

SCS SB 646 -- SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

SPONSOR: Schupp

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 10 to 0.

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the bill permits 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 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must develop guidelines for training or professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention and must also develop materials that may be used for such training or professional development.

Each district is required to adopt a policy for youth suicide awareness and prevention by July 1, 2018 and the department must develop a model policy by July 1, 2017, that districts may adopt. The department must cooperate, consult with, and seek input from organizations that have expertise in youth suicide awareness and prevention. By July 1, 2021, 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 adapt the department's model policy. The department must post the information it receives from districts on its website and must not post any confidential information or any information that personally identifies a student or school employee.

This bill is similar to SB 328 (2015).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that in 2013, more Missourians died by completing suicide than as a result of motor vehicle accidents. The worst bully a child will ever encounter is his or her own thoughts. Most individuals who contemplate suicide will mention it or their behavior will drastically change before the attempt. A single suicide will affect 100 people on average. At schools that have received programs similar to those in the bill there are 4.9 fewer attempts per 1,000 students after receiving the program.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Schupp; Carol Cantor; Melody Seeger, Foundation For Suicide Prevention; Scott Perkins, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Missouri; Abram Chess Messer,

self; Rachel Greathouse, Empower Missouri; Michelle Scott Huffman; Rick Cantor; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri Association of Physicians And Surgeons; and Mark Utterback, Mental Health America Of Eastern Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.