

ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1662

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 30, 2023

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1662 (1R).

As amended by the committee, 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. As amended by the committee, in preparing the report, the council is to conduct a survey to collect data from local education agencies, approved private schools for students with disabilities, and charter and renaissance school projects in the 2023-24 school year to be delivered by the Department of Education. The department is to aggregate the data and ensure any student-identifying or confidential information has been removed prior to transmitting to the council for use in the report.

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.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 1662 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 3526, which was also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to remove the requirement allowing the council to request data and information from the Department of Education and the requirement that the department reach out to school districts if the department does not have the requested data.

The committee amendments require that the council, in preparing the report, conduct a survey to collect data from local education agencies, approved private schools for students with disabilities, and charter and renaissance school projects in the 2023-24 school year to be delivered by the Department of Education.

The committee amendments require the Department of Education, prior to transmitting the required data to the council, to aggregate the data and ensure any student-identifying or confidential information has been removed.

The committee amended the bill to remove the requirement in the bill that the chair of the council 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.