

SENATE BILL NO. 41

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS GRAY-JACKSON, Claman, Giessel, Dunbar

Introduced: 1/22/25

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to mental health education."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 * **Section 1.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
4 to read:

5 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that the Board of Education
6 and Early Development develop guidelines for instruction in mental health in consultation
7 with the Department of Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, regional
8 tribal health organizations, and representatives of national and state mental health
9 organizations.

10 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.016(a) is amended to read:

11 (a) A local school board shall, in consultation with parents, teachers, and
12 school administrators, adopt policies to promote the involvement of parents in the
13 school district's education program. The policies must include procedures

14 (1) recognizing the authority of a parent and allowing a parent to
15 object to and withdraw the child from a standards-based assessment or test required by

1 the state;

2 (2) recognizing the authority of a parent and allowing a parent to
3 object to and withdraw the child from an activity, class, or program;

4 (3) providing for parent notification not less than two weeks before
5 any activity, class, or program that includes content involving human reproduction or
6 sexual matters is provided to a child;

7 (4) recognizing the authority of a parent and allowing a parent to
8 withdraw the child from an activity, class, program, or standards-based assessment or
9 test required by the state for a religious holiday, as defined by the parent;

10 (5) providing a parent with an opportunity to review the content of an
11 activity, class, performance standard, or program;

12 (6) ensuring that, when a child is absent from an activity, class,
13 program, or standards-based assessment or test required by the state under this section,
14 the absence is not considered an unlawful absence under AS 14.30.020 if the child's
15 parent withdrew the child from the activity, class, program, or standards-based
16 assessment or test or gave permission for the child's absence;

17 **(7) providing for parent notification not less than two weeks before**
18 **any class or program that provides instruction in mental health is provided to a**
19 **child.**

20 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.30.360(a) is amended to read:

21 (a) Each district in the state public school system shall be encouraged to
22 initiate and conduct a program in health education for kindergarten through grade 12.
23 The program should include instruction in [PHYSICAL] health and personal safety
24 including alcohol and drug abuse education, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR),
25 early cancer prevention and detection, dental health, family health including infant
26 care, environmental health, **mental health, physical health,** the identification and
27 prevention of child abuse, child abduction, neglect, sexual abuse, and domestic
28 violence, and appropriate use of health services.

29 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.30.360(b) is amended to read:

30 (b) The state board shall establish guidelines for a health and personal safety
31 education program, **including guidelines for developmentally appropriate**

1 instruction in mental health. In developing guidelines for developmentally
 2 appropriate instruction in mental health, the state board shall consult with the
 3 Department of Health, the Department of Family and Community Services,
 4 regional tribal health organizations, and representatives of national and state
 5 mental health organizations. Personal safety guidelines shall be developed in
 6 consultation with the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Upon
 7 request, the Department of Education and Early Development, the Department of
 8 Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, and the Council on
 9 Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault shall provide technical assistance to school
 10 districts in the development of personal safety curricula. A school health education
 11 specialist position shall be established and funded in the department to coordinate the
 12 program statewide. Adequate funds to enable curriculum and resource development,
 13 adequate consultation to school districts, and a program of teacher training in health
 14 and personal safety education shall be provided.

15 * **Sec. 5.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
 16 read:

17 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE. Two years after the effective date of this Act, the
 18 state Board of Education and Early Development shall submit a report to the senate secretary
 19 and chief clerk of the house of representatives and notify the legislature that the report is
 20 available. The report must

21 (1) include a copy of the guidelines for developmentally appropriate
 22 instruction in mental health developed by the state Board of Education and Early
 23 Development as required under AS 14.30.360(b), as amended by sec. 4 of this Act; and

24 (2) describe the process the state Board of Education and Early Development
 25 used to develop the guidelines.

26 * **Sec. 6.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
 27 read:

28 TRANSITION. The state Board of Education and Early Development shall develop
 29 the mental health guidelines required by AS 14.30.360(b), as amended by sec. 4 of this Act,
 30 within two years after the effective date of this Act.