

SUBJECT: Annual suicide prevention education for certain school employees

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Aycock, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Galindo, González, K. King

0 nays

3 absent — Allen, Huberty, VanDeaver

WITNESSES: For — Calla Childers; Kevin Childers; Chris Owen; Janet Sutton; Kim Whitaker; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Brock Gregg, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Katharine Ligon, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Gyl Switzer, Mental Health America of Texas; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Clayton Travis, Texas Pediatric Society; Merily Keller, Texas Suicide Prevention Council; Casey Smith, United Ways of Texas; and five individuals)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Angela Hobbs-Lopez, Department of State Health Services)

BACKGROUND: Health and Safety Code, sec. 161.325 requires the Department of State Health Services, the Texas Education Agency, and regional education service centers to provide and annually update a list of recommended best practice-based programs in areas that include early mental health intervention, mental health promotion and positive youth development, substance abuse prevention, and suicide prevention. School districts may choose a program from the list generated by the department or from outside resources and provide training to appropriate school personnel.

Under sec. 161.325(c-2), if a school district provides training, school district employees are required to participate in this training at least one time, and the school district must maintain records with the name of each district employee who participated.

Suicide prevention programs train adults who are closest to the student to be aware of warning signs and to refer the student to appropriate medical personnel. Training for school employees can inform them of prevention resources and intervention protocols.

DIGEST: HB 2186 would require employees of school districts that offered a suicide prevention training program to complete this training at least once annually.

School districts no longer would be required to keep records of employees who completed training. This bill would apply beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2015.