

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 449

PRINTER'S NO. 432

AMOUNT

\$37,500 to \$3,478,600 – First Year Costs

FUND

General

DATE INTRODUCED

February 7, 2011

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Vance

HISTORY OF BILL

Referred to AGING AND YOUTH, Feb. 7, 2011

Reported as committed, March 2, 2011

First consideration, March 2, 2011

Re-referred to APPROPRIATIONS, April 6, 2011

Re-reported as committed, Sept. 19, 2011

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF BILL

Amends the Public School Code of 1949 to require Department of Public Welfare (DPW), in consultation with the Department of Education, to establish a child abuse recognition and reporting program.

Requires DPW to:

1. Administer the program to mandated reporters employed by or under contract with a school entity;
2. Include training in child abuse recognition and reporting requirements; and
3. Provide opportunities to complete the training through the Internet or other distance communication systems.

Requires 3 hours of training every 5 years.

Provides continuing education credit for professional educations who complete training.

Defines "school entity" as a school district, intermediate unit, joint school district, area vocational-technical school, charter school, cyber charter school and private school.

The Act shall take effect in 180 days.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

Under current statute, school administrators, counselors, teachers, and nurses are required to report suspected child abuse. There are currently 228,744 teachers and counselors. That does not include other school employees or contracted employees within a school entity, so the actual number of "mandated reporters" will be much higher.

Depending on the method of training delivery, costs are expected to range from \$37,500 to \$3,478,600.

Online Training Method:

The Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) is developing an on-line training program that includes both pre- and post-training assessments so that an individual can confirm their understanding of the materials. PFSA plans to offer the program at a cost of \$75 for a two-hour session. SB 449 requires three hours of training. Assuming that (1) PFSA's on-line program can be expanded to three hours and (2) a school entity could offer the program to all affected school employees at one time, the minimum cost would be \$37,500 ($75 * 500 = 37,500$). This estimate includes several assumptions – adding an additional hour of training with no increase in the cost to participants, offering a single training session at each school entity, and reaching all affected employees – that are unlikely to occur.

A slightly more realistic assumption is to provide sessions to an average of 100 individuals per session. Under this scenario, DPW would have to provide 2,287 training sessions ($228,744 / 100 = 2,287$) at a total cost of \$171,525 ($2,287 * 75 = 171,525$). This estimate assumes that all training locations would both be free of charge and Internet accessible.

PFSA CD-ROM Training:

PFSA offers self-directed training through a CD-ROM at a cost of \$125 each. As with the on-line training, the CD offers pre- and post-training assessments to validate the participants' understanding of the information. Purchasing one CD per school entity would cost \$62,500 ($500 * \$125 = \$62,500$); however, we expect that most would need more than one CD. The current CD training curriculum runs three hours and would meet the requirements of SB 449.

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PFSA Delivered Trainer-of-Trainer:

DPW may develop capacity within the school entities through a trainer-of-trainer (TOT) model. The TOT session, which allows for a maximum of 25 participants, requires 12 hours of training per person with each session costing \$6,084.12. DPW would recommend training three employees at each school entity, allowing eight school entities to send three employees each for a single training session that accommodates 25 people. Sixty sessions ((500 school entities x 3 employees) / 25 people per session = 60) would be required, at a cost of \$365,047.20 (60 x \$6,084.12 = \$365,047.20).

PFSA Delivered Training:

If DPW were to offer in person training to 228,744 people, with a maximum of 100 people per session, at least 2,287 training sessions would be required. This number of participants is not ideal and can lead to questionable comprehension of material. Based upon an hourly training cost of \$507.01, a three-hour session would cost \$1,521.03. The total for 2,287 sessions would be \$3,478,595.61.

SB 449 is silent on whether all individuals must be trained in the first year and then every five years thereafter or whether one-fifth of the individuals can be trained each year. Because on-line training, CD-ROM training, and TOT all provide some type of on-going resource that a school entity can use to train additional staff, this question was not critical to estimating the cost for those types of training. In person training, however, is different.

In person training requires a contract for services and may include such things as the minimum and maximum number of people to be trained in each session, number of training sessions, cost of a trainer's travel, materials, and location fees. Because these contracts may include both minimum and maximum numbers of attendees for a training session, the question of whether all individuals must be trained in the first year and then every five years thereafter, or whether one-fifth of the individuals can be trained in each year becomes important.

Assuming that DPW may train one-fifth of the individuals annually would level out costs over a five-year period and ensure that newly hired employees are trained as soon as possible: the annual cost would be \$699,369.40. DPW has an existing contract with PFSA for training school employees, and assuming that this contract could be amended or a new contract issued to cover the training required under SB 449. Of the current contract, \$91,703.20 is spent on training school employees, thereby reducing the amount of increase needed to fund SB 449 from \$699,369.40 to \$607,666.20 annually.

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There are approximately 2,100 certified school nurses in Pennsylvania, a number that has remained consistent over the last several years. AAP, through their program, has trained 1,839 school nurses since its inception. Since most school nurses have been trained through the existing program, DPW could assume the additional school nurses under the current contract.