

HB 244 -- MENTAL HEALTH EFFORTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Williams

Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, suicide prevention training and school district policies on youth suicide awareness are required to include training and guidance on using the Columbia Protocol for suicide risk assessment and training on the mental health virtual tool created under this bill.

Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, mental health awareness training currently provided in grades nine to 12 must be expanded to include additional age appropriate instruction relating to suicide awareness, tools for identifying potential suicide signs, strategies and protocols for helping students at risk, and other provisions specified in the bill.

The bill requires that the current mental health training and awareness instruction be expanded to grades five to eight beginning in the 2026-27 school year; this provision will be known as "Brennan's Law" and such instruction must be included in existing health or physical education curriculum.

The bill requires the Department of Mental Health's Children's Office to develop and implement a virtual tool to enhance access to mental health resources. Criteria for the virtual tool include an online resource directory, a method to allow individual screening and assessment relating to mental health, and additional information and support deemed necessary by the Department.

This bill is the same as HCS HB 2471 (2024).