

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 6431

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### As Passed House - Amended:

March 6, 2014

**Title:** An act relating to assistance for schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities.

**Brief Description:** Concerning assistance for schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Kohl-Welles, Lias, Kline, Rolfes, Parlette, Frockt, Pedersen and Conway).

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/14, 2/26/14 [DP];

Appropriations Subcommittee on Education: 2/27/14 [DPA].

#### Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/6/14, 90-6.

### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) to work with state agencies and community partners to assist schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities.
- Directs the Superintendent to prioritize funding appropriated for youth suicide prevention activities to communities identified as the highest risk.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Fey, Haigh, Hargrove, Hawkins, Hayes, S. Hunt, Klippert, Lytton, Muri, Orwall, Parker, Pollet, Seaquist and Warnick.

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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*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.*

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Fagan, Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Dahlquist, Haler, Lytton, Pettigrew, Seaquist, Sullivan and Wilcox.

**Staff:** Jessica Harrell (786-7349).

### **Background:**

According to the Department of Health (DOH), suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington state youth ages 10-24 and the third leading cause of death nationally.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) oversees K-12 public education in Washington and works with the state's 295 school districts. In 2011 the Legislature required the Superintendent to work with state agencies and community partners to develop pilot projects to assist schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities.

In the 2013 legislative session, the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1336. This law increased the capacity of school districts to recognize and respond to youth with emotional or behavioral distress, including indicators of possible youth suicide, by adding trainings, requiring improved planning, and encouraging partnerships with mental health and social services agencies in the community.

### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

The Superintendent is directed to work with state agencies and community partners to assist schools in implementing youth suicide prevention activities which may include:

- training for school employees, 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 to prevent further instances of suicide after a suicide or attempted suicide.

The Superintendent is directed to work with state agencies and community partners to prioritize funding appropriated for youth suicide prevention activities to communities identified as the highest risk.

If specific funding for the purposes of this bill is not provided in the budget by June 30, 2014, the bill is null and void.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education):**

(In support) When teen suicide occurs in a school it is traumatic for everyone in the community, so there needs to be more community engagement. Any time a child has suicidal thoughts, it should be taken seriously. The more adults who know the signs of suicide, the more likely at-risk children are to be identified. Counseling services are often underfunded, but this bill might help encourage funding of these programs. Every week, two young people die of suicide and 17 are hospitalized by an attempt. Effective trainings exist to help people respond to suicidal youth. High performing students are at high risk. This bill does not solve the problem; it is merely a way to direct funding to those areas most in need. There are already trainings for educators, counselors, and nurses, but this bill addresses trainings for community persons. The work is not duplicative; it is complementary.

(Opposed) None.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education):**

(In support) Members of the education community other than teachers may be the first to identify the first signs of youth suicide risk. Friends are most often the first people to notice a young person's risk of suicide. The youth suicide prevention program has a large network for providing training. If the state were to fund this legislation, more training would be available through a mechanism other than that identified by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying (Education):** Sherry Krainick, Washington State PTA; and Melanie Smith, Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

**Persons Testifying (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education):** Melanie Smith, Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education):** Lucy Luddington.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education):** None.