
Education Committee

HB 1363

Brief Description: Addressing secondary trauma in the K-12 workforce.

Sponsors: Representatives Ortiz-Self, Callan, Davis, Ramos, Simmons, Berg, Morgan, Bergquist, Harris-Talley and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The bill requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to publish on its website links to resources, self-assessments, and best practices for educators and local policymakers to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress in the workforce.
- Directs the Washington State School Directors' Association to develop a model policy and procedure to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress in the workforce that includes specified elements, for example establishing a district-wide workforce mental health committee.
- Requires school districts to adopt, by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, policies and procedures that incorporate the required elements.

Hearing Date: 2/2/21

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Secondary Traumatic Stress. The United States Department of Health and Human Services defines secondary traumatic stress disorder, or compassion fatigue, as a natural, but disruptive by-product of working with people who have been traumatized. Evidence of secondary traumatic stress can be difficult to recognize in oneself or even in others. Symptoms often

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include a combination of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, spiritual, and physical features, such as feelings of isolation, anxiety, dissociation, physical ailments, and sleep disturbances. Secondary traumatic stress is preventable and treatable, however, if unaddressed, the symptoms can result in problems with mental and physical health, strained personal relationships, and poor work performance.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matter pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and its office has numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute. Among these duties are the development and publication of best practices and other resources on a variety of topics.

Washington State School Directors' Association. Established by statute, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is the state agency that provides advice and assistance to local school boards. The WSSDA is charged with coordinating policymaking, control, and management of the state's school districts. Among other actions, the WSSDA develops model policies and procedures, often in response to legislative directives, that school districts may adopt.

Summary of Bill:

Resources. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must publish on its website links to resources, self-assessments, and best practices for educators and local policymakers to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress in the workforce. The OSPI must collaborate with the WSSDA, the educational service districts, and the school employees' benefits board and provide links to any resources on secondary traumatic stress available through these organizations.

Model Policy and Procedures. The WSSDA must develop a model policy and procedure to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress in the workforce.

The model policy and procedure must include the following elements: (1) a commitment to support mental health in the workplace; (2) promotion of a positive workplace climate with a focus on diversity and inclusion; (3) Establishment of a district-wide workforce mental health committee with specified functions, for example sharing resources and reporting to the school board once per year; (4) regular assessment of policy implementation; and (5) provision of appropriate resources and training to schools and staff for continuous improvement.

The model policy and procedure must be posted publicly on the WSSDA website by August 1, 2021. Updates to the model policy and procedure must be posted publicly within a reasonable time of development.

School District Policy and Procedures. By the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, each school district must adopt, or amend if necessary, policies and procedures that, at a minimum, incorporate all the elements required for the secondary traumatic stress model policy and

procedure. School districts must periodically review their policies and procedures for consistency with updated versions of the model policy and procedure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2021.

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