

Legislation Addressing Bullying and Student Mental Health 2015-2019

compiled for the Education Interim Committee, August 2019
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Suicide Prevention

2015—[HB 374](#) (McClafferty) requires OPI to provide guidance to schools on suicide prevention and recommends that districts make suicide prevention training available to school employees. Codified at [20-7-1310, MCA](#).

2017—[HB 381](#) (Lenz) amends 20-7-1310 to add requirement that school district trustees establish suicide prevention and response policies, procedures, or plans.

2017—[HB 118](#) (Windy Boy) appropriates \$250,000 one-time-only to DPHHS to fund grants for school-based suicide prevention activities. These grants were used to support the incorporation of the PAX Good Behavior Game in elementary school classrooms, as recommended by the [2016 Suicide Mortality Review Team Report](#). (In May 2019, DPHHS received a [\\$2.1 federal grant](#) to support PAX implementation.)

2019—[HB 398](#) (Pierson) *was not enacted; it proposed requesting that the Board of Public Education include in its requirements for teacher certification a minimum of 8 hours of youth mental health and suicide prevention training.*

Bullying

2015—[HB 284](#) (Dudik) creates the Bully-Free Montana Act; defines bullying and prohibits bullying of a student in a public K-12 school. Codified at [20-5-207, MCA](#) (et seq.)

2017—[HB 248](#) (Dudik) clarifies that a victim of bullying can contact law enforcement at any time.

Mental Health Screening

None of the following were enacted. Mandatory depression screening for school children aged 11-17 was one of the top recommendations of the [2016 Suicide Mortality Review Team Report](#).

2015—[HB 383](#) (Dunwell) *proposed creating grant program to support districts in implementing optional mental health screening for students. The bill included a \$1 million general fund appropriation.*

2017—[HB 265](#) (Dunwell) *proposed creating a suicide prevention grant program to support districts in adopting either a resiliency or a suicide prevention curriculum and in utilizing mental health screening tools. The bill as introduced funded the program through an increase in the rental car tax.*

2019—[HB 186](#) (Dunwell) *was very similar to HB 383 (2015; see above).*