



2026 Sponsored Legislation

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Bill solicitation process

Date	Event
August 1, 2025	Request for Bill Proposals issued, guided by the Decision-Making Framework for Legislation
August 15, 2025	22 proposals received
September 18, 2025	Overview of legislative landscape and early proposal concepts presented at the LEX Advisory Committee meeting
Current	Staff are developing a bill proposal for the 2026 Legislative Session

Proposal for consideration

SUSTAINING AND SUPPORTING SUICIDE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

A proposal to build on existing school practices by:

- (1) Preserving access to accessible suicide prevention education via free online training
- (2) Enabling smarter data use

Decision Making Framework

Alignment

- Does the legislation directly relate to behavioral health or to the Commission and its work?
- Does the legislation relate to the implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act or the state’s Behavioral Health Transformation?
- Is it aligned with the strategic plan of the Commission to:
 1. *Champion vision into action (elevate diverse voices, improve systems, apply global best practices);*
 2. *Catalyze best practices (build capacity, strengthen workforce, ensure equitable access);*
 3. *Inspire innovation (promote adaptive policy, fund new ideas, share impact stories); or*
 4. *Drive expectations (reduce stigma, measure outcomes, raise public and policymaker awareness)?*

Impact and Equity

- Does the legislation advance equity for marginalized or underserved groups?
- What is the potential impact (high, medium, low)?
- What is the urgency or timing of the legislation?
- Is funding identified and sufficient to implement and sustain the legislation?
- Are the intended impacts consistent with the Commission’s vision for all Californians to experience wellbeing through a coordinated, prevention and recovery focused system?

Landscape and Value

- Do stakeholders support the legislation?
- Do the individuals, communities, or organizations directly impacted by the legislation support it?
- Is the Commission’s support meaningful or necessary for the legislation’s success?
- Does this duplicate current legislation or other statutory mandates?

Potential Outcomes

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Oppose Unless Amended
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ No position



Sustaining and Supporting Suicide Prevention in Schools

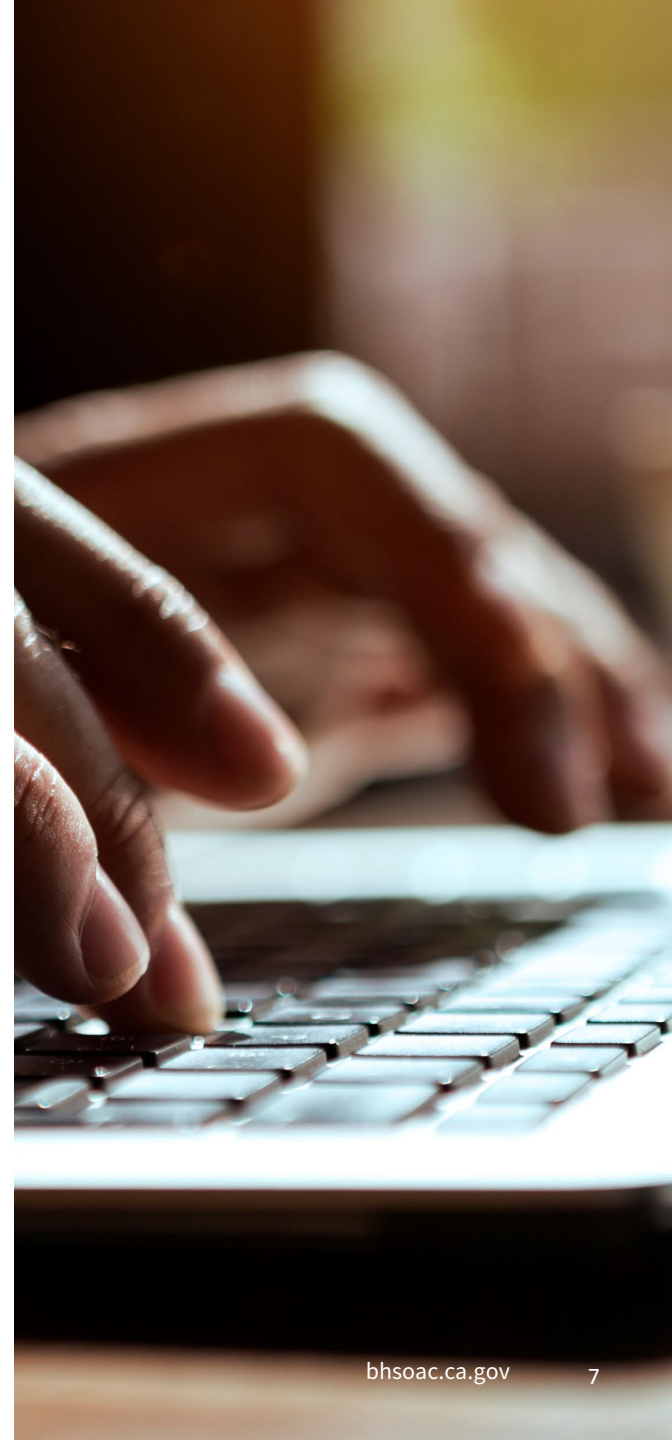
Current law

- California law requires all schools to adopt a suicide prevention policy for K-12 students based on the model developed by the California Department of Education.
- The model policy recommends that schools provide suicide prevention training and conduct suicide risk screenings.



Problem

- In 2022, California's age-adjusted suicide rate was 10.4 suicide deaths per 100,000 people – a rise of 8.3% over two decades – underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive prevention.
- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for youth ages 10-25.
- California schools currently lack a consistent, accessible suicide prevention training resource.
- Although many schools conduct suicide-risk screenings, the results aren't shared or aggregated.



Example: San Diego County COPES initiative

OVERVIEW

- San Diego County Office of Education runs the Creating Opportunities in Preventing and Eliminating Suicide (COPES) initiative.
- Builds capacity through mental health promotion and education, suicide prevention, and data collection.
- All COPES districts and charters use an evidence-based suicide risk screening tool and have staff trained on suicide intervention.
- Goal: saturate school communities with mental health literacy.

Example: San Diego County COPES initiative

DATA COLLECTION

- Annual data collection includes:
 - Needs assessment
 - California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) core module
 - CHKS mental health supports module
 - Suicide risk screenings
 - Events, trainings, and activities
- 31 local education agencies report monthly data on:
 - Number of suicide risk screenings
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Grade
 - Level of severity
 - Outcome

Example: San Diego County COPES initiative

CHANGES OVER TIME

Among more than 20,000 San Diego County middle and high school staff and students who completed LivingWorks Start:

98%

of staff

feel confident helping
someone at risk

95%

of students

feel confident
helping others

96%

of students

know how to use resources if
they're struggling

25%

&

35%

of staff

of students

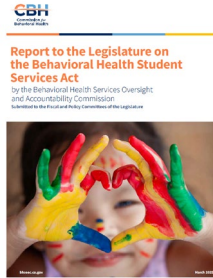
report having someone in mind
with whom to use their new skills

California-wide solution/summary

- California should implement a free, accessible, and sustainable online suicide prevention training for students, teachers, and parents to equip communities to recognize and respond to at-risk youth and reduce suicidal ideation and deaths.
- Requiring de-identified, aggregate school suicide risk screening data reporting would enable the State to identify regional and demographic trends so schools' efforts inform targeted action.

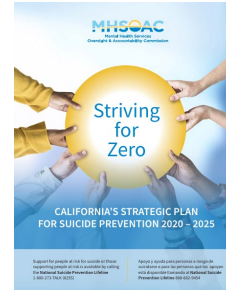


Commission intersections



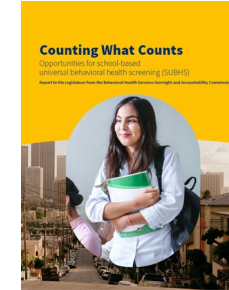
BHSSA Legislative Report

- Expands accessible, youth-centered resources, especially for underserved communities
- Reinforces accountability



Striving for Zero

- Increases training access
- Standardizes risk assessment
- Empowers communities to prevent suicide



School-Based Universal Behavioral Health Screening

- Supports data-driven decision-making
- Reduces stigma and increases behavioral health literacy
- Builds trust through inclusive training and transparent data practices

Proposed recommendation



Vote: The Legislative and External Affairs Advisory Committee recommends that the full Commission approve sponsoring a bill for Sustaining and Supporting Suicide Prevention in Schools for the 2026 legislative session.