

Background

House Bill 1386 was passed by the 82nd Legislature (Regular Session, 2011) and amended the Texas Education Code Chapter 11.25, which relates to District Improvement Plans. This required that the District Improvement Plans include a Suicide Prevention Plan. The bill further stipulated that the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Texas Education Agency (TEA) develop a Best Practice list for early mental health intervention programs and suicide prevention programs for use by elementary, middle school, high school, and any other general education program in public schools.

The bill allows DSHS and TEA to consider any existing suicide prevention program developed by a school district. DSHS and TEA also may consider any internet or online course or program developed in this state or another state that is based on best practices recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or the Suicide Resource Center. Each school district may select from this list any program(s) that is appropriate for implementation in their district.

The bill also allows DSHS to accept donations for purposes of this section from sources without a conflict of interest. The department may not, however, accept donations for purposes of this section from an anonymous source.

The bill charges DSHS to submit a report to the Texas Legislature relating to the development of the list of best practice based programs and the implementation of selected programs by school districts that choose to do so. This report is to be submitted no later than January 1, 2013.

The list of best practice based programs was coordinated and developed with TEA and released in June 2012. It is posted on the DSHS website under the Suicide Prevention page, www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa/suicide/Suicide-Prevention.aspx as well as on the Texas Suicide Prevention website, www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org.

Evaluation

DSHS partnered with TEA in order to obtain information about the implementation of suicide prevention and early intervention programs in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Questions were added to the 2011-2012 School Health Survey. School districts are mandated by TEA to complete this survey each academic year.

The following questions were added about suicide prevention:

1. Has your school district implemented a policy, program, or practice as a result of a School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) recommendation? If yes, then did you address the topics of Suicide Prevention?

• Of the 681 school districts that answered this question, 58 answered "yes" to confirm that their school district has a suicide prevention program, policy, or practice as a result of a SHAC recommendation. The following are the school districts that reported having implemented a policy, program, or practice about suicide prevention as the result of a SHAC recommendation:

Crandall ISD Fort Bend ISD Wichita Falls ISD Austin ISD Georgetown ISD Santa Maria ISD Fort Sam Houston ISD Ennis ISD Plano ISD Tioga ISD Santa Fe ISD Bishop CISD Vernon ISD Commerce ISD Lago Vista Mount Vernon ISD Shepherd ISD Harmony Science Academy - Lubbock

Balmorhea ISD
Patton Springs ISD
Seymour ISD
Waskom ISD
New Braunfels ISD
Wolfe City ISD
Eula ISD
New Waverly ISD
Tom Bean ISD
Everman ISD
Comal ISD
Pearsall I.S.D.
New Deal ISD
Dublin
Chapel Hill ISD

Quinlan ISD

Harmony Science Academy - Li Kilgore ISD. El Campo ISD Shallowater ISD Brazosport ISD Mart ISD Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD Por Vida Academy Advantage Academy Livingston ISD De Leon ISD Boerne ISD Windthorst ISD
Edna ISD
Lampasas ISD
Bloomburg ISD
Whitewright ISD
Rains ISD
McKinney ISD
Benavides ISD
Menard
Frankston ISD
Perrin- Whitt ISD
Leveretts Chapel ISD

Roscoe

- 2. Was the topic of suicide prevention addressed on your school district's website and/or handbook?
 - Of the 681 school districts that responded to the survey, 230 school districts replied "yes" to confirm that they address suicide prevention on the district website; 315 school districts answered "yes" to confirm that they address suicide prevention in their student handbooks. It is not known whether any of these responses were duplicates, meaning that the school district has addressed suicide prevention on a website and a handbook.

- 3. The final question added to the survey about suicide prevention asked school districts to report about their staff training or staff development needs around suicide prevention training.
 - 361 of the 681 school districts responding to the survey reported that they provided suicide prevention training or staff development. 148 of the 681 school districts reported that their school district staff need suicide prevention training or staff development.

Conclusions

- 1. Data collected from TEA in the School Health Survey was useful for establishing a baseline of schools that have a suicide prevention plan, policy, or program. This, however, was only reflective of those school districts that responded.
- 2. Of the approximately 1300 public school districts in Texas, 681 (52%) school districts completed the survey. A better response rate is needed to more accurately report the actual number of school districts that are in compliance with this new legislation.
- 3. As there is a need for more specific information about school districts' suicide prevention and early intervention plans and programs, the following additional questions were submitted by DSHS to TEA in August 2012 for the 2012-2013 School Health Survey:
 - a. Does your district use a suicide prevention program or curriculum for students from Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Best Practice Registry and/or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)?
 - b. Of the following health-related topics, which are addressed in each of your district's campus improvement plans? Bullying Prevention, Suicide Prevention, Suicide Prevention, Early Mental Health Intervention, Physical Activity, etc.

Data results from the 2012-2013 survey are scheduled to be available for DSHS review in April 2013. DSHS will continue to partner with TEA to collect and review data and update the best practice list annually.