

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1662

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 2023

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 1662 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires the New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council to prepare a report regarding suicide prevention instruction in public schools. In preparing the report, the council may consult with the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Children and Families. The council may also request administrative and technical support from the Department of Children and Families. Additionally, the council may request data and information from the Department of Education, provided that any data and information forwarded does not contain any student identifying or confidential information. In the event that the department does not have the requested data, the department is required to request data from any school district that may have access to the information.

The report is required to include the following: (1) identifying the suicide prevention instruction already provided to public school teaching staff members and students; (2) reviewing the effectiveness and sufficiency of instruction in suicide prevention currently provided to public school teaching staff members and students; (3) identifying any methods public schools may use to identify students who may be at risk for suicide or self-injury; (4) identifying evidence-based and best practice programs in public schools for the prevention of youth suicide and self-injury, including a survey of programs being implemented in surrounding states; (5) identifying opportunities to enhance access to mental health treatment in public schools; and (6) findings and recommendations, including legislative and regulatory proposals, to improve suicide prevention instruction. The council is required to submit the report to the Governor and Legislature no later than 12 months after the effective date of the act. If the council does not submit the report to the Governor and Legislature before the end of the 12th month after enactment, the chair of the council is required to appear before a legislative committee to explain why the report has not yet been submitted.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- specify that when preparing the report, the council may consult with the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Children and Families;
- specify that the council may request administrative and technical support from the Department of Children and Families;
- allow the council to request data and information from the Department of Education provided that the data and information does not contain any student-identifying or confidential information. In the event that the department does not have access to the requested data, the department will reach out to school districts that may have the information; and
- require the chair of the council to appear before a legislative committee if the report has not been submitted to the Governor and Legislature by the 12th month after the date of enactment.