
Education Committee

HB 2239

Brief Description: Supporting student well-being through instruction in social-emotional skills.

Sponsors: Representatives Timmons, Eslick, Callan, Ramel, Reeves, Reed, Doglio, Leavitt and Davis.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Encourages school districts and public schools to provide instruction on skills that promote social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health and wellness.
- Directs, subject to appropriation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to annually distribute funding to support this instruction and to submit an outcomes report.

Hearing Date: 1/25/24

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Social-Emotional Learning Standards and Instruction.

Legislation enacted in 2019 directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt social-emotional learning standards and benchmarks by January 1, 2020, and to revise the social-emotional learning standards and benchmarks as appropriate.

There are six state social-emotional learning standards related to: self-awareness, self-management, self-efficacy, social awareness, social management, and social engagement.

The OSPI is also required to align the programs it oversees with the state social-emotional

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learning standards and integrate these standards where appropriate.

Public schools must provide instruction in social-emotional learning that is consistent with the state learning standards and benchmarks to students in kindergarten through third grade. Social-emotional learning is not required for students in higher grades.

Youth Suicide Prevention Activities.

The OSPI must work with state agency and community partners to assist schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities, for example:

- training for school staff, parents, community members, and students in recognizing and responding to the signs of suicide;
- partnering with local coalitions of community members interested in preventing youth suicide; and
- responding to communities determined to be in crisis after a suicide or attempted suicide to prevent further instances of suicide.

The OSPI, working with state and community partners, must prioritize funding appropriated for these activities to communities identified as the highest risk.

Summary of Bill:

Encouraged Social-Emotional Learning Instruction.

Every school district and public school is encouraged to provide instruction on skills that promote social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health and wellness inclusive of self-awareness, self-management, self-efficacy, social awareness, social management, and social engagement consistent with state social emotional learning standards and benchmarks. It is recommended that any curriculum used to provide this instruction be research-based or evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, linguistically responsive, and culturally sustaining, incorporate elements of universal design, and promote and support student learning, mental health, and well-being.

School districts and public schools are encouraged to coordinate actions to implement this instruction with related efforts.

Funding for Instruction in Social-Emotional Learning.

Subject to appropriation, between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2029, the OSPI must annually distribute funding to school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools for the purpose of supporting instruction in social-emotional learning that is consistent with the state learning standards and benchmarks. The process for distributing funding must be streamlined for the effective delivery of resources to rural and small school districts.

The OSPI must work with state and community partners and must prioritize funding as follows:

- first to the highest poverty school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools that are not providing social-emotional learning instruction consistent

- with the state standards and benchmarks; and
- second to school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools in communities identified as highest risk for purposes of youth suicide prevention activity funding and that provide instruction in social-emotional learning as a component of primary prevention activities.

Recipients of the funding must provide the instruction as recommended above and must report their perspectives on any student outcomes that were impacted by increasing social-emotional learning instruction to the OSPI.

By October 15, 2029, the OSPI must submit to the Legislature a report indicating the recipients of the funding, what each recipient used the funding for, and perspectives on impacted student outcomes.

Youth Suicide Prevention Activities.

Requirements directing the OSPI to work with state agency and community partners to assist schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities are modified as follows: (a) prevention experts in the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery in the Health Care Authority are explicitly included as partners; and (b) the OSPI is encouraged to work with agency and community partners to promote the funding available for these activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2024.

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