HB197

164817-1

By Representative Collins

RFD: Education Policy

First Read: 10-MAR-15
SYNOPSIS: Currently, there is no particular K-12 curriculum to educate students on sexual assault and abuse. This bill would require such a curriculum known as "Erin's Law".

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To adopt "Erin's Law" in Alabama: to adopt guidelines for K-12 instructional courses on how to recognize and avoid child sexual abuse and to provide for an age appropriate curriculum in public schools on avoiding child sexual abuse.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. (a) The Legislature recognizes that Erin Merryn was raped and molested for six and a half years by a neighbor and a family member. She began a crusade her senior year of high school in 2004 to end the silence and shame
around sexual abuse. Erin's Law has been adopted in a number of states to help address the problem of child sexual abuse.

(b) The intent of Erin's Law is to shatter the silence and stigma around child sexual abuse, and to educate children and empower them to recognize and to report abuse.

(c) The Legislature finds that without a specific initiative like Erin's Law, schools generally fail to give young students adequate awareness and a voice in this issue.

Section 2. (a) The State Board of Education shall adopt guidelines for a child sexual abuse prevention instructional program. The guidelines shall:

(1) Educate children in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in public schools on child sexual abuse prevention through age appropriate curriculum through role plays, discussions, activities, and books.

(2) Give children the knowledge and encouragement to speak up and tell if anyone has ever touched them inappropriately, rather than keep it a secret.

(3) Educate children on safe touch, unsafe touch, safe secrets, and unsafe secrets, and how to get away from an abuser and report an incident immediately.

(b) All K-12 public schools shall establish a child sexual abuse prevention instructional program for students in grades consistent with subsection (a). The content of instruction shall be at the discretion of the local board; provided that at minimum, the instruction shall include each of the following:
(1) Techniques to teach children to recognize child sexual abuse, equip them with skills to reduce their vulnerability, and encourage them to report the abuse.

(2) At least four sessions of instruction to reinforce the concepts learned in the program.

(3) Sessions conducted at least annually, building on skills learned in the previous years.

(4) Developmentally appropriate instruction for each grade level.

(5) Involvement of students as active learning participants, and include discussions, modeling, and role playing.

(6) A capacity to be delivered by a wide range of personnel and professionals, including teachers, school counselors, outside agency prevention educators, and the like; provided that the personnel and professionals should have a thorough knowledge of child sexual abuse, including how to respond appropriately to child sexual abuse disclosures.

(7) An evaluation component with measurable outcomes.

(8) Instruction that is culturally sensitive and adaptable for use within varying school contexts, including age, race, and special needs.

(9) An evidence-based curriculum, to the extent possible.

(10) A professional training component for administrators, teachers, and other school personnel on
talking to students about child sexual abuse prevention, effects of child sexual abuse on children, handling of child sexual abuse disclosures, and mandated reporting.

(11) A component that encourages parental involvement within the child sexual abuse prevention program. This component shall inform parents about child sexual abuse topics, including characteristics of offenders, grooming behaviors, and how to discuss this topic with children.

Section 3. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.