
SENATE BILL 5365

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senators Rolfes, Cleveland, Frockt, Kohl-Welles, and Kline

Read first time 01/28/13. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing the capacity of school districts to
2 recognize and respond to troubled youth; amending RCW 28A.410.035;
3 adding a new section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; adding new sections to
4 chapter 28A.320 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.310 RCW; and
5 creating new sections.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

8 (a) According to the state department of health, suicide is the
9 second leading cause of death for Washington youth between the ages of
10 ten and twenty-four. Suicide rates among Washington youth remain
11 higher than that national average;

12 (b) An increasing body of research shows an association between
13 adverse childhood experiences such as trauma, violence, or abuse, and
14 school performance;

15 (c) Educators are not necessarily trained to address significant
16 social, emotional, or behavioral issues exhibited by troubled youth.
17 Rather, best practices guidelines suggest that school districts should
18 form partnerships with qualified health, mental health, and social
19 services agencies to provide support; and

1 (d) Current safe school plans prepared by school districts tend to
2 focus more on natural disasters and external threats and less on how to
3 recognize and respond to potential crises among the students inside the
4 school.

5 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to increase the capacity for
6 school districts to recognize and respond to troubled youth through
7 additional training, more comprehensive planning, and emphasis on
8 partnerships between schools and communities.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) As provided under subsections (2) and (3) of this section,
12 individuals certified by the professional educator standards board as
13 a school nurse, school social worker, or school counselor must complete
14 a training program on youth suicide screening and referral as a
15 condition of certification. The training program must be at least
16 three hours in length. The professional educator standards board must
17 adopt standards for the minimum content of the training in consultation
18 with the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the
19 department of health. In developing the standards, the board must
20 consider training programs listed on the best practices registry of the
21 American foundation for suicide prevention and the suicide prevention
22 resource center.

23 (2) This section applies to the following certificates if the
24 certificate is first issued or is renewed on or after July 1, 2015:

- 25 (a) Continuing certificates for school nurses;
- 26 (b) Continuing certificates for school social workers; and
- 27 (c) Continuing and professional certificates for school counselors.

28 (3) A school counselor who holds or submits a school counseling
29 certificate from the national board for professional teaching standards
30 in lieu of a professional certificate must complete the training
31 program under subsection (1) of this section by July 1, 2015, or within
32 the five-year period before the certificate is first submitted to the
33 professional educator standards board, whichever is later, and at least
34 once every five years thereafter in order to be considered certified by
35 the professional educator standards board.

36 (4) The professional educator standards board shall consider the
37 training program under subsection (1) of this section as approved

1 continuing education under RCW 28A.415.020 and shall count the training
2 program toward meeting continuing education requirements for
3 certification as a school nurse, school social worker, or school
4 counselor.

5 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.410.035 and 1990 c 90 s 1 are each amended to read
6 as follows:

7 (1) To receive initial certification as a teacher in this state
8 after August 31, 1991, an applicant shall have successfully completed
9 a course on issues of abuse. The content of the course shall discuss
10 the identification of physical, emotional, sexual, and substance abuse,
11 information on the impact of abuse on the behavior and learning
12 abilities of students, discussion of the responsibilities of a teacher
13 to report abuse or provide assistance to students who are the victims
14 of abuse, and methods for teaching students about abuse of all types
15 and their prevention.

16 (2) The professional educator standards board shall incorporate
17 into the content required for the course under this section, knowledge
18 and skill standards pertaining to recognition, initial screening, and
19 response to emotional or behavioral distress in students, including but
20 not limited to indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, and
21 youth suicide. To receive initial certification after August 31, 2014,
22 an applicant must have successfully completed a course that includes
23 the content of this subsection. The board shall consult with the
24 office of the superintendent of public instruction and the department
25 of health in developing the standards.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
27 RCW to read as follows:

28 (1) Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, each school district must
29 adopt a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to
30 emotional or behavioral distress in students, including but not limited
31 to indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide.
32 The school district must annually provide the plan to all district
33 staff.

34 (2) At a minimum the plan must address:

35 (a) Identification of training opportunities in recognition,
36 screening, and referral that may be available for staff;

1 (b) How to use the expertise of district staff who have been
2 trained in recognition, screening, and referral;

3 (c) How staff should respond to suspicions, concerns, or warning
4 signs of emotional or behavioral distress in students;

5 (d) Identification and development of partnerships with community
6 organizations and agencies for referral of students to health, mental
7 health, substance abuse, and social support services, including
8 development of at least one memorandum of understanding between the
9 district and such an entity in the community or region;

10 (e) Protocols and procedures for communication with parents;

11 (f) How staff should respond to a crisis situation where a student
12 is in imminent danger to himself or herself or others; and

13 (g) How the district will provide support to students and staff
14 after an incident of violence or youth suicide.

15 (3) The plan under this section may be a separate plan or a
16 component of another district plan or policy, such as the harassment,
17 intimidation, and bullying prevention policy under RCW 28A.300.2851 or
18 the comprehensive safe school plan required under RCW 28A.320.125.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 The office of the superintendent of public instruction and the
22 school safety advisory committee shall develop a model school district
23 plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or
24 behavioral distress in students, including but not limited to
25 indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide.
26 The model plan must incorporate research-based best practices,
27 including practices and protocols used in schools and school districts
28 in other states. The model plan must be posted by February 1, 2014, on
29 the school safety center web site, along with relevant resources and
30 information to support school districts in developing and implementing
31 the plan required under section 4 of this act.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.310
33 RCW to read as follows:

34 Each educational service district shall develop and maintain the
35 capacity to offer training for educators and other school district
36 staff on youth suicide screening and referral, and on recognition,

1 initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in
2 students, including but not limited to indicators of possible substance
3 abuse, violence, and youth suicide. An educational service district
4 may demonstrate capacity by employing staff with sufficient expertise
5 to offer the training or by contracting with individuals or
6 organizations to offer the training. Training may be offered on a fee-
7 for-service basis, or at no cost to school districts or educators if
8 funds are appropriated specifically for this purpose or made available
9 through grants or other sources.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The office of the superintendent of public
11 instruction shall convene a temporary task force to identify best
12 practices, model programs, and successful strategies for school
13 districts to form partnerships with qualified health, mental health,
14 and social services agencies in the community to coordinate and improve
15 support for troubled youth. The task force shall identify and develop
16 resource documents to be posted on the school safety center web site,
17 and submit a report with recommendations to the education committees of
18 the legislature by December 1, 2013.

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