

By: Powell

S.B. No. 980

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention program for certain public elementary school campuses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter G, Chapter 38, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 38.3515 to read as follows:

Sec. 38.3515. SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "postvention" includes activities that promote healing necessary to reduce the risk of suicide by a person affected by the suicide of another.

(b) To the extent funds are appropriated to the agency for that purpose, the agency shall establish a suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention program for optional implementation at an elementary school campus of a school district described by Subsection (c).

(c) A school district may implement the program established under this section at a campus of the district if the district or campus has:

(1) experienced suicide loss among elementary school students enrolled in the district; or

(2) a reasonable concern regarding the risk of suicide among elementary school students enrolled in the district.

(d) The agency may prioritize school districts described by Subsection (c)(1).

1 (e) For each elementary school campus at which the program
2 is implemented, the agency shall:

3 (1) conduct:

4 (A) an eligibility assessment of whether a
5 district that implements the program meets the criteria provided
6 under Subsection (c); and

7 (B) a needs-based assessment to identify
8 individual needs of each campus in the program;

9 (2) provide, in coordination with the Health and Human
10 Services Commission, comprehensive Suicide Safer Early
11 Intervention and Prevention systems for each campus in the program;

12 (3) provide recommendations for research-based best
13 practices for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
14 policies;

15 (4) develop a method for eligible districts to request
16 the assistance of public and private community-based mental health
17 resources;

18 (5) ensure that informational materials distributed
19 by an eligible district are age-appropriate and evidence-based; and

20 (6) at the request of an eligible district, provide
21 support to the campus in the program, including by:

22 (A) identifying the individual needs of the
23 campus through the assessment conducted under Subdivision (1)(B);

24 (B) implementing research-based best practices
25 for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention; and

26 (C) working with mental health professionals,
27 school counselors, teachers, nurses, administrators, and other

1 staff, as well as law enforcement officers and social workers who
2 regularly interact with students, to prevent suicide among students
3 enrolled at the campus.

4 (f) Each school district that implements the program under
5 this section shall provide written notice to a parent or guardian of
6 each student enrolled at a campus in the program. The required
7 written notice must include:

8 (1) current information on suicide rates;

9 (2) evidence-based informational materials
10 identifying strategies to recognize the signs and symptoms of
11 possible suicidal ideation that are age-appropriate for children
12 who are three years of age or older;

13 (3) information about suicide prevention strategies
14 involving restricting access to the means of suicide; and

15 (4) a list of available school and community resources
16 to support students or community members who may be at risk for
17 suicide.

18 (g) In developing the program under this section, the
19 agency, in consultation with the Health and Human Services
20 Commission, shall make the considerations described by Section
21 [38.351\(f\)](#).

22 (h) In addition to the policies and procedures developed by
23 a school district under Section [38.351\(i\)](#), a district that
24 implements the program shall develop practices and procedures
25 concerning suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention that:

26 (1) include a procedure for providing notice to a
27 parent or guardian of a student regarding a recommendation for

1 early mental health intervention regarding the student within a
2 reasonable amount of time after the identification of early warning
3 signs of risk for suicide, including:

4 (A) declining academic performance;

5 (B) depression;

6 (C) anxiety;

7 (D) isolation;

8 (E) unexplained changes in sleep or eating
9 habits; and

10 (F) destructive behavior toward self and others;

11 (2) include a procedure for providing notice of a
12 student identified as at risk of attempting suicide, including a
13 student who is or may be the victim of or who engages in bullying, to
14 a parent or guardian of the student within a reasonable amount of
15 time after the identification of early warning signs, including the
16 signs listed in Subdivision (1);

17 (3) designate at least one person to act as a liaison
18 officer in the district for the purposes of identifying students in
19 need of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention;

20 (4) provide information concerning available
21 counseling alternatives to parents and guardians of district
22 students to consider when a student is identified as possibly in
23 need of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention; and

24 (5) include procedures to support the return of a
25 student to regular school attendance following hospitalization or
26 residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance
27 abuse.

1 (i) The practices and procedures developed under Subsection
2 (h) must be included in:

3 (1) the annual student handbook; and

4 (2) the district improvement plan under Section
5 11.252.

6 (j) The agency:

7 (1) may accept donations for purposes of this section
8 from sources without a conflict of interest; and

9 (2) may not accept donations for purposes of this
10 section from an anonymous source.

11 (k) Nothing in this section is intended to interfere with
12 the rights of parents or guardians and the decision-making
13 regarding the best interest of the child. Practices and procedures
14 developed in accordance with this section are intended to notify a
15 parent or guardian of a need for suicide prevention, intervention,
16 or postvention so that a parent or guardian may take appropriate
17 action.

18 (l) Nothing in this section authorizes a school district
19 employee to recommend prescription medication for a student or to
20 interfere with medical decisions to be made by the student's parent
21 or guardian.

22 (m) The commissioner shall adopt rules to administer this
23 section.

24 (n) This section expires September 1, 2025.

25 SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022
26 school year.

27 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives

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1 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
2 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
3 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
4 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.