

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2643

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to educator recertification requirements regarding youth suicide screening, referral, and safety planning.

Brief Description: Concerning educator recertification requirements regarding youth suicide screening, referral, and safety planning.

Sponsors: Representatives Callan, Ybarra, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Orwall, Davis, Thai, Steele, Fey, Gildon, Doglio, Leavitt, Harris and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/20, 2/3/20, 2/6/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that youth suicide safety planning that includes notification of trusted adults and discussion with trusted adults about removal of lethal means be incorporated into Professional Educator Standards Board-approved training programs on youth suicide screening and referral.
- Adds school principals to the list of certificated staff who must complete the training program every five years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Callan, Harris, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai, Valdez and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Steele, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier and Corry.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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

Background:

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) establishes certification requirements for educational staff associates. There are eight educational staff associate certificate roles: school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school nurse, school occupational therapist, school physical therapist, school speech language pathologist/audiologist, and school behavior analyst.

School counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, and school social workers must complete a PESB-approved training program on youth suicide screening and referral every five years. For some certificate holders the requirement became effective on July 1, 2015 and for other certificate holders the requirement becomes effective September 1, 2020.

The PESB-approved training programs include three-hour introductory courses and six-hour advanced courses.

The PESB uses the Department of Health (DOH) standards to approve three-hour training program content. The standards are as follows:

- content must be based on current empirical research and known best practices;
- training must reflect sensitivity and relevance to the cultures and backgrounds of the relevant client or patient populations;
- a minimum of 70 minutes must address screening for suicide risk, which must include when and how to screen a client or patient for acute and chronic suicide risk and protective factors against suicide; appropriate screening tools, tailored for specific ages and populations if applicable; and strategies for screening and appropriate use of information gained through screening; and
- a minimum of 30 minutes must address the referral process, which must include how to identify and select an appropriate resource; best practices for connecting a client or patient to a referral; and continuity of care when making referrals.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

By July 1, 2022, youth suicide safety planning that includes notification of trusted adults and discussion with trusted adults about removal of lethal means must be incorporated into PESB-approved training programs on youth suicide screening and referral.

Beginning September 1, 2023, school principals are added to the list of certificated staff who must complete this PESB-approved training program every five years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill delays for one year, until July 1, 2022, the requirement that the training program incorporate youth suicide safety planning and delays for two years, until September 1, 2023, the requirement that principals complete the training program as a condition of certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 6, 2020.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill strengthens training for school counselors, school social workers, school nurses, and school psychologists who are on the front line of youth suicide screening. It is important for these educators and principals to understand how to perform safety planning and to have discussions with the adults in youth's lives about the removal of potentially lethal means.

Principals would like to have more training on youth suicide, trauma, adverse childhood experience, and other similar topics. There is a concern that training requirements are not duplicative.

Professional learning for educators should be relevant, accessible, and high quality. The bill requires enhancement of current courses. If the bill is enacted, the PESB and the DOH will have different course standards. If the DOH courses are not enhanced in the same way as the courses under this bill, then educators might have difficulty meeting the certification requirements due to a lack of access to the DOH courses.

It would help implementation if the timelines in the bill were extended. It would also be good to allow other types of professional development to count towards this training requirement.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Callan, prime sponsor; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; and Maren Johnson, Professional Educator Standards Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Sharon Hanek; Justin Montermini, Professional Educator Standards Board; and Baeza Lakew and Lily Medway, Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council.