

H. B. No. 123, School Security and Youth Suicide Awareness/Training

Good Morning Education Committee Chair, Senator Lehner and members of the committee, my name is Steve Terrill, and I appreciate the privilege to provide my input in regard to H. B. No. 123, concerning school security and youth suicide awareness/training.

1) I have strong concerns with additional involvement of state agencies in decisions that should be made at the local / regional level. Local ADAMHS Boards, Law Enforcement, and school districts should continue to collaborate to offer the programming, threat assessment, safety planning, and training based on local needs.

- Much of the legislation requires additional compliance activities on behalf of school districts. Many of these requirements will fall to school counselors or building principals, a group that is already overwhelmed with regulatory requirements.

2) In regard to Suicide training, we don't need education that starts and focuses on the outcome. We need to equip our youth with a basic understanding of mental wellness. *This begins with requiring behavioral health education each year in health classes, supplemented by **Teen Mental Health First Aid training that includes a comprehensive suicide prevention module***. Lastly, *does anyone here actually believe one hour once a year is anywhere enough.*

3) The fact that districts can utilize "existing teams" to meet the proposed requirements is a plus. Schools, especially our small rural districts (of 700 or less), are already asked to manage a significant number of "committees/teams" to facilitate school improvement processes, PBIS, RTI, and numerous other non-academic programs.

4) Funding remains a silent issue within the bill. Specific dollars will need to be allocated as facilitation and completion of the tasks outlined in the bill will required additional resources. Possibly this is an opportunity to designate some of the "Student Wellness" funding in the current budget be allocated here?

5) The requirement to establish an additional student club *does not consider that many students in our small district are already over-scheduled*. Students (at-risk students in particular) will likely have commitments to help with supervision of younger children, informal jobs to support the household.

In summary, I strongly support the basis of this Bill, but do not believe it takes into consideration these points I have stated and request these changes be made that would make this legislation effective and not just another state mandated check off item. Again, I appreciate you taking serious consideration to my input. Thanks: Steve Terrill, 919-623-0952 sterrill11@gmail.com