

- SUBJECT:** Adding substance abuse programs to a resource list for schools
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Kolkhorst, Naishtat, Coleman, Collier, Cortez, S. Davis, Guerra, S. King, Laubenberg, J.D. Sheffield, Zedler
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Katharine Ligon, Center For Public Policy Priorities; Gyl Switzer, Mental Health America of Texas; *(Registered, but did not testify:* Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference; Melody Chatelle, United Ways of Texas; Laurie Glaze, One Voice Texas; Greg Hansch and Catherine Weaver, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Marilyn Hartman; Cynthia Humphrey, Association of Substance Abuse Programs; Merily Keller, Texas Suicide Prevention Council; Mandi Kimball, Children at Risk; Kathryn Lewis, Disability Rights Texas; Susan Milam and John Stuart, National Association of Social Workers/Texas Chapter; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Chuck Smith, Equality Texas; Andrea Usanga, Mental Health America of Greater Houston; Eric Woomer, Federation of Texas Psychiatry
- Against — *(Registered, but did not testify:* Barbara Harless)
- On — Angela Hobbs-Lopez, Department of State Health Services
- BACKGROUND:** Health and Safety Code, ch. 161, subch. O-1 governs early mental health intervention and prevention of suicide. Sec. 161.325 requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to provide and annually update a list of recommended best-practice-based programs in early mental health intervention and suicide prevention for implementation in public K-12 schools. DSHS must develop the list in coordination with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Each school district may select from the list programs appropriate for implementation.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3327 would add substance abuse prevention and intervention as a focus of Health and Safety Code, ch. 161, subch. O-1. The bill would add mental health promotion, positive youth development, and substance abuse prevention and intervention to the list of recommended best-

practice-based programs provided and updated by DSHS. The bill would require DSHS to develop the programs in coordination with regional education service centers, along with TEA. It would require that DSHS, TEA, and each regional education service center make the list of programs easily accessible on their websites.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 3327 would provide school districts with an easily accessible list to identify recommended best-practice-based programs in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention. Currently, districts sift through hundreds of different programs across many different websites. The bill would require TEA, DSHS, and the regional education service centers, the agencies with which districts most frequently communicate, to make the lists accessible and convenient on their websites. This would make selecting appropriate programs easier and more efficient for schools.

The current resource list does not include programs on substance abuse, which can be a serious problem among students. Schools would not be required to implement any of the programs. CSHB 3327 simply would give schools easier access to important programs that could help students.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The Texas school system should focus on the fundamentals of instructing students instead of dedicating resources to compiling lists of programs in areas not related to education and outside of the schools' core mission. With the state's system of public education already struggling under tight budget constraints, DSHS, TEA, and regional education services centers should not be required by law to work together to compile an even longer list of programs.