
HOUSE BILL 1363

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Ortiz-Self and Callan

1 AN ACT Relating to policies and resources to address secondary
2 traumatic stress in the K-12 workforce; adding a new section to
3 chapter 28A.300 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.400 RCW; and
4 creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1)(a) The legislature acknowledges that
7 secondary traumatic stress, also called compassion fatigue, is a
8 natural but disruptive set of symptoms that may result when one
9 person learns firsthand of the traumatic experiences of another.
10 Symptoms of secondary traumatic stress may include feelings of
11 isolation, anxiety, dissociation, physical ailments, and sleep
12 disturbances. In addition, those affected by secondary traumatic
13 stress may experience: Changes in memory and perception; alterations
14 in their sense of self-efficacy; a depletion of personal resources;
15 and disruption in their perceptions of safety, trust, and
16 independence.

17 (b) Secondary traumatic stress may be experienced by teachers,
18 school counselors, administrators, or other school staff. Everyday
19 these school staff work with students experiencing trauma and loss.
20 In addition, many students have experienced additional trauma due to

1 the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on themselves and their
2 families.

3 (2) The legislature finds that secondary traumatic stress is
4 preventable and treatable. Therefore, the legislature intends to
5 require school districts to adopt a policy and procedure to prevent
6 and address secondary traumatic stress in the workforce and to make
7 resources on secondary traumatic stress publicly available.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
9 RCW to read as follows:

10 The office of the superintendent of public instruction must
11 publish on its website links to resources, self-assessments, and best
12 practices for educators and local policymakers to prevent and address
13 secondary traumatic stress in the workforce. The office of the
14 superintendent of public instruction must collaborate with the
15 Washington state school directors' association, the educational
16 service districts, and the school employees' benefits board created
17 in RCW 41.05.740 and provide links to any resources on secondary
18 traumatic stress available through these organizations.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.400
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 (1) The Washington state school directors' association shall
22 develop a model policy and procedure to prevent and address secondary
23 traumatic stress in the workforce.

24 (2) The model policy and procedure must include the following
25 elements:

26 (a) A commitment to support mental health in the workplace;

27 (b) Promotion of a positive workplace climate with a focus on
28 diversity and inclusion;

29 (c) Establishment of a district-wide workforce mental health
30 committee with the following functions:

31 (i) Share secondary traumatic stress, stress management, and
32 other mental health resources and supports available through the
33 office of the superintendent of public instruction, the educational
34 service districts, and the school employees' benefits board created
35 in RCW 41.05.740;

36 (ii) Share links to a secondary traumatic stress self-assessment
37 tool and any associated resources; and

1 (iii) Report to the school district board of directors at least
2 once per year with a summary of committee activities;

3 (d) Regular assessment of district-level and school building-
4 level implementation of the policy and procedures that includes input
5 from the workforce; and

6 (e) Provision of appropriate resources and training to schools
7 and staff for continuous improvement.

8 (3) The model policy and procedure developed under this section
9 must be posted publicly on the Washington state school directors'
10 association's website by August 1, 2021. Updates to the model policy
11 and procedure must be posted publicly within a reasonable time of
12 development.

13 (4) By the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, each school
14 district must adopt, or amend if necessary, policies and procedures
15 that, at a minimum, incorporate all the elements described in
16 subsection (2) of this section. School districts must periodically
17 review their policies and procedures for consistency with updated
18 versions of the model policy and procedure.

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