

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 16, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2246**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member O'Donnell**

**(~~Coauthor: Assembly Member Low~~)**

**(*Coauthors: Assembly Members Bloom, Chiu, Gordon, and Low*)**

February 18, 2016

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An act to add Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 215) to Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, relating to pupil health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2246, as amended, O'Donnell. Pupil suicide prevention policies.

Existing law establishes a system of public elementary and secondary schools in ~~this state~~, *state* and provides for the establishment of school districts and other local educational agencies to operate these schools and provide instruction to pupils. Existing law establishes the State Department of Education in ~~state government~~, *government* and vests the department with specified powers and duties relating to the state's public school system.

This bill would require ~~a~~ *the* governing board or body of a local educational agency, as defined, that serves pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, to, before the beginning of the 2017–18 school year, adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, as specified, that specifically addresses the needs of high-risk groups. By imposing additional duties on local educational agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would require the department to develop and maintain a model policy to serve as a guide for local educational agencies.

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 these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: yes.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:
- 3 (a) According to the latest 2013 data from the federal Centers  
4 for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second leading  
5 cause of death for youth and young adults ~~aged 10 to 24~~. *24 years*  
6 *of age, inclusive.*
- 7 (b) As children and teens spend a significant amount of their  
8 young lives in school, the personnel that interact with them on a  
9 daily basis are in a prime position to recognize the warning signs  
10 of suicide and make the appropriate referrals for help.
- 11 (c) In a national survey conducted by the Jason Foundation, the  
12 number one person who a pupil would turn to for helping a friend  
13 who might be suicidal was a teacher. It is imperative that when a  
14 young person comes to a teacher for help, the teacher has the  
15 knowledge, tools, and resources to respond.
- 16 (d) There are national hotlines available to help adults and  
17 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth  
18 experiencing suicidal ideation, including the National Suicide  
19 Prevention Lifeline and the Trevor Project, respectively.
- 20 (e) According to the Family Acceptance Project, research has  
21 found that, for an LGBTQ youth, having at least one supportive  
22 adult can reduce the youth's risk of suicide.
- 23 (f) A model policy on suicide prevention created in consultation  
24 with suicide prevention experts and other stakeholders is available  
25 through the Trevor Project for adoption or adaptation, or both, by  
26 the State Department of Education and local educational agencies.

1 SEC. 2. Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 215) is added  
2 to Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education  
3 Code, to read:

4  
5 Article 2.5. Pupil Suicide Prevention Policies  
6

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

17 ~~(1)~~

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

20 (A) Youth bereaved by suicide.

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

23 (C) Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home ~~settings.~~  
24 *settings, such as foster care.*

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

26 ~~(2)~~

27 (3) (A) The policy shall also address any training to be provided  
28 to teachers of pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, on suicide  
29 awareness and prevention.

30 ~~(A)~~

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

36 ~~(B)~~

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

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

7     ~~(3)~~

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

12     (b) For purposes of this section, “local educational agency”  
13 means a county office of education, school district, state special  
14 school, or charter school.

15     SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that  
16 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to  
17 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made  
18 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division  
19 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.