
HOUSE BILL 2496

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representatives Santos and Harris; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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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