

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Education Committee

BILL: CS/SB 1876

INTRODUCER: Education Committee and Senators Webster and Fasano

SUBJECT: Signs of Suicide Prevention Program

DATE: March 28, 2006

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Harkey</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>CF</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>EA</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill establishes a pilot program for suicide and depression prevention to be conducted by the Signs of Suicide Prevention (SOS) Program for secondary schools in Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties. The pilot programs must submit proposals to the Department of Education in order to receive funding. Parents must be provided with a screening form and information about the program. The pilot program must provide a report to Legislative leaders by January 1, 2007.

The bill requires the Michael Buonauro Foundation to provide \$600,000 in matching funds in order to receive the appropriation made in the bill.

The bill appropriates \$600,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education to be distributed to the Michael Buonauro Foundation for the pilot program.

This bill creates two unnumbered sections of law.

II. Present Situation:

Incidence of Suicide

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the 13th leading cause of death worldwide and the 11th in the United States.¹ In 2001, suicide was the third

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Suicide and Attempted Suicide," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Vol. 53, No. 22. June 11, 2004. p. 471.

leading cause of death among persons aged 10 to 19 years in the United States.² Suicide is often associated with isolation, depression, or anxiety, and it is also associated with violence against oneself or others. “Certain students who engage in extreme forms of violence, such as school shootings, exhibit suicidal ideation or behavior before or during the attack.”³

Signs of Suicide Prevention

Signs of Suicide Prevention (SOS)⁴ is a school-based suicide prevention and depression screening program that combines curricula to raise awareness of suicide and a brief screening for depression and other risk factors associated with suicidal behavior. SOS teaches students how to identify symptoms of depression and suicidal tendencies in themselves and friends while educating students about the relationship between depression and suicide and encouraging them to seek help. Research on the SOS program indicates that the program of suicide prevention for secondary school students has resulted in a reduction of suicide attempts. In a randomized controlled study with a population of 2,100 students in five high schools in Hartford, Connecticut and Columbus, Georgia, youth in the SOS treatment group were 40 percent less likely to report a suicide attempt within the past three months compared with youth in a control group.⁵

The Michael Buonauro Foundation

The parents of Michael Buonara, who died by suicide May 28, 2004, one day after his 25th birthday, created the Michael Buonauro Foundation. Through the foundation, Judy and Frank Buonauro have secured the SOS program for all public and private high school students in Orange County. Through the foundation, they work to share the cost of therapeutic services for young people identified through the program, who might otherwise have difficulty finding and affording care.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill establishes a pilot program for suicide and depression prevention in secondary schools in Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties during FY 2006-2007 and provides funding for the program. The Signs of Suicide Prevention Program (SOS) will provide the pilot program. The pilot program must encourage collaboration with local mental health facilities and individual professionals.

In order to receive funding, an SOS entity for a county authorized to participate in the pilot program must submit to the Department of Education by September 1, 2006, a proposal for suicide and depression prevention for secondary school students who attend school in that county. The pilot program must provide local school personnel in each participating county with

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “Methods of Suicide Among Persons Aged 10-19 Years—United States, 1992-2001,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Vol. 53, No. 22. June 11, 2004. p. 471.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “Suicide Attempts and Physical Fighting Among High School Students—United States, 2001,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Vol. 53, No. 22. June 11, 2004. p. 474.

⁴ <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/highschool/>

⁵ Aseltine, R.H., Jr., and DeMartino, R. “An Outcome Evaluation of the SOS Suicide Prevention Program,” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 94, No. 3. March 2004. pp.447-448.

the materials necessary for implementation. The parent of each student in a participating school must be provided with program information and a copy of a screening form to assist the parent in the identification of depression and suicidal tendencies and to help initiate family discussions.

By January 1, 2007, the district school board of each participating county must provide to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report that includes:

- An itemized list of program costs;
- An evaluation of participating schools;
- An assessment of the quality of the program components;
- An assessment of the safety of program implementation;
- An assessment of the burden on school support staff after implementation of the program;
- An assessment of the efficacy of the program; and
- Recommendations regarding program effects and outcomes.

The information must be reported for the pilot program in the aggregate, for each participating county, and for each participating school in each participating county.

The bill appropriates \$600,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for FY 2006-2007 to be distributed to the Michael Buonauro Foundation to implement the Signs of Suicide Prevention Program as a pilot program for secondary schools in Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties. The Michael Buonauro Foundation must provide \$600,000 in matching funds in order to receive the appropriation in the bill.

The bill would take effect July 1, 2006.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Private secondary schools in the four-county pilot program area could participate in the suicide prevention program.

The Michael Buonauro Foundation must provide \$600,000 in matching funds in order to receive the appropriation in the bill.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill appropriates \$600,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for the 2006-2007 fiscal year to be distributed to the Michael Buonauro Foundation for a pilot program to be conducted by the Signs of Suicide Prevention Program in Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties.

According to the DOE, school districts could incur costs for coordination of implementation procedures for screening and training of students participating in the SOS program. However, while the SOS program must provide school personnel with the materials necessary to implement the program, the bill does not require schools to participate. Any cost incurred by a school participating in the program likely would be incurred voluntarily.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
