

SENATE BILL NO. 369

INTRODUCED BY M. YAKAWICH

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING SCHOOL YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION LAWS; STRENGTHENING YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS IN MONTANA SCHOOLS; REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO ENSURE LOW-COST AND NO-COST OPTIONS FOR YOUTH SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION TRAINING; REQUIRING YOUTH SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION TRAINING FOR CERTAIN OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION EMPLOYEES AND FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES; REQUIRING THAT THE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, OR PLANS RELATED TO SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE DEVELOPED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES; AMENDING SECTION 20-7-1310, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 20-7-1310, MCA, is amended to read:

**"20-7-1310. Youth suicide awareness and prevention training.** (1) This section may be cited as the "Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training Act".

(2) The office of public instruction shall provide guidance and technical assistance to Montana schools on youth suicide awareness and prevention training materials. All training materials offered must be approved by the office of public instruction, meet the standards for professional development in the state, and be periodically reviewed by a qualified person or committee for consistency with generally accepted principles of youth suicide awareness and prevention training. The office of public instruction, in consultation with the department of public health and human services, shall ensure low-cost and no-cost training options for schools.

(3) ~~The legislature recommends that youth~~ Youth suicide awareness and prevention training must be made available annually to each employee of a school district and to staff of the office of public instruction who work directly with any students enrolled in Montana public schools. The training must be provided at no

cost to the employee. The training may be offered through any method of training identified in subsection (4).

(4) ~~The legislature recommends that employees~~ Employees under subsection (3) shall take at least ~~2 hours~~ 1 hour of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every ~~5~~ 3 years. Appropriate methods for delivery of the training include:

- (a) in-person attendance at a live training;
- (b) videoconference;
- (c) an individual program of study of designated materials;
- (d) self-review modules available online; and
- (e) any other method chosen by the local school board that is consistent with professional development standards.

(5) The trustees of a school district shall establish policies, procedures, or plans related to suicide prevention and response. The policies, procedures, or plans must include a description of the youth suicide awareness and prevention training requirements for school district employees pursuant to subsections (3) and (4).

(6) No cause of action may be brought for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the implementation of the provisions of this section or resulting from any training or lack of training related to this section. Nothing in this section may be construed to impose a specific duty of care."

**NEW SECTION. Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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