

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Rudy Salas  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0032

**RE: AB 58 (Salas) Suicide Prevention policies and training: school-based health programs: pilot program**  
**AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Salas,

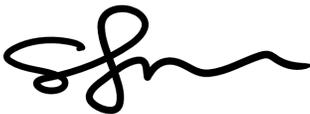
The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 58, as introduced on December 7, 2020, which would require Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to review and update their policies on pupil suicide prevention, provide training for faculty and staff, and create pilot programs establishing school health centers at five LEAs located in counties with high rates of youth suicide and self-harm.

American youth have high rates of suicides and suicide attempts. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Committee on Adolescence reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents 15 to 19 years old, affecting young people from all races and socioeconomic groups. According to a survey conducted by the AAP in 2019, 80% of pediatricians had had a patient who attempted or died by suicide, 48% within the past year.<sup>1</sup> Schools are well-positioned to offer help to students in terms of access, but currently lack the model prevention policies and training for faculty and staff to recognize and respond to youth who are at risk of suicide or self-harm to do so.

AB 58 would require LEAs to review and update their policies on suicide prevention to incorporate best practices identified by the California Department of Education (CDE) and to provide suicide awareness and prevention training at the beginning of each school year to teachers. Additionally, it would require the CDE to develop resources and guidance on how to conduct suicide awareness and prevention training remotely, as well as the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to create a pilot program to establish a school health center at five LEAs located in counties with high rates of youth suicide and self-harm, and for the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to provide technical assistance to the CDE and LEAs.

Teachers and other school staff provide an additional layer of support for our youth and need access to up-to-date, best-practice-based training on suicide prevention and awareness. AAP-CA strongly supports AB 58. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Sharon Pham, M.D. FAAP  
Member, State Government Affairs Committee  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2019/10/23/research102319>