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SENATE BILL 6141

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators McCoy, Wellman, Van De Wege, Keiser, Hasegawa, and Kuderer; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Read first time 01/09/18. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to strengthening school district plans for  
2 recognition, screening, and response to emotional or behavioral  
3 distress in students; and amending RCW 28A.300.288, 28A.320.127, and  
4 28A.310.500.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.300.288 and 2014 c 103 s 2 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
9 work with state agency and community partners to assist schools in  
10 implementing youth suicide prevention activities, which may include  
11 the following:

12 (a) Training for school employees, parents, community members,  
13 and students in recognizing and responding to the signs of suicide;

14 (b) Partnering with local coalitions of community members  
15 interested in preventing youth suicide; and

16 (c) Responding to communities determined to be in crisis after a  
17 suicide or attempted suicide to prevent further instances of suicide.

18 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction,  
19 working with state and community partners, shall prioritize funding  
20 appropriated for subsection (1) of this section to communities  
21 identified as the highest risk.

1       (3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
2 specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public  
3 instruction shall develop and make available an online one hour  
4 training module for school staff on recognition, screening, and  
5 response to emotional or behavioral distress in students to assist  
6 school districts in meeting the staff training component of RCW  
7 28A.320.127.

8       (a) The online suicide prevention training module for school  
9 staff does not replace RCW 28A.410.226, the training requirement for  
10 school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses to  
11 complete an approved three hour suicide prevention training.

12       (b) School staff may complete the three hour suicide prevention  
13 training required by RCW 28A.410.226 in lieu of the one hour online  
14 suicide prevention training.

15       **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.320.127 and 2016 c 48 s 1 are each amended to  
16 read as follows:

17       (1) Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, each school district  
18 must adopt a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to  
19 emotional or behavioral distress in students, including but not  
20 limited to indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, youth  
21 suicide, and sexual abuse. The school district must annually provide  
22 the plan to all district staff.

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

24       (a) Identification of training opportunities in recognition,  
25 screening, and referral that may be available for staff including,  
26 but not limited to, the training developed in RCW 28A.300.288(3);

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

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

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

36       (e) Protocols and procedures for communication with parents and  
37 guardians, including the notification requirements under RCW  
38 28A.320.160;

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

3 (g) How the district will provide support to students and staff  
4 after an incident of violence, youth suicide, or allegations of  
5 sexual abuse;

6 (h) How staff should respond when allegations of sexual contact  
7 or abuse are made against a staff member, a volunteer, or a parent,  
8 guardian, or family member of the student, including how staff should  
9 interact with parents, law enforcement, and child protective  
10 services; and

11 (i) How the district will provide to certificated and classified  
12 staff the training on the obligation to report physical abuse or  
13 sexual misconduct required under RCW 28A.400.317.

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

18 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.310.500 and 2016 c 96 s 5 are each amended to  
19 read as follows:

20 (1)(a) Each educational service district shall develop and  
21 maintain the capacity to offer training for educators and other  
22 school district staff on youth suicide screening and referral, and on  
23 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 An educational service district may demonstrate capacity by employing  
27 staff with sufficient expertise to offer the training or by  
28 contracting with individuals or organizations to offer the training.  
29 Training may be offered on a fee-for-service basis, or at no cost to  
30 school districts or educators if funds are appropriated specifically  
31 for this purpose or made available through grants or other sources.

32 (b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
33 specific purpose, each educational service district will identify a  
34 regional mental health coordinator. The mental health coordinators  
35 will be responsible for: (i) Coordinating activities identified in  
36 (a) of this subsection; (ii) providing technical assistance and  
37 training to school districts to complete, maintain, and update the  
38 plan requirements of RCW 28A.320.127; (iii) tracking school  
39 districts' completion of the requirements of RCW 28A.320.127(2); and

1 (iv) reporting to the superintendent of public instruction by June  
2 30th of each year.

3 (2)(a) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for  
4 this specific purpose, Forefront at the University of Washington  
5 shall convene a one-day in-person training of student support staff  
6 from the educational service districts to deepen the staff's capacity  
7 to assist schools in their districts in responding to concerns about  
8 suicide. Educational service districts shall send staff members to  
9 the one-day in-person training within existing resources.

10 (b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
11 specific purpose, after establishing these relationships with the  
12 educational service districts, Forefront at the University of  
13 Washington must continue to meet with the educational service  
14 districts via videoconference on a monthly basis to answer questions  
15 that arise for the educational service districts, and to assess the  
16 feasibility of collaborating with the educational service districts  
17 to develop a multiyear, statewide rollout of a comprehensive school  
18 suicide prevention model involving regional trainings, on-site  
19 coaching, and cohorts of participating schools in each educational  
20 service district.

21 (c) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
22 specific purpose, Forefront at the University of Washington must work  
23 to develop public-private partnerships to support the rollout of a  
24 comprehensive school suicide prevention model across Washington's  
25 middle and high schools.

26 (d) The comprehensive school suicide prevention model must  
27 consist of:

28 (i) School-specific revisions to safe school plans required under  
29 RCW 28A.320.125, to include procedures for suicide prevention,  
30 intervention, assessment, referral, reentry, and intervention and  
31 recovery after a suicide attempt or death;

32 (ii) Developing, within the school, capacity to train staff,  
33 teachers, parents, and students in how to recognize and support a  
34 student who may be struggling with behavioral health issues;

35 (iii) Improved identification such as screening, and response  
36 systems such as family counseling, to support students who are at  
37 risk;

38 (iv) Enhanced community-based linkages of support; and

1 (v) School selection of appropriate curricula and programs to  
2 enhance student awareness of behavioral health issues to reduce  
3 stigma, and to promote resilience and coping skills.

4 (e) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
5 specific purpose, and by December 15, 2017, Forefront at the  
6 University of Washington shall report to the appropriate committees  
7 of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, with the  
8 outcomes of the educational service district trainings, any public-  
9 private partnership developments, and recommendations on ways to work  
10 with the educational service districts or others to implement suicide  
11 prevention.

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