
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 453 (File 480, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING CLASSROOM SAFETY AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR.

SUMMARY

This bill requires local and regional boards of education, as well as the State Department of Education (SDE), to address daily classroom safety in a manner similar to how they must address bullying and teen dating violence under current law. Under the bill, “daily classroom safety” means a classroom environment in which students and school employees are not physically injured by other students, school employees, or parents; or exposed to physical injury.

The bill makes the following changes to school safety and school climate laws:

1. requires boards of education to address daily classroom safety in their safe school climate plans (§ 2);
2. requires boards of education to annually report to SDE instances of daily classroom safety violations (§ 2);
3. allows teachers to refer out of their classroom students who commit daily classroom safety violations and sets standards for the student’s return (§ 2);
4. requires SDE to provide school districts with training and assistance (§ 3);
5. expands the duties of school staff in safe school climate leadership positions to include daily classroom safety issues (§ 4); and
6. expands the statutory definition of a “prevention and intervention strategy” used to address daily classroom safety

violations (§ 5).

The bill also makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes.

*Senate Amendment "A":

1. removes a provision that would have made verbal abuse a daily classroom safety violation (§ 1);
2. adds daily classroom safety to the items that must be included in the existing safe school climate plans (§ 2);
3. eliminates provisions that would have (a) specified offenses for which a teacher may remove a student from class, (b) required boards of education to establish a school district safety committee, (c) added daily classroom safety to the statewide safe school climate network's mission, and (d) required the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to amend its school safety and security plan standards; and
4. removes a provision that would have allowed safe school climate plans to include mental health services as an intervention, replacing it with therapeutic support (§ 5).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2018

§ 2 — SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN PROVISIONS

The bill requires boards of education, by September 1, 2019, to revise their safe school climate plans to additionally include provisions on daily classroom safety. Under current law, these plans must address bullying and teen dating violence.

Each revised plan must:

1. include a prevention and intervention strategy for daily classroom safety;

2. provide language about daily classroom safety to include in student conduct codes;
3. provide a designated procedure and support plan for daily classroom safety (see below);
4. require the school principal, when a student has violated daily classroom safety, to notify and provide details of the violation to (a) the parents or guardians of the student who violated daily classroom safety, and (b) when other students witness a violation, the board of education and the parents or guardians of the other students, without disclosing the identity of the student who violated daily classroom safety;
5. require schools to invite parents or guardians of a student who commits a violation to a meeting to discuss the school's interventions to prevent further violations;
6. establish a procedure for schools to document and maintain records of daily classroom safety violations and the number of such verified acts for public inspection and annual reporting to SDE;
7. prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of a violation of daily classroom safety; and
8. require an administrator to meet with the teacher of a student who has violated daily classroom safety no later than two school days following the violation to discuss how the student's behavior will be addressed and what interventions will be implemented to support the teacher and student.

Designated Procedure and Support Plan (§ 2)

Under the bill, the daily classroom safety procedure and support plan must include:

1. the identity of the administrator a teacher must notify when a

student is violating daily classroom safety, and the identity of any other individuals who may be contacted if the administrator is unavailable;

2. the process the administrator must use to investigate and assess the facts and severity of daily classroom safety violations;
3. the location where a teacher may refer a student who is violating daily classroom safety;
4. therapeutic support for the teacher and student or students involved in an incident; and
5. a process for ensuring that the support plan complies with the state special education law for students who commit repeated daily classroom safety violations.

§ 2 — REMOVAL AND RETURN OF STUDENTS TO THE CLASSROOM

Under the bill, if a teacher refers a student out of his or her classroom for a violation of daily classroom safety, the administrator can place the student in another educational setting that is best suited to meet the student's needs.

The administrator may return the student to the teacher's classroom if one of the following is met:

1. the teacher consents to such student's return or
2. the school's crisis intervention team, whose members must be trained in the use of physical restraint and seclusion, or a team of teachers and administrators designated by the school principal to assess whether the student should return to the classroom, determines the return is warranted because (a) the student has received appropriate intervention and support and (b) there are adequate protections in the classroom for the safety of the teacher and other students.

§ 3 — TRAINING FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

The bill requires SDE to provide daily classroom safety prevention, identification, and response training, within available appropriations, to any school employee who does not hold educator certification. Current law requires similar training for bullying and teen dating violence.

The bill allows this training to include the following:

1. developmentally appropriate strategies (a) to ensure daily classroom safety and (b) for immediate and effective interventions to ensure classroom safety;
2. information on the interaction and relationship between students violating daily classroom safety; and
3. research findings on daily classroom safety, such as information about the types of students who have been shown to be at-risk for violating classroom safety.

§ 4 — SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP DUTIES

The bill adds duties regarding daily classroom safety to the following individuals and groups with safe school climate leadership roles: district safe school climate coordinators and safe school climate committees (see BACKGROUND).

District Safe School Climate Coordinators

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, it requires district safe school climate coordinators to do the following in addition to their duties under current law:

1. collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the district's board of education, and the superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to daily classroom safety violations in district schools;
2. provide data and information about daily classroom safety to SDE, in collaboration with the superintendent; and
3. meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice each

school year to discuss daily classroom safety issues in the district.

Safe School Climate Committees

The bill requires each safe school climate committee to address issues relating to daily classroom safety in the school. More specifically, it requires the committee to do the following in addition to its duties under current law:

1. receive copies of completed reports following investigations of daily classroom safety violations;
2. identify and address patterns of acts that violate daily classroom safety among students in the school;
3. implement school security and safety plan provisions (see BACKGROUND) on the collection, evaluation, and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of daily classroom safety;
4. review and amend school policies relating to daily classroom safety;
5. educate students, school employees, and students' parents and guardians on daily classroom safety issues;
6. collaborate with the district safe school climate coordinator to collect data on daily classroom safety violations; and
7. perform any other duties the principal determines are related to the preventing, identifying, and responding to daily classroom safety violations for the school.

§ 5 — DAILY CLASSROOM SAFETY PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

The bill expands the definition of “prevention and intervention strategy” used in the state laws governing safe school climate plans and safe school climate assessments. Specifically, it expands the

definition to include the following:

1. implementation of a positive behavioral intervention and support process or another evidence-based model approach for ensuring daily classroom safety;
2. school rules prohibiting acts that violate daily classroom safety;
3. individual interventions with the child who violates daily classroom safety;
4. promotion of parent involvement to prevent acts that violate daily classroom safety;
5. an expanded culturally competent curriculum focused on social-emotional learning that includes trauma-informed instruction; and
6. therapeutic support for students, as needed, following violations of daily classroom safety.

Current law defines this strategy in similar terms for addressing bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and intimidation.

BACKGROUND

Safe School Climate Leadership Roles

By law, safe school climate leadership positions include the following:

1. a district safe school climate coordinator for each school district, chosen by the superintendent of each board of education from among existing school district staff, and
2. a safe school climate committee, chosen by the principal of each school, that includes at least one student's parent or guardian (CGS § 10-222k).

School Security and Safety Plan

The law requires each local and regional board of education to

develop a school security and safety plan for each school within its district (CGS § 10-222m). The plan must align with DESPP standards, which provide an all-hazards approach to handling emergencies at public schools (CGS § 10-222n).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/23/2018)