

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2997
By: Talarico
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that training has been essential in informing many educators across the state about suicide prevention and that the training, which can help save lives, should be made available to all public school district and open-enrollment charter school employees who regularly interact with students. C.S.H.B. 2997 seeks to ensure this by revising requirements relating to suicide prevention training.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2997 amends the Health and Safety Code to revise requirements for each public school district with regard to the provision of suicide prevention training:

- by extending the requirements to an open-enrollment charter school;
- by specifying that the training must be provided each year for an employee who regularly interacts with students enrolled in the district or charter school;
- by removing a provision limiting the requirement to provide the training at an elementary school campus only to the extent that sufficient funding and programs are available; and
- by replacing the authorization for each district to implement a suicide prevention program on a certain Department of State Health Services list of recommended best practice-based programs and research-based practices to satisfy these requirements with a requirement for each district and charter school to do so.

C.S.H.B. 2997 requires an applicable district or charter school employee to participate in the training at regular intervals, not to exceed four years, as provided by a schedule adopted by commissioner of education rule and establishes that an employee may satisfy the training required through independent review of suicide prevention training material that complies with the Texas Education Agency-developed guidelines and is offered online. The bill establishes that Health and Safety Code provisions relating to mental health, substance abuse, and youth suicide expressly do not waive any immunity from liability of or create any liability for a cause of action against a charter school, school officers, or employees.

C.S.H.B. 2997 amends the Education Code to make conforming changes and repeals Sections 21.451(d-1) and (d-2), Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2997 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute changes the frequency with which an applicable district or charter school employee is required to participate in suicide prevention training from each year on a schedule adopted by commissioner rule to regular intervals, not to exceed four years, as provided by a schedule adopted by commissioner rule.