

HB 1293 -- YOUTH SUICIDE AWARENESS EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Lauer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues in Education by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Education by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill allows, beginning in the 2016-17 school year, any licensed educator to annually complete up to two hours of training or professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention as part of the professional development hours required for State Board of Education certification.

The bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop guidelines suitable for training or professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention and to develop materials that may be used for the training or professional development.

By July 1, 2017, each district must adopt a policy for youth suicide awareness and prevention, including the training and education of district employees.

Each district's policy must address, but are not limited to, strategies that can help identify students who are at possible risk of suicide, strategies and protocols for helping students at possible risk of suicide, and protocols for responding to a suicide death.

By July 1, 2016, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must develop a model policy that districts may adopt. When developing the model policy, the department must cooperate, consult with, and seek input from organizations that have expertise in youth suicide awareness and prevention. By July 1, 2020, and at least every three years thereafter, the department must request information and seek feedback from districts on their experience with the policy for youth suicide awareness and prevention. The department must review this information and may use it to change the department's model policy. The department must post any information on its website that it has received from districts that it deems relevant. The department must not post any confidential information or any information that personally identifies any student or school employee.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the dissemination of the information in the bill, early identification of risk, and prevention training are vital to keeping Missouri students from taking their own lives.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lauer; Carol Kost Cantor; Joseph Custin; Rebecca Pamperl, American Foundation of Suicide Prevention; Cindi Keele; Bart Andrews, PhD; Rick Cantor, Averys Angels Foundation; Gary L. Burton; Missouri State Teachers Association; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri Coalition of Community Mental Health Centers; AFT St. Louis Local 420; and Michael C Reid.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.