

CLIENT NEWS BRIEF

New Laws Aim to Address Bullying and Suicide Prevention

Governor Jerry Brown recently signed a series of bills aimed at preventing bullying and suicide. These new laws require school districts to: 1) adopt procedures for bullying prevention; 2) provide suicide prevention hotline information on student identification cards; and 3) review and update policies on suicide prevention at least every five years.

AB 2291 – Bullying Prevention Training and Resources

In an effort to curb bullying and harassment in schools, Assembly Bill (AB) 2291 amends section 32283.5 of the Education Code to require the California Department of Education (CDE) to post on its website its training module and annually post an updated list of other available online training resources related to bullying or bullying prevention.

School districts, charter schools and county offices of education will also be required to make the CDE training module available to certificated school site employees and all other school site employees who have regular interaction with students.

Additionally, local educational agencies (LEAs) will be required to adopt procedures for preventing acts of bullying by December 31, 2019, per the newly codified Education Code section 234.4.

The procedures for bullying prevention would likely fit within LEAs' existing prevention policies on bullying or within their comprehensive school safety plan. Existing law already encourages all school safety plans to include policies and procedures aimed at the prevention of bullying. Education Code section 234.1 already requires school boards adopt a bullying policy, since July 1, 2012. (See 2012 Client News Brief No. 22.)

SB 972 – Suicide Prevention Hotline on Student Identification Cards

Beginning July 1, 2019, Senate Bill (SB) 972 will require schools serving students in grades 7 through 12 and in higher education issue student identification cards to print a suicide prevention hotline number on the cards.

SB 972 adds section 215.5 to the Education Code, specifically providing that the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Crisis Text Line or a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number can be printed on either side of the identification card. In addition, higher education institutions are also authorized to print the campus police or security telephone number, or the local nonemergency telephone number.

Schools with students in grades 7 through 12 and higher education institutions which already have a supply of unissued, noncompliant identification cards as of January 1, 2019, may continue to issue the noncompliant identification cards until the supply is depleted.

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As the information contained herein is necessarily general, its application to a particular set of facts and circumstances may vary. For this reason, this News Brief does not constitute legal advice. We recommend that you consult with your counsel prior to acting on the information contained herein.

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AB 2639 – Review Suicide Prevention Policies

AB 2639 builds upon AB 2246 (see 2016 CNB No. 82) which required schools to adopt suicide prevention policies prior to the commencement of the 2017-2018 school year. The new law, found at Education Code section 215, requires governing boards of LEAs that serve students in grades 7 through 12 to review their policies on suicide prevention at least every five years. Based on the original adoption deadline of July 1, 2017, districts should plan to review and update their policies no later than July 1, 2022.

The Legislature intends that suicide prevention policies be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that those policies remain relevant and address youth suicide prevention.

Takeaways

Bullying prevention training posted on the CDE website will need to be made available to certificated school site employees and all other school site employees who have regular interaction with students. LEAs will need to adopt procedures for preventing acts of bullying by December 31, 2019.

Schools with students in grades 7 through 12 and higher education institutions that issue student identification cards will need to have a suicide prevention hotline number printed on the cards by July 1, 2019.

LEAs will need to review and, if necessary, update their suicide prevention policies at least every five years.

If you have any questions about bullying and suicide prevention, or wish to discuss these new legal requirements, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or an attorney at one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or download our [Client News Brief App](#).