



March 27, 2024

The Honorable Aisha Wahab
California State Senate District 10
1021 O Street, Suite 7330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1318 (Wahab) Pupil health: suicide prevention policies: pupil mental health crisis - Support

Dear Senator Wahab,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write in support of SB 1318, which would require local educational agencies to include protocol for crisis intervention within their pupil suicide prevention policy.

Currently, local educational agencies serving pupils of all grades, including kindergarten, are required to adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention. Contained within that policy and its updates, procedure is to address suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention and consider age appropriateness, the needs of high-risk groups, and school and community stakeholder input, among other specified requirements.

In line with their core goals, CSAP supports preemptive efforts and planning for addressing mental health crises. The existing policy requirements take an important step in training educators and school officials on how to provide support to pupils. However, existing statute should be clarified to require an outlined intervention plan in the event of a pupil mental health crisis – exactly what SB 1318 aims to do.

Specifically, SB 1318 calls on local education agencies to include in their policies an outlined plan for how staff and external agencies are to be deployed in the event of a pupil mental health crisis. Further, SB 1318 clarifies the appropriate circumstances for involvement of law enforcement agencies. Finally, CSAP supports the inclusion of school mental health professionals wherever possible, and SB 1318 prioritizes their use in the event of crisis, providing for additional staff who may be called upon when needed. In the event that the educational agency does not have a school mental health professional on staff, SB 1318 requires the governing board to consider hiring for one whenever reviewing its pupil suicide prevention policy.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 1318.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yoder', is positioned below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Chair and Members, Senate Education Committee