or more rural districts, I’ve found that spending time on-site and building relationships makes a huge difference. People respond quickly when they know and trust you.”*

Participants across multiple districts acknowledged disparities in resources and funding. While larger districts had more infrastructure and training opportunities, smaller or rural schools sometimes struggled to access the same level of tools or personnel.

### Summary of Thematic Section 3

BSA teams across the NWRES D consistently center student safety and holistic support in their processes. At Level 1, schools focus on gathering information, conducting interviews, and applying trauma-informed strategies, guided primarily by the Salem-Keizer model. At Level 2, teams collaborate with mental health professionals, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and DHS to conduct a more comprehensive review.

Though the core framework is consistent, tools and workflows vary by district, with larger systems leveraging digital platforms and third-party partners to manage volume and increase efficiency. Access to professional development, clarity of documentation, and interagency relationships were identified as essential supports, especially in ensuring fidelity to the process and legal compliance.

### Thematic Section 4: Implementation Challenges

This section explores the primary barriers that BSA teams face during the implementation of threat assessments and related safety interventions across the NWRES D. Participants were asked the following questions:

*“What would you say are the biggest challenges your team faces in carrying out BSA work?”*

*“Describe any barriers to collaborating between Level 1 and Level 2 teams.”*

## **Level 1 Teams: Staffing, Space, and Student Access to Education**

Across multiple smaller and midsize districts, Level 1 BSA team members described the logistical and resource-related challenges of carrying out the threat assessment process while maintaining educational access and safety for all students.

Several BSA team members from Neah-Kah-Nie, Gaston, Clatskanie, and St. Helens highlighted the difficulty of separating students involved in a threat incident due to limited classroom space, small student populations, and lack of supervision. One Level 1 participant from Gaston described the situation this way:

*“When the safety plan says students can’t have contact with each other, that’s nearly impossible for us. We only have a handful of classrooms, and it’s a challenge to supervise those kinds of changes with such a small staff.”*

Others echoed the view that supervising students during non-class time, such as recess, passing periods, or lunch, is a major burden, particularly when only one principal or counselor is available at a building.

A recurring concern from several Level 1 participants was that students undergoing assessment are often sent home for extended periods, not due to disciplinary intent but because schools lack internal structures to ensure both supervision and safety. A principal from Neah-Kah-Nie shared the following:

*“If the threat is severe enough for a Level 1, the student usually ends up at home until it’s complete. That’s unfortunate, but we don’t have the capacity to safely monitor them at school during the process.”*

This disruption often results in students missing several days of instruction only to later be found to have not posed a serious threat.

An administrator from Clatskanie stated,

*“That student might be out for three or four days, and once the team completes the process, we realize they didn’t need to be. That’s a huge barrier—balancing safety and fairness with the limited resources we have.”*

Another significant challenge mentioned by a team member from St. Helens was ensuring consistent fidelity to the BSA process across schools, especially when districts have multiple campuses with limited centralized oversight.



## Barriers to Level 1 and Level 2 Collaboration

Several Level 1 BSA team members noted that while the escalation from Level 1 to Level 2 is intended to bring in additional expertise and resources, logistical delays and coordination issues often reduce the effectiveness of the process.

In Neah-Kah-Nie, teams described the difficulty of coordinating with external agencies like DHS, juvenile justice, and local law enforcement. As one participant noted,

*“It’s hard to get all the players in the room at once. We’ve had meetings where some partners don’t show up, and we have to reschedule. In small towns, everyone is stretched thin.”*

One school psychologist from Gaston described a common tension in Level 2 meetings, where uncertainty around information sharing can lead to hesitation:

*“Even with MOUs in place, people sometimes don’t know if they should speak up. There’s this moment of silence where you can tell they’re unsure if they’re allowed to share.”*

Another Level 1 team member from Clatskanie shared a particularly challenging case where the student was deemed unsafe to return, but none of the behaviors met the threshold for community agency involvement:

*“We’ve had three or four meetings on the same student, and no one can do anything. The student refuses mental health services, law enforcement won’t act, and DHS says it doesn’t qualify. But the student still isn’t safe to return to school. We’re stuck.”*

Others expressed that larger districts, like Beaverton or Hillsboro, sometimes face delays due to limited availability on the Level 2 docket, resulting in long wait times for formal support.

## Level 2 Teams: Training, Turnover, and Resource Gaps

Level 2 BSA team members from Beaverton, Hillsboro, and the NWRESA cited staff training, buy-in, and team capacity as their biggest challenges.

One Level 2 participant from Beaverton noted the following:

*“We struggle to find time to build Level 1 capacity. It’s hard to get in front of teams for training and tabletop exercises so that people feel confident with the process.”*

A similar challenge was raised in Hillsboro, where a participant described the ongoing effort to educate staff and secure procedural buy-in:

*“It’s not that educators don’t want to follow the process—they’re overwhelmed. It feels like threat assessment only gets taken seriously when the situation is extreme.”*

The issue of staff turnover, especially in small school districts or local mental health agencies, was highlighted by an NWRESA school safety specialist:

*“We train people, and then they leave. Even those who stay often need a second training after they’ve done a few assessments—it finally clicks then.”*

Level 2 participants also described resource disparities, especially between urban and rural areas. In some counties, there may be only one mental health agency with three clinicians or only one wraparound service slot available. In other cases, schools have no viable placement options when students cannot safely remain on campus.

As one Level 2 team member emphasized,

*“We get examples in training that assume we have certain programs available, but they don’t exist in our counties. So we have to improvise.”*

## Technology, Documentation, and System Gaps

Documentation challenges were cited as a shared frustration, especially when forms are missing critical information or safety plans are not included.

- Teams in Beaverton are transitioning from Nintech to StudentSafe (Raptor Technologies) to improve documentation consistency and support legal compliance.
- A participant from Hillsboro shared concerns about administrators handling threat assessments in isolation:

*“Sometimes Level 1 forms come in without any safety plan. That’s a big concern—it shows the process wasn’t followed correctly.”*

Level 2 members also pointed to legal and liability concerns when assessments are not done thoroughly. As one team member noted,

*“If documentation is incomplete, administrators are at risk. They could be held personally accountable. That’s why we push for fidelity.”*

## Digital Threats and the Need for Modern Tools

A growing concern identified by several participants was the lack of tools to assess students’ digital activity, especially when threats are made online.

- In Beaverton, the district contracts with Safer Schools Together to conduct digital open-source investigations and monitor what they call “virtual hallways.”



- As a Level 2 team member emphasized,

*“State funding for digital threat monitoring tools would be huge. Without looking at a student’s online presence, we’re missing context.”*

Even in better resourced counties, placements and mental health services are limited, especially in spring, when many programs are full.

## Summary of Thematic Section 4

BSA teams across the NWRESA face common and persistent implementation challenges, particularly around staffing limitations, lack of supervision capacity, inconsistent documentation, and resource scarcity, especially in rural areas. Level 1 teams often struggle to supervise students safely during assessments and may resort to sending students home due to a lack of alternatives. Meanwhile, Level 2 teams contend with delays, training gaps, and difficulty aligning with community-based supports.

There is widespread agreement that building Level 1 capacity, increasing interagency coordination, and investing in digital safety tools and data systems are urgent needs. Without these supports, schools, especially smaller or under-resourced ones, remain vulnerable to process breakdowns that can compromise both safety and equity. Participants called for state-level funding, standardized systems, and stronger cross-sector collaboration to ensure all districts can implement BSA practices with fidelity and fairness.

## Thematic Section 5: Lessons Learned and Successes

In this section, participants reflected on what has worked well in their BSA processes. They were invited to share the practices, structures, and training efforts that have yielded the most positive outcomes for their schools and communities. Participants were asked the following questions:

*“What have been the most effective practices or changes that your team has implemented?”*

*“What kind of supports have been most helpful, like trainings, resources, or even leadership support?”*

*“Highlight any lessons learned and successes.”*



## Level 1 BSA Team Members: Process Improvements and Training for Practical Application

Level 1 BSA team members repeatedly emphasized the value of having a structured and thorough process, even if it initially feels overwhelming. Several participants shared how sticking closely to the BSA protocol helped uncover issues that might have otherwise been missed.

A Level 1 BSA team member from Clatskanie School District offered the following reflection:

*“One of the things that we have learned to appreciate—while this is a very long and tedious process—we’ve found that we’re glad the specific steps and processes are there. There have been times where, if we didn’t have the process and only looked at it from the surface and basic interviews, there would be things we would have missed. On the surface it didn’t seem like a huge issue, but once we followed all of the steps, we realized we had a bigger issue—it ended up going to Level 2.”*

A nurse from Neah-Kah-Nie School District added the following:

*“The structured process has helped. It’s become easier over time, but it was overwhelming at first. Now we’re more efficient, even though it’s still time-consuming. We also added a dismissal process for when a threat is unfounded—where maybe someone with a disability makes a reactive statement. We’ve had different scenarios where we’ve been able to dismiss without going through the Level 1 process.”*

Another administrator from Neah-Kah-Nie noted the documentation benefits:

*“The dismissal form has been great for us because we can document that it happened and keep a record, even if it wasn’t quite at the level of a Level 1.”*

A school psychologist from Gaston School District echoed this:

*“Maybe we’re talking about the inquiry process where we dismiss it before going through the entire Level 1 protocol. Especially if a student says, ‘Oh, I shouldn’t have said that,’ and it’s clearly a reactive, transient threat—then it’s over at that point. Staff don’t have to go through the full protocol.”*

Training was a major area of growth for some districts. A participant from Sherwood shared their approach to skill building through simulation:

*“When we fine-tuned our process, we did a good job training it out to staff. We worked with school counselors and administrators and did case studies—presenting scenarios and running through them as if it was a Level 1 screener. There’s so much critical thinking involved, and this helped everyone see how different people process the same information. That’s what really built some of those skills.”*

When asked about supports that made the most difference, several team members cited ongoing training opportunities and relationships with law enforcement.

A team member from St. Helens School District offered the following remark:

*“Training has been really good for us. We’ve done a couple of workshops through the ESD or in Seaside, and just walking through the protocol has been great.”*

A school psychologist from the NWRESA added the following:

*“Having those trainings annually has been helpful to get new staff trained or expand the number of trained people. A few years ago, they weren’t offered as often, but now they’re more regular.”*

Finally, a team member from Sherwood emphasized the importance of embedded SROs:

*“We have two full-time SROs, and we know how lucky we are. They’re not only involved in every process, but because they’re in our buildings full-time, they have relationships with the students and families. Their coordination with the police department has been a huge factor in our BSA success.”*

## **Level 2 BSA Team Members: Systems Building and Team Consistency**

Level 2 participants highlighted the importance of team consistency, clinical expertise, and clear communication about the purpose of BSA.

A Level 2 participant from Hillsboro shared the following:

*“Our Level 2 team is effective. We consistently have the same people showing up. I come from law enforcement and crisis response, and I think our Level 2 team does a good job supporting our Level 1 teams. Our relationship with the district psychologist is huge. He understands the brain, the SPED side, and is very knowledgeable—I rely a lot on him.”*

A participant from Beaverton added humor while reinforcing the value of clinical expertise:

*“We’re trying to steal [the district psychologist] from Hillsboro if you haven’t noticed. Having a clinical psychologist who is trauma-informed and also part of the city’s threat assessment team is such a huge resource. He interviews kids really well, speaks with parents in a calm way—it’s just a blessing to have him.”*

They continued by describing how their team clarifies the purpose and boundaries of BSA:

*“We keep saying—we are not discipline, we are not placement. We’re here to wrap around and disrupt the pathway to violence. We support both the student who*



*needs protecting and the one who needs the safety plan. That communication—about what we are and what we aren't—is really helpful for staff understanding.”*

The same team also emphasized the importance of resetting training expectations:

*“This reset of Level 1 training has gotten positive feedback. We brought in John—the Godfather of threat assessment—to lead training. He wrote the plan, and he’s trauma-informed, understands the politics, and clearly explains what this process is all about.”*

A school safety specialist from the NWRESA offered a broader systems-level perspective:

*“Probably the biggest success has been building systems where previously there weren’t any. Some districts didn’t have any plan for what to do if something happened. Now they’re mostly doing what they’re supposed to, and they’re meeting more frequently. We can staff cases more efficiently than we could a couple of years ago. We’re still early in the learning phase, but we’re improving and growing.”*

## Summary of Thematic Section 5

Both Level 1 and Level 2 teams reported that the structured nature of the BSA protocol—though time-consuming—provides clarity, consistency, and safety. Teams shared that adding dismissal or inquiry forms has helped reduce unnecessary assessments while preserving documentation and transparency. Simulation-style training, case walk-throughs, and cross-role conversations helped build practical skills and confidence, especially for administrators and counselors tasked with leading assessments.

At Level 2, consistent team membership, access to clinical expertise, and reinforcement of the purpose and limits of BSA were viewed as essential for success. Participants underscored the importance of clear communication, trauma-informed practices, and continued professional development led by experienced trainers.

Notably, participants across levels and districts highlighted the value of relationships—whether with psychologists, law enforcement, or community partners—as key to their success. Many credited their progress to system-building efforts that allowed previously underprepared districts to respond to threats with more confidence, care, and coordination.

## Thematic Section 6: Final Reflections

To conclude the interviews, participants were asked one final, open-ended question designed to surface any additional insights or takeaways that had not yet been shared.

*“We are reaching the end of our interview, but before we end, is there anything we didn’t ask that you think is important to share about your BSA work?”*

## Level 1 BSA Team Members: Emphasizing Consultation and the Impact of Technology

Several Level 1 BSA team members spoke to the importance of continuous training, having access to consultation networks, and the increasing role of technology in threat cases.

A school leader from St. Helens School District focused on the restorative purpose of the process:

*“My advice would be to attend the trainings so that you are knowledgeable about what you are doing. Really, it is about protecting every kid—the kid who might have made a threat or the kids who are feeling threatened. To me, you have to fix that harm because everyone has to come back into the school and be in the classroom together, and you want to create that climate for that.”*

A school psychologist from the NWRES D highlighted the value of expert consultation and collaboration across districts:

*“Being able to have someone to consult with—whether it’s a colleague in another district, someone like Neha, or someone else from the ESD—is important, especially for cases that are a little different. We had one instance where the parents and student had an attorney and were advised not to cooperate, which really complicated the situation. So having someone to talk through that with was helpful.”*

The same participant noted that digital communication and device access now play a much larger role in modern BSA practices:

*“Technology has become more of a factor in the BSA process. Whether a threat was made online or through Snapchat—our students have Chromebooks, so we check history. We work with our IT department to access student phone information if they’re on our school’s Wi-Fi. It’s legally accessible and can contain a lot of information. We can’t ignore these digital pieces anymore.”*

## Level 2 BSA Team Members: Statewide Collaboration and Sustained System Growth

Level 2 team members shared final reflections that emphasized statewide alignment, the need for leadership roles dedicated to BSA, and appreciation for Oregon’s progress compared to other states.

A participant from Hillsboro voiced appreciation for the collaborative structure Oregon has built:



*“I think it’s great that we’re all coming to the table and talking about this at a PK–12 level. And what’s even crazier is that the kids we’re concerned about are getting younger, it’s no longer just high school. We’re getting concerns about 4th graders. I think it’s great the state came together and put a team in place to help improve what we’re doing and support rural areas that might not have the same resources we do in Portland metro. So thank you—I really appreciate this space.”*

A district safety manager from Beaverton emphasized both the importance of clarity around BSA and the need for dedicated personnel:

*“Spreading awareness of what this is and isn’t is important—along with why it’s critical to have someone overseeing the work in a district. Having someone to call for consultation, like Neha, is essential. I’ve worked with others in the field over the years, and there’s a lot of good support through collaboration. But we need to continue pushing out the message and advocating for these roles to exist.”*

Finally, a safety specialist with the NWRESA underscored Oregon’s position as a leader in school safety work:

*“The more people who can come to the table and learn from each other, the more we all grow and improve. Having gone to national school safety conferences and hearing about places where staff still need to be convinced that this kind of work matters—I’m grateful to be in Oregon. I think we’re ahead of a lot of other places, and I’m excited to see where we go from here and what additional resources might become available.”*

## Summary of Thematic Section 6

Final reflections across both Level 1 and Level 2 participants emphasized several shared themes:

- the importance of consultation and collaboration, especially for complex or unusual cases
- an appreciation for structured training and statewide systems, with specific gratitude toward the support provided by the NWRESA
- a call to expand awareness of the purpose and function of BSA, including clarifying misconceptions around discipline versus support
- a recognition that technology and digital communication are now central to many threat assessments and require careful attention
- acknowledgment that students involved in threats are getting younger, further underscoring the need for early intervention, staff training, and developmentally informed responses



There was consensus that Oregon's BSA infrastructure provides a solid foundation and that continued investment in training, consultation, and interdistrict support will be vital to its future growth and effectiveness.

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# Discussion/Analysis

## Interpretation of Findings and Implications for Practice

This research explored how BSA teams across the NWRESA are structured, how they operate, what supports or barriers they encounter, and how they evaluate their own effectiveness. The study team used a thematic framework to categorize responses into six key areas. Below is an interpretation of those themes in relation to the guiding questions as well as implications for practice.

### Thematic Section 1: Team Structures and Roles/Responsibilities

#### Interpretation

BSA teams in the NWRESA reflect the core principles of the Salem-Keizer Cascade Model, which stress multidisciplinary collaboration. Findings confirm that Level 1 teams are typically school based and fluid and composed of available professionals (e.g., administrators, counselors, SROs), while Level 2 teams involve formal, interagency collaboration and are coordinated regionally.

#### Implication for Practice

Clear roles and protocols support effective case management, but districts may benefit from formal onboarding processes and equity-centered approaches in team composition to ensure consistent representation and reduce bias in decision-making.

### Thematic Section 2: Policy and Procedure Development

#### Interpretation

While most teams base their practice on the Salem-Keizer model, a significant gap exists between procedural frameworks and formal district-level policies. Many districts rely on



informal agreements, and documentation varies widely. This may lead to inconsistencies in fidelity to the process, especially during staff turnover or high-volume periods.

### **Implication for Practice**

Districts should be supported in transforming informal practices into formal policies. This would promote legal defensibility, increase staff confidence, and allow for greater transparency and accountability in BSA implementation.

## **Thematic Section 3: Activities and Tools**

### **Interpretation**

Practices are largely consistent with best-practice guidelines: student interviews, record reviews, safety planning, and multiagency coordination. Trauma-informed approaches and empathy-based interviewing are frequently cited. However, tool use (e.g., digital screeners, data platforms) varies significantly between districts, with rural and smaller districts reporting limited access.

### **Implication for Practice**

Investing in regionally supported platforms and providing uniform tools could enhance consistency and data-sharing. Moreover, training on trauma-informed practices should remain a focus given the psychological vulnerability of many referred students.

## **Thematic Section 4: Implementation Challenges**

### **Interpretation**

Barriers such as limited staffing, lack of supervision capacity, uneven training, and resource disparities—particularly in rural districts—were repeatedly cited. Teams often face dilemmas around how to supervise students during assessments or how to manage cases without adequate mental health personnel. Delays and fragmentation in community coordination exacerbate these problems.

### **Implication for Practice**

There is a need for state-level funding, minimum staffing standards, and regional equity audits to ensure that safety is not determined by zip code. Establishing shared service models (e.g., itinerant evaluators or roving clinicians) could help fill gaps in smaller districts.



## Thematic Section 5: Lessons Learned and Successes

### Interpretation

Teams expressed strong support for the structured nature of the BSA process despite the time demands. Innovative practices—such as dismissal forms and simulation training—are helping reduce unnecessary assessments and improving staff confidence. Relationships with community psychologists, law enforcement, and district specialists were repeatedly credited as key to success.

### Implication for Practice

Encouraging simulation-based training and codifying inquiry protocols across districts could prevent burnout and reduce the number of inappropriate referrals, especially when working with neurodivergent or emotionally reactive students.

## Thematic Section 6: Final Reflections

### Interpretation

Participants reinforced the importance of consultation, cross-district learning, and continued investment in building systems. There was strong awareness of the increasing complexity of BSA work—especially with the rise of digital threats and the younger age of referred students. Oregon was viewed as a national leader in threat assessment infrastructure, but further investment in coordination and public awareness is still needed.

### Implication for Practice

Future policy and training should explicitly address digital literacy for threat assessment teams, expand consultation networks, and raise public awareness about the supportive—not punitive—nature of BSA work.

## Cross-Thematic Implications for Research and Practice

Collectively, the findings address several core research questions:

- **How are BSA teams structured and operated across the NWRESD region?**  
Multidisciplinary, tiered teams are functioning across most districts, but team makeup, processes, and tools vary significantly.
- **What challenges and supports influence implementation?**  
Resource disparity, staff capacity, and inconsistent documentation are major challenges; structured training, relationships, and trauma-informed practices are key supports.



- **How do teams define success and adapt practices over time?**  
Success is defined by harm prevention, student support, and procedural fidelity. Teams are adapting through custom tools, dismissal forms, simulation training, and interagency consultation.
- **What policy or resource changes are needed to strengthen implementation?**  
Teams call for clearer policy, standardized documentation, increased funding for rural supports, and access to expert consultation.

## Conclusion

The NWRESD reflects many of the strengths and limitations identified in national threat assessment research: strong foundational frameworks, dedicated professionals, and a commitment to continuous improvement—but also a need for systemic equity, consistent policy, and ongoing training. As digital threats and younger students become more prevalent in BSA work, the system must continue to evolve, and state-level support will be critical in sustaining momentum and addressing gaps.



# Strategic Recommendations

Based on insights gathered from focus group interviews with Level 1 and Level 2 BSA team members across the NWRESD, the following recommendations have been developed to guide improvement, support sustainability, and inform next steps at the state level.

These recommendations reflect the real-world challenges, successes, and needs identified by BSA practitioners and are intended to help the ODE enhance statewide support for BSA implementation. While not exhaustive, they serve as a foundational starting point for improving and sustaining BSA operations across Oregon's school districts.

## Promote the Use of a Consistent BSA Documentation Platform Within Districts

Encourage districts to adopt or develop a centralized platform to document BSA cases consistently within their own systems. While the platform does not need to be shared statewide or across districts, it should

- ensure internal documentation fidelity across schools and teams within a district;
- support the identification of local trends and patterns to inform prevention efforts; and
- enable safer transitions when students transfer between schools within the same district by maintaining accessible, centralized records.

*Note:* This recommendation does not suggest creating a shared, cross-district system to exchange BSA data. Student privacy and legal compliance remain critical. Instead, the goal is to support each district in building an internal infrastructure that ensures consistency, efficiency, and fidelity in their BSA work.

## Support Districts in Developing Board-Approved Policies and Procedures

Provide implementation support or templates for the following:

- school board policy
- procedural documentation
- communication protocols (e.g., parent notifications)
- community partnerships and referral processes



## Expand Training Opportunities and Peer Learning Networks

- Increase access to foundational and advanced BSA training statewide.
- Facilitate professional learning communities or networks across districts, especially for smaller or rural systems.
- Encourage case study–based training models that simulate real scenarios and build decision-making skills.

## Increase Funding and Access to Community-Based Resources

- Support the creation of a centralized repository of community mental health, behavioral evaluation, and social service providers.
- Explore funding streams for behavioral health evaluations and post-assessment supports, particularly in under-resourced districts.

## Promote Procedural Fidelity and Model Integrity

- Regularly communicate with districts about the purpose and limits of BSA.
- Discourage ad hoc changes to the adopted model that could compromise safety, equity, or legal compliance.
- Monitor fidelity and provide support for alignment with the Salem-Keizer Cascade Model.

## Create and Sustain Regional and Statewide BSA Networks

- Establish ongoing collaborative networks that include representatives from multiple BSA teams statewide.
- Facilitate regular cross-district meetings to share practices, solve problems, and disseminate updates.

## Strengthen Response to Digital and Technology-Based Threats

- Provide training and tools to address the growing number of threats made through digital platforms (e.g., social media, messaging apps).
- Fund district-level IT and investigative supports to safely access and interpret digital evidence.
- Develop guidance on balancing digital privacy with school safety requirements.



By implementing these recommendations, the ODE can help ensure that Oregon's BSA systems are consistent, equitable, and sustainable statewide, equipping all districts with the tools, partnerships, and resources they need to identify, assess, and respond to student threats with care, clarity, and confidence.

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## Limitations

While this research effort provides valuable insights into BSA practices within the NWRESD, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

- **Limited Generalizability:** The data collected reflect only the experiences and practices of districts within the NWRESD. As such, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other Education Service Districts (ESDs) across Oregon, where district size, structure, and available resources may differ.
- **Uneven Participant Representation:** There was a disproportionate number of Level 1 BSA team members compared to Level 2 participants. Only four Level 2 participants were included, which was fewer than anticipated. This imbalance may limit the breadth and depth of insight into Level 2 processes and perspectives.
- **Incomplete Regional Representation:** Not all districts within the NWRESD region were represented in the focus groups. The absence of perspectives from certain districts further limits the ability to draw broad conclusions or identify regionwide trends.

These limitations highlight the importance of interpreting the findings within the context of the NWRESD region and underscore the need for continued research involving broader participation across multiple ESDs and balanced representation across BSA team levels.



# Appendix A. Focus Group Interview Protocol

## ODE BJA STOP School Violence Grant Program Evaluation Task 4

Interview Protocol: Behavior Safety Assessment (BSA) Team Operations

### Purpose

The purpose of this interview protocol is to systematically collect qualitative data from Level 1 and Level 2 Behavioral Safety Assessment (BSA) team members to inform a comprehensive understanding of BSA operations within the Northwest Regional Education Service District. The protocol focuses on understanding team members' roles and responsibilities, the development of policies and procedures, common practices and strategies, challenges encountered, lessons learned, and key factors that contribute to successful outcomes.

### Interview Focus Group Format

Each focus group session will include five to seven BSA team members from both Level 1 and Level 2. This structure is intended to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives is represented, supporting a comprehensive understanding of BSA operations.

- **Session 1: Level 1 Team Focus Group**
  - Focus on school-based or frontline implementation.
    - Ideal participants: school staff, frontline BSA team members, counselors, psychologists, etc.
- **Session 2: Level 2 Team Focus Group**
  - Focus on system-level or regional coordination.
    - Ideal participants: ESD-level staff, district leads, program administrators, etc.

### Introduction/Opening Remarks

“Hello, and thank you for taking the time to join us today. My name is **[Facilitator Name, e.g., Andre’ Spence]**, and I’m with WestEd. In partnership with the Oregon Department of Education



(ODE), we're gathering insights from Level 1 and Level 2 BSA team members within the Northwest Educational Service District. Our goal is to better understand how BSA processes are structured and implemented across different educational settings.

Your perspectives will help us identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities to improve and sustain these processes. This session will take approximately **60 minutes**. As indicated in the email for participation, the focus group interview will be recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Please know that all responses will remain confidential, and no individuals will be named in the final report.

We encourage you to speak openly and honestly—there are no right or wrong answers. If you'd prefer not to answer a question, or if you need more time to answer any of the questions, just let me know.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?"

## Interview Questions

"Before we dive into the questions, I would like to provide an overview of the structure of the interview questions.

The interview questions are organized into six thematic sections. These sections include

1. Team Structure and Roles/Responsibilities
2. Policy and Procedure Development
3. Common Activities and Strategies
4. Implementation Challenges
5. Lessons Learned and Successes
6. Final Reflections

Each section contains questions that will be posed to both Level 1 and Level 2 participants. The questions are designed to elicit insights from each level, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of organizational practices and experiences across different roles and responsibilities."

### Thematic Section 1: Team Structure and Roles/Responsibilities

"The first part of our discussion will focus on BSA team structure and roles/responsibilities. Please describe your current role and your responsibilities within your BSA team."



*Probing questions:* If more information is needed from the focus group, ask the following:

- What roles are typically involved at your level (Level 1 and Level 2)?
- What is the process for coordination between Level 1 and Level 2 team members?

## **Thematic Section 2: Policy and Procedure Development**

“The second thematic section has to do with policy and procedure development. The first question pertaining to this section is ‘What policies and procedures guide your team’s BSA work?’ and the second is ‘Who is involved in developing or revising these policies and procedures?’”

*Probing questions:* If more information is needed from the focus group, ask the following:

- How often are policies or procedures reviewed and updated?
- How are these policies or procedures communicated to staff and stakeholders?

## **Thematic Section 3: Common Activities and Strategies**

“Thematic Section 3 covers common activities and strategies among BSA teams. What are the most common activities your team engages in as part of the BSA process?”

Additionally, explain any specific strategies or frameworks that guide your assessment or intervention process.”

*Probing questions:* If more information is needed from the focus group, ask the following:

- What tools or resources do you regularly use to support your work?
- How are aggregate data from BSAs used to inform Tier 1 or Tier 2 intervention?

## **Thematic Section 4: Implementation Challenges**

“In this section we are going to shift gears a bit and discuss implementation challenges related to your BSA work. What would you say are the biggest challenges your team faces in carrying out BSA work?”

*Probing question:* If more information is needed from the focus group, ask the following:

- Describe any barriers to collaborating between Level 1 and Level 2 teams.



## Thematic Section 5: Lessons Learned and Successes

“In this section I am going to allow you to highlight lessons learned and successes. What have been the most effective practices or changes your team has implemented?”

Also, what kinds of support (training, resources, leadership) have been most helpful?”

## Thematic Section 6: Final Reflections

“We are reaching the end of our interview, but before we end is there anything we didn’t ask that you think is important to share about your BSA work?”

*Probing question:* If more information is needed from the focus group, ask the following:

- What advice would you provide for a colleague who is new to the BSA process?

## Closing

“Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me today. Your insights are incredibly valuable and will help us better understand current practices and opportunities for improvement as it relates to BSA.”



# Appendix B. Email Invitation for Participation

**Subject:** Invitation to Participate in Behavior Safety Assessment (BSA) Focus Groups

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and WestEd are partnering on a project to document Behavior Safety Assessment (BSA) operations at Northwest Regional Educational Service District (NWRESA). This effort focuses on capturing how BSA teams are structured, the activities they engage in, and the policies and procedures that guide their work—with the goal of supporting continuous improvement and long-term sustainability.

As part of this project, we are conducting two **60-minute virtual** focus group interviews to gather input directly from Level 1 and Level 2 BSA team members. These **60-minute** sessions will be used to document key aspects of BSA operations, including:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Policy and procedure development
- Common activities
- Strategies used
- Challenges experienced
- Lessons learned
- Facilitators of success

We are seeking 5–7 participants for each session. Your insights will contribute to a statewide understanding of effective BSA team practices.

## Focus Group Interview Sessions

Hosted by WestEd (via Zoom):

- **Focus Group 1:** Level 1 BSA Team Members
  - Date: **May 19, 2025**
  - Time: **9–10 a.m. PDT**
- **Focus Group 2:** Level 2 BSA Team Members
  - Date: **May 22, 2025**
  - Time: **2–3 p.m. PDT**



All sessions will be **recorded** and transcribed to support qualitative analysis. A final report summarizing the findings and recommendations will be shared with ODE.

If you are interested in participating or would like to recommend a colleague, please respond by **May 9, 2025**.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to contribute your experience to this important work. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

