STUDENTS: Requires the implementation of suicide prevention and student safety and violence and social isolation prevention training and the creation of clubs at certain public schools

AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:282.4(C)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (c) and 286(A) and to enact R.S. 17:282.4(G) and (H), relative to suicide prevention and violence in schools; to require training on related topics for certain students; to provide for requirements of the state Department of Education; to require formation of student organizations; to provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Suicide, Safety, and Violence Education (SAVE) Students Act".

Section 2. R.S. 17:282.4(C)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (c) and 286(A) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:282.4(G) and (H) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§282.4. Youth suicide prevention programs; student safety and violence and social isolation prevention training; policies; intent; rules; services; funding

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C. Any city, parish, or other local public school system offering a youth suicide prevention program established pursuant to this Section shall do so in
accordance with such rules and regulations adopted by the state board and shall report its participation to the state Department of Education. The department shall designate such a school as a Suicide Prevention Certified School and maintain an updated list of such schools on its website. A youth suicide prevention program may include but shall not be limited to the following:

(1) Classroom instruction, via in-person, video, or a combination of in-person and video training, integrated into the curricula designed to achieve any of the following objectives:

* * * *

(c) Teach students to recognize signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts about youth suicide, how to identify the signs and signals of depression, suicide, and self-injury in themselves and in their peers, the importance of seeking help for themselves and their peers, and the process for seeking help.

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G.(1) As part of an existing, relevant course of instruction, each public school shall offer age- and grade-appropriate evidence-based training on suicide prevention and student safety and violence and social isolation prevention to students in grades six through twelve. For purposes of this Subsection, "evidence-based" shall mean the training meets one of the following criteria:

(a) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such a program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.

(b) Has a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes based on one of the following:

(i) Strong evidence from at least one experimental study.

(ii) Moderate evidence from at least one quasi-experimental study.

(iii) Promising evidence from at least one correlation study with statistical controls for selection bias.
(2) Each student shall receive not less than one hour or one standard class period, whichever is shorter, of training in suicide prevention per year. Such training may be administered through student assemblies or in-person, video, or a combination of in-person and video training, and shall include but need not be limited to:

(a) How to identify observable warning signs and signals of an individual who may be at risk of harming themselves.

(b) The steps students can take to report harmful or potentially harmful activity.

(3) Each student shall receive not less than one hour or one standard class period, whichever is shorter, of training in student safety and violence and social isolation prevention per year. Such training may be administered through student assemblies, digital learning, and homework, and shall include but need not be limited to:

(a) How to identify observable warning signs and signals of an individual who may be at risk of harming others.

(b) The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help.

(c) The steps students can take to report dangerous, violent, or threatening activity.

(d) What social isolation is and how to identify social isolation in others.

(e) The importance of taking social isolation seriously and seeking help for peers.

(f) How to utilize strategies to be more socially inclusive in the classroom and community and how to establish connections with others.

(4) Upon written request of a student’s parent or legal guardian, a student shall be excused from any of the training.

(5) The state Department of Education shall develop and maintain a list of evidence-based suicide prevention and student safety and violence and social isolation prevention training, including but not limited to no-cost programming, on
the department website. The department shall review the list at least every three years.

H. Each public school governing authority shall offer a student-led club focused on suicide prevention, student safety, and violence and social isolation prevention for each school under its jurisdiction that has students in grades six through twelve. Each club shall:

1. Be open to any member of the student population.
2. Have at least one school employee serve as an advisor.
3. Develop and maintain awareness activities related to suicide prevention or student safety and violence and social isolation prevention training.
4. Foster opportunities for student leadership development.

§286. Violence prevention, self-esteem, and peer mediation

A. Any public elementary or secondary school in Louisiana may offer instruction in violence prevention, self-esteem, and peer mediation. Any public secondary school may offer instruction in self-esteem and peer mediation. The curriculum for such instruction shall be developed and approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Section 2. The provisions of this Act shall become effective on July 1, 2023, and shall be initially implemented for the 2023-2024 school year.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 495 Reengrossed 2022 Regular Session Schlegel

Abstract: Requires public school students in grades six through 12 to receive training on suicide prevention and student safety and violence and social isolation prevention.

Proposed law requires that public school students in grades six through 12 receive training on the following topics:

(1) Suicide prevention.
(2) Student safety and violence and social isolation prevention.

Proposed law requires each public school governing authority with jurisdiction over a school with students in grades six through 12 to offer student-led clubs focused on the two topics listed above.

Proposed law requires the state Dept. of Education to maintain a list of evidence-based training on the two topics listed above and review such list at least triennially.

Provides such training shall each be:

(1) Evidence-based.

(2) The duration of one standard class period or one hour.

Proposed law allows parents to request that their children be excused from the training.

Effective July 1, 2023.

(Amends R.S. 17:282.4(C)(1)(intro. para.) and (c) and 286(A); Adds R.S. 17:282.4(G) and (H))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Change subject of training from student safety, violence prevention, and social inclusion to student safety and violence and social isolation prevention.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Add special effective date.