

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1363

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 17, 2021

Title: An act relating to policies and resources to address secondary traumatic stress in the K-12 workforce.

Brief Description: Addressing secondary trauma in the K-12 workforce.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Callan, Davis, Ramos, Simmons, Berg, Morgan, Bergquist, Harris-Talley and Pollet).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/25/21, 58-40.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/12/21, 3/17/21 [DP, DNP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to publish on its website links to resources, self-assessments, and best practices to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress in the K-12 workforce.
- Directs the Washington State School Directors' Association to develop and periodically update a model policy and procedure to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress.
- Requires school districts to adopt a policy and procedure that incorporates the model by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year and periodically review.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Hunt, Mullet and Pedersen.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier and McCune.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Vicarious or Secondary Trauma. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) published a training tool that defines vicarious or secondary trauma. Vicarious or secondary trauma is post-traumatic stress disorder behaviors and emotions resulting from internalizing the traumatizing event experienced by another. The training tool explains it is not uncommon for school professionals, who have a classroom with one or more students struggling with the effects of trauma, to experience symptoms very much like those their students are exhibiting.

Washington State School Directors' Association. The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is the state agency that provides advice and assistance to local school boards. WSSDA is charged with coordinating policymaking, control, and management of the state's school districts. Among other actions, WSSDA adopts model policies and procedures, often in response to legislative directives.

Summary of Bill: Resources. OSPI must publish on its website links to resources, self-assessments, and best practices for educators and local policymakers to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress in the workforce. OSPI must collaborate with WSSDA, the educational service districts (ESDs), and the School Employees' Benefits Board (SEBB) to provide links to any resources on secondary traumatic stress available through these organizations.

Model Policy and Procedure. By August 1, 2021, WSSDA must develop or revise a model policy and procedure to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress and post it on its website. It must include:

- a commitment to support mental health in the workforce;
- promotion of a positive workplace climate with a focus on diversity and inclusion;
- establishment of a district-wide workforce mental health committee;
- regular assessment of district-level and school building-level implementation of the policy and procedures that includes input from the workforce; and
- provision of appropriate resources and training to schools and staff for continuous improvement.

WSSDA must periodically update the model policy and procedure and post it within a reasonable time.

The district-wide workforce mental health committee must:

- share mental health resources and supports available through OSPI, ESDs, and SEBB;
- share links to a self-assessment tool and any associated resources; and

- report to the school district board of directors at least once per year.

School District Policies and Procedures. By the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, each school district must adopt, or amend if necessary, policies and procedures that at a minimum incorporate the required elements in the model. School districts must periodically review their policies and procedures for consistency with updated versions of the model.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Many teachers experience trauma on a regular basis, and they are not adequately prepared. Research shows that this secondary traumatic stress can negatively impact teachers. This stress has increased and will continue to increase during the pandemic and as teachers see how their students have been impacted. This bill will address an urgent need and provide a model policy and a standard approach to address secondary traumatic stress, which will include best practices. This bill will help build a safer and more supportive work environment for teachers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Lillian Ortiz-Self, Prime Sponsor; Avanti Bergquist, Washington State School Directors' Association; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.