
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6399 (as amended by House "A" and "C")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), starting with the 2021-22 school year, to biennially administer the Connecticut School Health Survey to students in grades nine through 12, if the department receives funding from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for that purpose.

Under the bill, the survey must be (1) based on the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey and (2) administered in the high schools the CDC randomly selects. The bill requires DPH to provide local and regional boards of education with guidelines on the survey's administration and requires the boards to administer the survey according to these guidelines, including the opportunity for parents and guardians to exclude their children from the survey.

The bill requires the Department of Education (SDE), by January 1, 2022, and in consultation with DPH, to develop a uniform parental notification policy and form for local or regional boards of education to use in administering the survey.

It requires the child advocate, in consultation with DPH, by October 1, 2022, to develop and update, as necessary, questions to assess the risk of youths becoming victims of sexual assault or misconduct by an adult. The questions must be included in the survey.

The bill also allows DPH to develop additional questions to be included in the survey that are relevant to the health concerns of the state's high school students. DPH must do so in consultation with the departments of Children and Families, Education, and Mental Health and Addiction Services; the Office of Early Childhood; and any other

agency or public interest group DPH deems necessary.

*House Amendment "A" (1) changes the school year by which DPH must start administering the survey, from 2022-23 to 2021-22; (2) requires the DPH guidelines provide parents the opportunity to deny permission, in writing, rather than using passive parental consent; and (3) makes minor changes.

*House Amendment "C" requires SDE to develop a uniform parental notification policy and form for local and regional school boards to use in administering the survey.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, except the provision on the SDE uniform policy and parent notification form is effective upon passage.

DPH GUIDELINES

Under the bill, the DPH guidelines must include the:

1. CDC survey protocol;
2. requirement to provide parents the opportunity to exclude their children from the survey by denying permission in writing, on a DPH-prescribed form;
3. requirement for the survey to be anonymous and administered in a manner designed to protect student privacy;
4. timeframe for completing the survey; and
5. process for submitting survey results to the department.

SDE UNIFORM PARENT NOTIFICATION POLICY AND FORM

Under the bill, SDE's uniform policy must address timely notification to the parents or guardians of students in grades nine to 12 about the Connecticut School Health Survey within 21 calendar days before the date the board will administer the survey at a high school it governs.

The bill requires SDE to develop a notification form for parents and

guardians that includes (1) an explanation of the survey and how a parent or guardian may opt out of it being administered to his or her child and (2) the Internet link to the survey that will be administered.

BACKGROUND

CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Under existing agency practice, DPH biennially conducts the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered in Connecticut as the Connecticut School Health Survey, with funding provided through a cooperative agreement with the CDC. The survey is sponsored and designed by the CDC. The CDC randomly selects approximately 50 high schools that are a representative sample of public high school students. DPH staff obtain permission from the CDC-selected schools to conduct the survey.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 1 (02/25/2021)

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 38 Nay 0 (04/13/2021)