
HOUSE BILL 2373

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Senn, Kagi, Stambaugh, Kuderer, Jinkins, Reykdal, Robinson, Frame, Kilduff, Sawyer, Orwall, Sells, McBride, Bergquist, and Pollet

Read first time 01/12/16. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to evaluating student mental health services and
2 providing students with skills that promote mental health and well-
3 being and increase academic performance; amending RCW 28A.310.500;
4 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The education of children is critically
7 important. In order for children to be ready to learn and ready to
8 ultimately enter the workforce prepared, they need to have academic,
9 social, and emotional skills.

10 Responsible decision making, self management, healthy
11 relationship skills, and self and social awareness are among the
12 tools students need. These essential skills help improve school
13 climate and reduce bullying, discipline issues, dropout rates, and
14 the educational opportunity gap at the same time as they increase
15 mental well-being, student engagement, and academic performance.

16 Schools teaching developmentally appropriate interpersonal and
17 decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning
18 see large increases in academic performance.

19 Students today experience unfathomable stresses. Over thirty
20 thousand K-12 students are homeless. Thousands experience bullying,
21 depression, abuse, or have witnessed domestic violence or other

1 violence in their communities. Many have lost a parent or suffered a
2 traumatic experience.

3 Emotions and relationships directly affect how students learn and
4 how they use that learning in other contexts. If a student is
5 anxious, afraid, or worried about other stresses in his or her life,
6 those emotions will interfere with attention, memory, and positive
7 behaviors. By developing social and emotional skills, students will
8 be equipped with tools to overcome barriers to their learning and
9 even find solace in education and going to school.

10 The legislature is committed to investing in preventative
11 strategies in schools to increase student mental health and well-
12 being in order to support the education of our state's children.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.310.500 and 2013 c 197 s 6 are each amended to
14 read as follows:

15 (1) Each educational service district shall develop and maintain
16 the capacity to offer training for educators and other school
17 district staff on youth suicide screening and referral, and on
18 recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or
19 behavioral distress in students, including but not limited to
20 indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide.
21 An educational service district may demonstrate capacity by employing
22 staff with sufficient expertise to offer the training or by
23 contracting with individuals or organizations to offer the training.
24 Training may be offered on a fee-for-service basis, or at no cost to
25 school districts or educators if funds are appropriated specifically
26 for this purpose or made available through grants or other sources.

27 (2)(a) Each educational service district shall develop and
28 maintain the capacity to serve as a convener, trainer, and mentor for
29 educators, administrators, and other school district staff on social
30 and emotional learning. An educational service district may
31 demonstrate capacity by employing staff with sufficient expertise to
32 offer the training or by contracting with individuals or
33 organizations to offer the training.

34 (b) Each educational service district must offer training on
35 social and emotional learning, beginning in the 2017-18 school year,
36 at no cost to school districts or educators if funds are appropriated
37 specifically for this purpose or made available through grants or
38 other sources.

1 (c) The training model and curricula must be based on the
2 recommendations of the office of the superintendent of public
3 instruction's 2016 report on comprehensive benchmarks for
4 developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making
5 knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning.

6 (d) An educational service district may work with school
7 districts to create a training model that works best for each school
8 district and educational service district.

9 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. (1) The joint legislative audit and review
10 committee shall conduct an inventory of the mental health service
11 models available to students through schools, school districts, and
12 educational service districts and report its findings by October 31,
13 2016. The report must be submitted to the appropriate committees of
14 the house of representatives and the senate, in accordance with RCW
15 43.01.036.

16 (2) The committee must perform the inventory using data that is
17 already collected by schools, school districts, and educational
18 service districts. The committee must not collect or review student-
19 level data and must not include student-level data in the report.

20 (3) The inventory and report must include information on the
21 following:

22 (a) How many students are served by mental health services in
23 each school, school district, or educational service district;

24 (b) How many of these students are participating in medicaid
25 programs;

26 (c) How the mental health services are funded, including federal,
27 state, and private sources;

28 (d) Information on who provides the mental health services,
29 including district employees and contractors;

30 (e) Any other available information related to student access and
31 outcomes.

32 (4) This section expires July 1, 2017.

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