

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 53

BY REPRESENTATIVES MOSS, CARMODY, AND DWIGHT

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

SCHOOLS/EMPLOYEES: Provides relative to suicide prevention in schools

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:282.4(C)(introductory paragraph) and 437.1 and to enact R.S.
3 17:282.4(F) and 3996(B)(54), relative to suicide prevention in schools; to provide
4 for training for school employees, to provide relative to services provided to
5 students; to provide relative to student identification cards; to provide for programs
6 and policies; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 17:282.4(C)(introductory paragraph) and 437.1 are hereby amended
9 and reenacted and R.S. 17:282.4(F) and 3996(B)(54) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §282.4. Youth suicide prevention programs; policies; intent; rules; services; funding

11 * * *

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

19 * * *

20 F. Beginning not later than the 2020-2021 school year, the governing
21 authority of each public and approved nonpublic secondary school that issues student

1 identification cards shall have printed on the cards the United Way of Southwest
2 Louisiana's teen text hotline.

3 * * *

4 §437.1. Suicide prevention; in-service training; materials and supplies; limitation
5 on liability

6 A. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall develop
7 and adopt guidelines for in-service training in suicide prevention as provided for in
8 Subsection B of this Section. The board, in coordination with the Louisiana
9 Department of Health, shall identify suitable ~~materials~~ programs for use in such
10 training. The state Department of Education shall post on its website a listing of
11 approved programs. The list shall include instructions on accessing such programs.
12 The board shall update the list every five years.

13 B.(1) The board shall adopt rules to require that all public and approved
14 nonpublic school teachers, school counselors, and principals and, as determined by
15 the board, other school administrators for whom such training is deemed beneficial
16 participate annually in at least two hours of in-service training in suicide prevention.
17 Such rules shall include provisions permitting such training to be provided by
18 self-review of suitable materials.

19 (2) The training shall address the following:

20 (a) Increasing awareness of risk factors including but not limited to the
21 following:

22 (i) Mental health and substance abuse conditions.

23 (ii) Childhood abuse, neglect, and trauma.

24 (iii) Potential causes of stress, such as bullying, harassment, and relationship
25 problems.

26 (iv) Secondary trauma from a suicide or sensationalized or graphic accounts
27 of suicide in media.

28 (v) History of suicide attempts and related family history.

1 (b) How teachers should respond to suspicious behavior or warning signs
2 exhibited by students.

3 (c) How teachers should respond to a crisis situation in which a student is in
4 imminent danger to himself.

5 (d) Policies and protocol for communication with parents, including
6 specifications for circumstances in which parental notification is not in the best
7 interest of the student.

8 (e) Counseling services available within the school for students and their
9 families related to suicide prevention.

10 (f) Dissemination of information concerning crisis intervention, suicide
11 prevention, and mental health services in the community for students and their
12 families and school employees.

13 (g) Community organizations and agencies for referral of students to health,
14 mental health, substance abuse, and social support services, including development
15 of at least one memorandum of understanding between the school system and such
16 an entity in the community or region.

17 C.(1) No person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused
18 by any act or omission resulting from the implementation of or good faith attempt
19 to implement the provisions of this Section or resulting from any training; or lack
20 thereof; required by this Section, unless such loss or damage was caused by willful
21 or wanton misconduct.

22 (2) The training; or lack thereof; required by the provisions of this Section
23 shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of care.

24 D.(1) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall
25 randomly survey employees of public and approved nonpublic secondary schools to
26 ascertain their compliance with the suicide prevention training requirements of this
27 Section.

28 (2) The governing authority of each such secondary school shall document
29 and verify to the state Department of Education, by December thirty-first of each

Initiative, for a youth suicide prevention plan for public schools. Requires that such plan include procedures for development of suicide prevention programs by local school systems.

Present law requires local suicide prevention programs to comply with BESE regulations and provides relative to the content of such programs.

Proposed law retains present law and further requires schools offering youth suicide prevention programs to report such participation to the state Dept. of Education (DOE). Requires DOE to designate such a school as a Suicide Prevention Certified School and to maintain a list of such schools on its website.

Proposed law requires the governing authority of each public and approved nonpublic secondary school that issues student identification cards to have printed on the cards the phone number for the United Way of Southwest La. teen text hotline.

Proposed law provides that present law and proposed law regarding suicide prevention programs are applicable to charter schools.

Present law requires BESE to adopt guidelines for in-service training of school employees in suicide prevention. Requires that the board adopt rules requiring public and approved nonpublic school employees to participate in at least two hours of such training annually.

Proposed law requires that such training address:

- (1) Increasing awareness of risk factors.
- (2) Employee response to suspicion, concerns, or warning signs exhibited by students and to crisis situations.
- (3) Policies and protocol for communication with parents.
- (4) Services available at the school and in the community.
- (5) Development of a plan to assist survivors.

Proposed law requires that the board identify suitable programs and requires coordination with LDH in identification of such programs. Requires DOE to post a list of approved programs on its website. Requires school employees to participate in such training, rather than requiring BESE to adopt rules to require such training.

Present law provides for immunity from liability for loss or damage caused by implementation of present law regarding in-service training. Proposed law further provides for such immunity for loss or damage caused by a good faith attempt to implement present law and proposed law.

Proposed law requires BESE to randomly survey schools regarding compliance with requirements for in-service training and requires submission of a report on survey findings to the legislative education and health and welfare committees.

(Amends R.S. 17:282.4(C)(intro. para.) and 437.1; Adds R.S. 17:282.4(F) and 3996(B)(54))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Require the United Way of Southwest La.'s teen text hotline be printed on the back of student identification cards instead of the National Suicide Prevention

Lifeline hotline number, the Crisis Text Line number, and a local suicide prevention hotline number.

2. Make youth suicide prevention programs applicable to charter schools, instead of the identification card component.
3. Delete provision requiring all school employees to complete suicide prevention training and retain present law requiring employees as provided by rule to complete such training.
4. Add content requirements for suicide prevention in-service training. Remove such proposed law content requirements that would have been applicable to school governing authority policies.
5. Change requirement of frequency of BESE to survey schools on compliance with training requirements from annually to randomly.