
SENATE BILL 5685

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Bailey, Rolfes, Warnick, O'Ban, Darneille, Frockt, Keiser, Kuderer, and Wilson, L.

Read first time 01/28/19. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring a primary contact in schools to
2 recognize, screen, and respond to emotional or behavioral distress in
3 students; adding a new section to chapter 28A.320 RCW; and creating a
4 new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that on February 14,
7 2018, a former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in
8 Florida is alleged to have returned to that high school and carried
9 out one of the nation's worst school shootings by killing seventeen
10 people and injuring many more. The legislature further finds that
11 this student's past revealed a pattern of disciplinary issues and
12 unnerving behavior. His attorney stated that this student has
13 ". . . . been through a lot of trauma. He has suffered significant
14 mental illness, and significant mental trauma."

15 The legislature intends to increase student health and well-being
16 by requiring each school building to have a primary contact who is
17 trained in recognizing, screening, and responding to emotional or
18 behavioral distress in students.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
20 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, school districts must
2 identify one person in each school building as the student health and
3 well-being primary contact.

4 (2) The primary contact must be appointed by the school building
5 principal and may be a mental health counselor or other professional
6 that is trained in recognizing, screening, and responding to
7 emotional or behavioral distress in students and identifying students
8 who are at risk for substance abuse, violence, or youth suicide.

9 (3) At a minimum, the primary contact must:

10 (a) Build trusting relationships with students;

11 (b) Educate students about the conditions that should trigger
12 communicating concerns;

13 (c) De-escalate tension;

14 (d) Observe classrooms upon request by a teacher or student;

15 (e) Collaborate with the primary contact regarding the
16 antiharassment, intimidation, or bullying policy required by RCW
17 28A.300.285;

18 (f) Coordinate the implementation of plans for recognition,
19 initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress
20 in students as required by RCW 28A.320.127;

21 (g) Participate in the professional collaboration with school
22 counselors, social workers, and psychologists required by RCW
23 28A.320.290; and

24 (h) Facilitate partnerships with qualified health, mental health,
25 and social services agencies in the community to whom school
26 personnel may make referrals.

27 (4) This section does not create any civil liability on the part
28 of the state or any state agency, officer, employee, agent, political
29 subdivision, or school district.

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