

By Representative Detert

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; creating "The
3 Student Services Act for the Prevention of
4 Violence in Education"; creating a pilot
5 project in specified counties to enable school
6 districts in those counties to provide students
7 with skills in conflict resolution, anger
8 management, and related subjects; providing
9 legislative intent; providing purpose;
10 providing for funding; providing an effective
11 date.

12
13 WHEREAS, there is an increasing amount of violence in
14 our schools, nationally and in Florida, which threatens our
15 children's fundamental sense of safety in schools and
16 psychological well-being and jeopardizes their ability to
17 fulfill their potential, and

18 WHEREAS, parents have traditionally been confident of
19 the safety of their children at school, they now fear for
20 their children's well-being in school, and

21 WHEREAS, teachers are increasingly distracted from
22 their basic teaching duties by disruptive and violent
23 incidents, and

24 WHEREAS, research has demonstrated that students learn
25 best from direct teaching provided in a safe, low stress
26 environment, and

27 WHEREAS, external controls such as metal detectors and
28 additional security forces are only partially effective in
29 making schools safer, and

30
31

1 WHEREAS, internal controls such as anger management,
2 conflict resolution skills, good self esteem and social skills
3 result in more positive student behaviors, and

4 WHEREAS, student services personnel possess the
5 knowledge, training, experience, and credentials necessary to
6 reduce school violence and improve student outcomes
7 significantly, NOW, THEREFORE,

8
9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

10
11 Section 1. This act may be cited as "The Student
12 Services Act for the Prevention of Violence in Education."

13 Section 2. There is created a 5-year pilot program in
14 Sarasota, St. Johns, Broward, Okaloosa, Lake, and Duval
15 counties to enable school districts in those counties to
16 provide students with skills in conflict resolution, anger
17 management, building effective interpersonal relationships,
18 and behavioral self-controls such as impulse control,
19 self-monitoring, and internal achievement motivation. These
20 skills are essential to reducing disruptive and dangerous
21 behavior in the classroom and for increasing academic
22 performance.

23 Section 3. (1) The Legislature finds that there have
24 been many recent changes in society, including loss of the
25 traditional family structure, increasing job and other
26 pressures on parents, lack of respect for authority, as well
27 as alcohol and drug abuse, resulting in increased needs of the
28 state's youth.

29 (2) The Legislature further finds that school
30 counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers
31 serving in our schools are fully occupied with necessary and

1 important mandated duties such as career counseling, truancy
2 followup, and testing for special class placement. There is an
3 insufficient number of student-services personnel to implement
4 research-based initiatives to reduce violence, enhance school
5 safety, and improve student performance.

6 Section 4. The purpose of this act is to allocate
7 incentive funding to school districts to provide adequate
8 student-services personnel to:

9 (1) Provide students with skills to find positive
10 solutions to conflict; teach them to accept more personal
11 responsibility; enable them to stay more on task; provide them
12 with the skills necessary to interact positively with peers
13 and those in authority; help them deal with violent peers when
14 they encounter them; and improve their use of critical
15 thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

16 (2) Reduce disciplinary referrals significantly as
17 well as the number of suspensions and expulsions.

18 (3) Increase the amount of time teachers can focus on
19 teaching rather than on managing disruptive and dangerous
20 students as well as promote consistency in the application of
21 disciplinary strategies by school staff.

22 (4) Increase the confidence of parents and communities
23 that schools are safe and effective places for learning.

24 Section 5. From funds appropriated in the General
25 Appropriations Act for this purpose, the Commissioner of
26 Education shall allocate an incentive award for each
27 participating school district in an amount equal to 5 percent
28 of the district's 1998-1999 salary and benefits expenditure
29 for social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors.

30
31

