

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 200

PRINTER NO. 943

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

May 28, 2019

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Hughes

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 200 amends the Public School Code to provide for the education and training of school officials and school personnel in the field of trauma-informed education.

This legislation increases the minimum training hours by one (1) hour for new school directors and charter school trustees and reelected school directors and charter school trustees and provides for best practices in trauma-informed approaches to comprise a minimum of one (1) hour of the required training.

The legislation requires the professional education plan for each school entity to include a minimum of one (1) hour of required training on trauma-informed approaches and requires each school entity to provide school employees with training on trauma-informed approaches. Training for school employees will be based on evidence-based or evidence-informed programs that reflect best practices. The training shall including:

- Recognition of the signs of trauma;
- Best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma-informed approaches;
- Recognition of the impact of secondary trauma on school employees and appropriate resources for employees that experience secondary trauma;
- School entity's policies regarding trauma-informed approaches; and
- School entity's policies regarding connecting the student with services.

The legislation requires the Department of Education (department) to develop guidelines for the approval of flexible post-baccalaureate instructional certification programs in the field of trauma-informed approaches. The impact of trauma on a child is added to the core Pennsylvania School Leadership Standards.

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The legislation adds the Secretary of Health, or a designee, and a subject matter expert in trauma-informed approaches to education from a state-related institution of higher education to the School Safety and Security Committee (committee). It provides for the committee to develop model trauma-informed approaches that a school entity must use if they are seeking funding from the School Safety and Security Grant Program for trauma-informed activities. At a minimum, the model will include:

- Designation of an individual who is assigned to the school and oversees the implementation of a trauma-informed approach plan;
- Coordination of services between the school, student, family and community or county-based services;
- Indication of how coordinated services are being provided;
- Utilization of evidence-based approaches;
- Collection of data to determine the effectiveness of the approaches; and
- Professional development and support for school staff on understanding, recognizing and responding to trauma.

The legislation includes language providing the State Board of Education to adopt policies encouraging the inclusion of trauma-informed approaches in professional education curriculum at institutions of higher education issuing teaching degrees.

The legislation defines “trauma” as an event, series of events or set of circumstances that an individual experienced that is physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and has lasting effects on the individual’s cognitive functioning and physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual well-being.

The legislation also defines “trauma-informed approach” as a schoolwide approach to education and a classroom-based approach to student learning that recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in students, their family and staff and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, professional learning and procedures for the purposes of recognizing trauma and resisting the reoccurrence of trauma.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The enactment of Senate Bill 200 will have no fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds.

The Department of Education has indicated that the cost to develop guidelines for the approval of flexible post-baccalaureate instructional certification programs in the field of trauma-informed approaches and for the State Board of Education to adopt policies encouraging the inclusion of trauma-informed approaches in professional education curriculum at institutions of higher education issuing teaching degrees should be minimal as these responsibilities are within the department’s and state board’s expertise and can be accomplished within the department’s existing operating budget. The FY 2019-18 budget includes \$26,947,000 for General Government Operations.

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The provisions requiring the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency through the School Safety and Security Committee to develop model trauma-informed approaches that a school entity must use when seeking funding from the School Safety and Security Grant Program for trauma-informed activities should be minimal and can be accomplished within PCCD's existing operating budget. The 2018-19 fiscal year budget includes \$7,350,000 for PCCD.

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association has indicated that the additional training for school directors and charter school trustees required on trauma-informed approaches will have minimal fiscal impact as the training would be included as part of its normal annual program of training offered to school directors and charter school trustees.

Additionally, the provisions requiring school entities to provide training for school employees on trauma-informed approaches should pose minimal cost as training can be accomplished within the school entities' normal regime of training for school employees.