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**SB-1318 Pupil health: suicide prevention policies: pupil suicide crisis.** (2023-2024)

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**Senate Bill No. 1318**

**CHAPTER 645**

An act to amend Section 215 of the Education Code, relating to pupil health.

[ Approved by Governor September 27, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2024. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 1318, Wahab. Pupil health: suicide prevention policies: pupil suicide crisis.

Existing law requires the governing board or body of a local educational agency, defined as a county office of education, school district, state special school, or charter school, that serves pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, to adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention that specifically addresses, among other things, procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and any training on suicide awareness and prevention to be provided to teachers of pupils in all of the grades served by the local educational agency. Existing law requires the governing board or body of a local educational agency that serves pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, to review, at minimum every 5th year, its policy on pupil suicide prevention and, if necessary, update its policy. To assist local educational agencies in developing policies for pupil suicide prevention, existing law requires the State Department of Education to develop and maintain a model policy to serve as a guide for local educational agencies, as provided.

This bill would require, on or before July 1, 2026, the department to update the model policy to address crisis intervention protocols in the event of a pupil suicide crisis, as defined, including the process by which staff and external agencies are deployed to address a pupil suicide crisis, limiting the involvement and notification of law enforcement to situations in which a pupil's life is in imminent danger and their needs cannot be addressed by a mental health professional, and the assessment process that law enforcement officers should follow to determine whether the pupil experiencing a suicide crisis is endangered by parental notification. The bill would require, on or after July 1, 2026, the governing board or body of a local educational agency to update their pupil suicide prevention policy to include these crisis intervention protocols, as provided. The bill would encourage, when the governing board or body of a local educational agency reviews its policy on pupil suicide prevention, if the local educational agency does not have a school mental health professional, as defined, or contract with a mental health professional, as defined, the governing board or body to consider whether funding should be identified for purposes of hiring a school mental health professional. By imposing additional duties on local educational agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Section 215 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**215.** (a) (1) The governing board or body of a local educational agency that serves pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, shall, before the beginning of the 2017–18 school year, adopt, at a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on pupil suicide prevention in grades 7 to 12, inclusive. The policy shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts and shall, at a minimum, address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

(2) (A) The governing board or body of a local educational agency that serves pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall, before the beginning of the 2020–21 school year, adopt, at a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on pupil suicide prevention in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive. The policy shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, the county mental health plan, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts and shall, at a minimum, address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

(B) The policy for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall be age appropriate and shall be delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young pupils.

(C) The policy for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall be written to ensure proper coordination and consultation with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a pupil who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary.

(3) The policy shall specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Youth bereaved by suicide.

(B) Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders.

(C) Youth experiencing homelessness or youth in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.

(D) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.

(4) (A) The policy shall also address any training on suicide awareness and prevention to be provided to teachers of pupils in all of the grades served by the local educational agency.

(B) Materials approved by a local educational agency for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services, both at the schoolsite and within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services.

(C) Materials approved for training may also include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials.

(D) On or before January 1, 2025, a local educational agency shall revise its training materials to incorporate best practices identified by the department in the department's model policy.

(E) Commencing with the 2024–25 school year, local educational agencies are encouraged to provide suicide awareness and prevention training to teachers of pupils in all of the grades served by the local educational agency.

(5) The policy shall be written to ensure that a school employee acts only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license. Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging a school employee to diagnose or treat mental illness unless the employee is specifically licensed and employed to do so.

(6) (A) To assist local educational agencies in developing policies for pupil suicide prevention, the department shall develop and maintain a model policy in accordance with this section to serve as a guide for local educational agencies.

(B) On or before June 1, 2024, the department shall complete the development of, and issue to local educational agencies, resources and guidance on how to conduct suicide awareness and prevention training remotely.

(C) On or before July 1, 2026, the department shall update the model policy, described in subparagraph (A), to address crisis intervention protocols in the event of a pupil suicide crisis, including all of the following:

(i) The process by which staff and external agencies are deployed to address a pupil suicide crisis. This protocol shall prioritize the use of school mental health professionals when addressing a pupil suicide crisis. If a school mental health professional is not available, the protocol may identify a school employee who has completed training pursuant to

Section 49428.15 to provide a warm handoff to a mental health professional. If a trained school employee is not available to address the pupil suicide crisis, the protocol shall identify one or more community-based organizations, mobile crisis units, 988 services, or other qualified mental health professionals to be contacted in the event of a pupil suicide crisis.

(ii) Involvement and notification of law enforcement, including law enforcement described in Section 832.3 of the Penal Code and Section 38000, shall be limited to situations in which a pupil's life is in imminent danger and their needs cannot be addressed by a mental health professional.

(iii) The assessment process that law enforcement officers should follow to determine whether the pupil experiencing a suicide crisis is endangered by parental notification. The pupil shall be informed if their parent or guardian is notified.

(b) (1) The governing board or body of a local educational agency that serves pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, shall review, at minimum every fifth year, its policy on pupil suicide prevention and, if necessary, update its policy.

(2) Nothing in this section shall prevent the governing board or body of a local educational agency from reviewing or updating its policy on pupil suicide prevention more frequently than every fifth year.

(3) On or before January 1, 2025, the governing board or body of a local educational agency that serves pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, shall review and update its policy on pupil suicide prevention to incorporate best practices identified by the department in the department's model policy.

(4) On or after July 1, 2026, the governing board or body of a local educational agency shall update its pupil suicide prevention policy to include crisis intervention protocols that incorporates best practices identified in the department's model policy during the next regularly scheduled review of the pupil suicide prevention policy.

(5) When the governing board or body of a local educational agency reviews its policy on pupil suicide prevention, if the local educational agency does not have a school mental health professional or contract with a mental health professional, the governing board or body is encouraged to consider whether funding should be identified for purposes of hiring a school mental health professional.

(c) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Local educational agency" means a county office of education, school district, state special school, or charter school.

(2) "Mental health professional" means an individual licensed or registered, or an intern or associate working towards licensure, by the Board of Behavioral Sciences or the Board of Psychology in the Department of Consumer Affairs.

(3) "Pupil suicide crisis" means any of the following:

(A) A pupil who is exhibiting suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

(B) A pupil who has completed a suicide risk assessment and is determined to be at risk of suicide.

(C) A pupil who is attempting to physically harm themselves or others.

(4) "School mental health professional" means a school employee with a clear or preliminary pupil personnel services credential with a specialization in school counseling, school social work, or school psychology, a credentialed school nurse, or a licensed, registered, or associate marriage and family therapist, professional clinical counselor, clinical social worker, educational psychologist, or psychologist under the supervision of a school employee with a pupil personnel services or administrative services credential.

**SEC. 2.** If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.