

# An Act

ENROLLED HOUSE  
BILL NO. 2513

By: Pittman, Waldron,  
Rosecrants, Hefner, Roe,  
and Talley of the House

and

Pugh, Hicks, and Floyd of  
the Senate

An Act relating to schools; describing the problem of unaddressed trauma in children; providing program purpose; directing Legislature to appropriate funds to implement and operate a Handle With Care Oklahoma program; providing for program coordination between certain public agencies and community coalitions; enabling law enforcement to notify program; listing applicable traumatic events for notification; requiring administration of a hotline, email, or other method to provide notification; prescribing information to be included in notification; prohibiting inclusion of certain information; directing notification to designated representatives; including specified statement in notification; directing Oklahoma School Security Institute to provide model protocol and training for certain agencies; requiring Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to provide model protocol and training; specifying information to be included in training; authorizing rule promulgation; providing exception for notification that could compromise an ongoing investigation; requiring program to apply for additional funding sources; directing program to submit annual report to certain elected officials; providing for noncodification; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

SUBJECT: Schools

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

A. The Problem.

Research shows that unaddressed trauma can undermine children's ability to learn, form relationships, and function appropriately in the classroom. In the past, calling the Oklahoma Department of Human Services statewide centralized hotline to make a mandated child welfare report was one of the only tools in the first responder's toolbox, but most children and teens do not meet the criteria for a child welfare report. Consequently, the children and teens are never identified, nor do they receive services, and they linger in traumatic situations without adequate support. These students have an increased risk for negative outcomes such as poor academic performance, truancy, dropping out of school, and delinquency.

B. The Handle With Care Oklahoma Program Purpose.

Handle With Care (HWC) Oklahoma is a program designed to enhance existing cross-agency communication and partnership between local law enforcement, community mental health services and supports, and schools regarding children's exposure to traumatic events. The "Handle With Care" approach enables first responders to start building trust and positive connections with children and teens they encounter at a traumatic scene and through a HWC notification, local schools and mental health providers can provide trauma-sensitive support immediately as needed. HWC is aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to crime, violence, and abuse receive appropriate interventions so they can succeed in school to the best of their ability. Children must feel safe in order to learn.

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1210.164 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Legislature shall appropriate funds to support the implementation and operation of the Handle With Care (HWC) Oklahoma program, coordinated through the Oklahoma School Security Institute, a division of the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security. HWC Oklahoma efforts shall enhance existing partnerships and

collaborations with key partners such as, but not limited to, other state and local first responder agencies, school districts, community coalitions, the State Department of Education, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Department of Human Services, and the State Department of Health. The statewide HWC Oklahoma program shall enhance planning, training, implementation, and sustainability in all counties in the state. The program shall give opportunities for local HWC initiatives to receive support from the state as needed.

B. The HWC program shall enable a law enforcement officer or employee of a law enforcement agency to notify the program when a child, who may attend a public school or childcare agency in the state, is exposed to a traumatic event, is at the scene with a first responder, or another event occurs that may affect his or her ability to succeed at school including, but not limited to:

1. Domestic violence in the presence of the child;
2. Death of a member of the family or household of the child;
3. Arrest of a parent or guardian of the child affecting the welfare of the child;
4. Search warrant is served in the residence of the child;
5. Drug or alcohol overdose of a child's family member;
6. Violence or mass shootings in the neighborhood where the child resides;
7. Forced displacement from the residence;
8. House fire;
9. Child maltreatment; or
10. Child is present at a first responder encounter.

C. The HWC program shall work with local communities and key partners to administer a telephone hotline, email, or other appropriate method to allow a law enforcement officer or first responder agency to provide the notification described in subsection B of this section.

D. Information submitted to the HWC program in the notification shall comply with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation's dissemination laws and Victim's Bill of Rights. It shall only include, to the extent that it is available:

1. The first, middle, and last name of the child;
2. The grade and school or childcare agency where the child is enrolled; and
3. The date of birth and age of the child.

The HWC notification shall not include any details about the traumatic event unless there is an imminent threat to the safety of the child or school safety.

E. Upon receiving notification as provided in subsection D of this section, the local HWC multi-disciplinary team (MDT) shall determine if the child attends a public school or childcare agency in this state. If the child attends a public school or childcare agency in the state, the local HWC MDT shall notify designated representatives where the child attends. The notice shall include that "the child referenced has been exposed to a traumatic event in the last twenty-four (24) hours and could exhibit academic, emotional, and behavioral problems because of exposure to a traumatic event. Please handle the child with care."

F. 1. The Oklahoma School Security Institute, in coordination with community coalitions and partner state and local first responder agencies, shall provide model protocol and training for the HWC Oklahoma program to first responder agencies and their employees who may respond to a traumatic event involving a child.

2. The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, in coordination with the State Department of Education and community coalitions, shall include model protocol and training for the HWC Oklahoma program in existing efforts which promote universal trauma-informed practices in school settings.

G. The training required in subsection F of this section shall include, at a minimum:

1. The criteria for sending a HWC notice;

2. The procedure for notifying the HWC program when a child who may attend a public school or childcare agency is exposed to an event listed in subsection B of this section that may affect his or her ability to succeed at school and the information to include in the notification;

3. Proper response to a notification received from the program, including, without limitation, the manner in which to respond to notification through early interventions; and

4. Collaboration with teachers and other members of the staff of a school, students, family members of students, multi-disciplinary teams, other persons, and behavioral, social, and health providers, as appropriate, to reduce the negative impact of the traumatic event on the affected student, appropriate interventions that may be available to assist the student, and the overall well-being of the student. Community coalitions shall be engaged to increase coordination of community services.

H. The Oklahoma School Security Institute may promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section with feedback from local first responder agencies, schools, and community coalitions.

I. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a law enforcement officer or employee of a law enforcement agency to provide notification pursuant to this section if the disclosure of information may compromise an ongoing investigation.

J. In addition to funds appropriated by the Legislature pursuant to subsection A of this section, the HWC Oklahoma program shall apply for additional federal, state, local, and private funds to support the HWC Oklahoma program.

K. The HWC Oklahoma program shall submit an annual report of the program's progress, outcomes, and impact on students and communities to the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate, and the Governor.

SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2023.

Passed the House of Representatives the 23rd day of May, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of the House  
of Representatives

Passed the Senate the 26th day of April, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of the Senate

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

By: \_\_\_\_\_