



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 74 (Substitute S-1)
Sponsor: Senator Glenn S. Anderson
Committee: Judiciary

Date Completed: 7-30-13

CONTENT

The bill would amend Matt's Safe School Law within the Revised School Code to require the board of a school district or intermediate school district (ISD), or board of directors of a public school academy (PSA), to include cyberbullying as a form of bullying, and a definition of cyberbullying, in its policy prohibiting bullying and require the policy to assure the confidentiality of an individual who reported an act of bullying.

The bill also would do the following:

- Require school districts and PSAs to report incidents of bullying to the Department of Education according to its form and procedure, which the Department would have to develop.**
- Require a school board to submit a change in its bullying policy to the Department within 30 days of the change.**

Under the Code, the board of a school district or ISD, or board of directors of a PSA, by June 6, 2012, must have adopted and implemented a policy prohibiting the bullying of students. The policy must contain specific provisions, including a statement prohibiting bullying. The bill would require this statement to include cyberbullying as a form of bullying, and to define cyberbullying, by the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

A policy prohibiting bullying also would have to include an assurance of confidentiality for an individual who reported an act of bullying, as well as procedures to safeguard that confidentiality.

If a policy were amended after the original submission, the board of a school district or ISD, or board of directors of a PSA, would have to submit a copy of the amended policy to the Department within 30 days of modifying it.

The bill also would require the Department of Education to establish a form and procedure for school districts and public school academies to report incidents of bullying to the Department on an annual basis. A school district or academy would have to report to the Department according to its established form and procedure. The Department would be required to make the information in the reports readily available to the public.

MCL 380.1310b

Legislative Analyst: Glenn Steffens

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have a minimal fiscal impact on the Department of Education. The costs would result from the requirement to establish a form and procedure for schools to report incidents of bullying annually to the Department, and the requirement to make this information readily available to the public.

The bill also would have a fiscal impact on school districts and public school academies. The costs associated with tallying the number of bullying incidents within a district and reporting the data to the Department would be minimal: a maximum of \$375,000 statewide. There would be additional costs to districts associated with reviewing and verifying incidents of bullying reported within the districts, but the extent of the fiscal impact as a result is unclear at this time.

Fiscal Analyst: Cameron Mock

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.