

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1352
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Due to multiple tragic events that have taken place recently, it has become clear that mental health needs to become a priority issue. One of the best ways to address this matter is by identifying mental health concerns in children. On average, children spend eight hours a day in school, and schools may be the best medium through which we can promote mental wellness.

Mental wellness is a persistent concern among children, as up to 30 percent of school-aged children experience at least moderate behavioral, social, or emotional problems. Children need to be mentally and physically healthy in order to focus on learning in school. As per the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this bill incorporates mental wellness into coordinated school health programs. Current statute requires the Department of State Health Services, the Texas Education Agency, and school districts to engage in coordinated school health activities to address the prevention of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and Type 2 diabetes. This bill adds mental health to this list of priorities.

As proposed, S.B. 1352 amends current law relating to inclusion of mental health concerns in existing state and local coordinated school health efforts.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.004, Education Code, by amending Subsections (c) and (d) and adding Subsection (1-1), as follows:

(c) Provides that the local school health advisory council's duties include recommending:

(1) Makes no changes to this subdivision;

(2) policies, procedures, strategies, and curriculum appropriate for specific grade levels designed to prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and mental health concerns through coordination of health education, physical education and physical activity, nutrition services, parental involvement, instruction to prevent the use of tobacco, school health services, counseling and guidance services, a safe and healthy school environment, and school employee wellness; and

(3) Makes a nonsubstantive change.

Deletes existing text providing that the local school health advisory council's duties include recommending strategies for integrating the curriculum components specified by Subdivision (2) with the following elements in a coordinated school health program for the district: school health services, counseling and guidance services, a safe and healthy school environment, and school employee wellness.

(d) Requires the board of trustees of each school district to appoint at least five members to the local school health advisory council. Requires a majority of the members to be persons who are parents of students enrolled in the district and who are not employed by the district. Requires one of those members to serve as chair or co-chair of the council. Authorizes the board of trustees also to appoint one or more persons from each of the following groups or a representative from a group other than a group specified under this subsection: public school teachers; public school administrators; district students; health care professionals; the business community; law enforcement; senior citizens; the clergy; nonprofit health organizations; local domestic violence programs; local community mental health providers; and local substance abuse services providers.

(1-1) Requires the local school health advisory council to:

(1) review the adopted health education curriculum for accuracy and content related to mental health and consider the inclusion of certain topics, including recognition of signs and symptoms related to mental illness, mental health stigmas, substance abuse, and stress management;

(2) make recommendations regarding professional development designed to promote the ability of school district staff to build positive relationships with students, increase school connectedness, and improve recognition and understanding of mental health issues; and

(3) make policy recommendations to the school district concerning the integration of social and emotional learning into the academic curriculum.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 38.013(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires the Texas Education Agency to make available to each school district one or more coordinated health programs designed to prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and mental health concerns in elementary school, middle school, and junior high school students. Requires that each program provide for coordinating health education, physical education and physical activity, nutrition services, parental involvement, and physical and mental health policies, services, and supports.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.