

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 739

Introduced by Assembly Members Bonnie Lowenthal and Brownley

February 17, 2011

An act to add Section 51223.5 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 739, as amended, Bonnie Lowenthal. Pupil instruction: suicide prevention: *mental illness awareness*.

Existing law establishes an adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12, inclusive. Existing law establishes the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission and requires the commission to recommend to the State Board of Education the adoption of minimum standards for courses of study in preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools.

This bill would require the state board and the commission to include suicide prevention instruction *and mental illness awareness instruction* in the health education framework for pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, during the next revision of that framework.

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

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

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 51223.5 is added to the Education Code,
2 to read:

1 51223.5. (a) During the next revision of the health education
2 framework, the state board and the Curriculum Development and
3 Supplemental Materials Commission shall include suicide
4 prevention instruction *and mental illness awareness instruction*
5 in that framework for pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive.

6 (b) As used in this section, “suicide prevention instruction”
7 includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

8 (1) Awareness and knowledge of depression, depression
9 symptoms, self-destructive behaviors, and risk factors and warning
10 signs of suicide.

11 (2) Ability to identify school and community resources for
12 suicide prevention.

13 (3) Knowledge and skills about how to seek help for oneself or
14 a friend and how to overcome barriers to seeking help.

15 (4) Importance of witnesses and bystanders reporting actual or
16 perceived signs of suicide risk factors or behaviors to teachers,
17 counselors, administrators, or other school staff.

18 (c) As used in this section, “*mental illness awareness*
19 *instruction*” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

20 (1) Awareness and knowledge of mental illnesses and disorders,
21 including, but not limited to, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar
22 disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and autism spectrum
23 disorders.

24 (2) Ability to identify school and community resources for
25 individuals living with a mental illness or disorder.

26 (3) Knowledge and skills about how to seek help for oneself or
27 a friend and how to overcome barriers to seeking help.