

SB 972 (Portantino)

Pupil and Student Health: Identification Cards: Suicide Prevention Hotline

PROBLEM

Adolescent suicide and self-inflicted injury are a serious social and public health concern. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 15-24. In 2013, 481 California youth ages 5-24 were known to have committed suicide. Males accounted for almost 80% of the youth suicides in California.

BACKGROUND

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, studies show that at least 90% of teens who kill themselves have some type of mental health issue, such as depression, anxiety, drug or alcohol abuse, or a behavioral problem. Other potential issues could be difficulties at school or with friends or family. Some teens may have been victims of sexual or physical abuse or be struggling with issues related to sexual identity. Bullying, cyber-bullying and peer pressure have also been linked reasons for suicide.

Most teens who commit suicide struggle with a mood disorder which is an illness of the brain. Students may have thought about suicide or have tried it but only decided to do it after an event produces a feeling of loss or failure, such as getting in trouble, having an argument, break up, or receiving a bad grade.

Recently, the California Department of Education adopted a model youth suicide prevention policy to help educate and train counselors and school employees of the signs of suicidal behavior and mental illness. By expanding the policy to provide an easily accessible suicide prevention telephone hotline number on student's identification cards will be another necessary resource for potential lifesaving help.

SUMMARY

SB 972 would require a public school, including a charter school, or a private school that serves pu

pils in grades 7-12 and higher education to issue on the back of pupil identification cards a suicide prevention hotline telephone number commencing July 1, 2019.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law, the California Suicide Prevention Act of 2000 authorizes the State Department of Health Care Services to establish and implement a suicide prevention, education, and gatekeeper program to reduce the severity, duration and incidence of suicidal behaviors. The act authorizes the State Department of Health Care Services to contract with an outside agency to establish and implement a targeted public awareness and education campaign on suicide prevention and treatment, and requires that target populations include junior high and high school students.

Existing law requires the governing board or body of a county office of education, school district, state special school, or charter school that serves pupils in grade 7 to 12 to adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention that specifically addresses the needs of high-risk groups.

Existing law requires The Instructional Quality Commission to consider developing and recommending for adoption by the State Board of Education, a district category on mental health instruction to educate pupils about all aspects of mental health, including among other things, depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Existing law requires a Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to send a notice to each middle school, junior high school, and high school that encourages each school to provide suicide prevention training to each school counselor. Providing information on the availability of certain suicide prevention training curriculum, informs schools about certain suicide prevention training, and describes how schools might retain those services.

SUPPORT

American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
California Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
California Catholic Conference
California Junior Leagues' State Public Affairs Committee, Pal Alto Mid-Peninsula Junior League
California School Boards Association
California School Nurses Organization
California State PTA
County Behavioral Health Directors Association
Disability Rights California (DRC)
Hathaway –Sycamores
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
High School Parent Engagement Group
Mental Health America of California (MHAC)
Pacific Clinics
Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Administrators of California

Version: 4/27/2018

