

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 9, 2016
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 16, 2016
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2246

Introduced by Assembly Member O'Donnell
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bloom, Chang, Chiu, Gordon, and
Low)
(Coauthor: Senator Leno)

February 18, 2016

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 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 and vests the department with specified powers and duties relating to the state's public school system.

This bill would require 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 10 to 24 years of age,
- 6 inclusive.
- 7 (b) As children and teens spend a significant amount of their
- 8 young lives in school, the personnel ~~that~~ *who* interact with them
- 9 on a daily basis are in a prime position to recognize the warning
- 10 signs 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~~ *whom* a pupil would turn to for helping
- 13 a friend who might be suicidal was a teacher. It is imperative that
- 14 when a young person comes to a teacher for help, the teacher has
- 15 the 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) (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, at
10 a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on pupil suicide prevention
11 in grades 7 to 12, inclusive. The policy shall be developed in
12 consultation with school and community stakeholders,
13 school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide
14 prevention ~~experts~~, *experts* and shall, at a minimum, address
15 procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and
16 postvention.

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

19 (A) Youth bereaved by suicide.

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 (4) The policy shall be written to ensure that a school employee
37 acts only within the authorization and scope of the employee's
38 credential or license. Nothing in this section shall be construed as
39 authorizing or encouraging a school employee to diagnose or treat

1 mental illness unless the employee is specifically licensed and
2 employed to do so.

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

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

10 SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
11 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
12 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
13 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
14 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.