

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2372
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Local school health advisory councils (SHACs) play a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of students in their school district. One of the biggest attacks on the health and well-being of Texas children today is unintentional overdose by fentanyl, which is why SHACs must prioritize making recommendations on appropriate curriculum instruction regarding addiction to and abuse of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid that has been implicated in a growing number of overdose deaths. Transnational criminal organizations continue to press counterfeit prescription pills and lace them with fentanyl. These fake pills pose a unique threat because they look identical to prescription drugs that youth may be prone to experimenting with such as Adderall, Xanax, and Oxycodone. Unfortunately, many young people are not fully aware of the risks associated with taking a drug that was not prescribed to them by a medical doctor. As a result, they may be more likely to unknowingly take a counterfeit pill, putting their health and well-being at risk.

The statistics surrounding fentanyl are staggering:

- One in four Texans have experienced an opioid overdose or know someone who has.
- Fentanyl is an opioid 50 times stronger than heroin and may be mixed with other substances and counterfeit (fake) pills. Even in small doses, as few as two milligrams, fentanyl can cause a life-threatening overdose or be lethal.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published provisional data from 2021 that shows about 66 percent of opioid-related deaths in Texas involve synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogs.
- Provisional data from the Texas Department of State Health Services indicate there were an estimated 2,506 opioid-related overdose deaths in 2021.
- Of all opioid overdose deaths among those aged 0-17, 92 percent involved a synthetic opioid such as fentanyl.

The numbers do not lie—children who experiment with pills laced with fentanyl or other opioids may be at a higher risk of overdose, which can lead to respiratory failure and death. The effects of opioid abuse can also have long-term consequences, including damage to the liver, kidneys, and other organs, as well as increased risk of infections and other health problems.

Overall, the impact of fentanyl and opioid abuse on the health and well-being of our children is significant and requires urgent attention. It is crucial that we educate our children on the dangers of opioids, teach signs of fentanyl overdose, and support them in seeking help if they struggle with addiction. By doing so, we can save precious lives and promote the health and well-being of our children.

The Bill:

- Amends Section 28.004(c) of the Education Code by requiring SHACs to recommend appropriate grade level curriculum instruction regarding the dangers of opioids, including opioid addiction and abuse of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.

As proposed, S.B. 2372 amends current law relating to recommendations by local school health advisory councils regarding opioid addiction and abuse education in public schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.004(c), Education Code, as follows:

(c) Provides that the local school health advisory council's duties include recommending:

(1)-(6) makes no changes to these subdivisions:

(7) appropriate grade levels and curriculum for instruction regarding the dangers of opioids, including instruction on:

(A) opioid addiction and abuse, including addiction to and abuse of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl; and

(B) creates this paragraph from existing text; and

(8) makes no changes to this subdivision.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.