

Dear members of the House Committee on Education:

I was asked to provide a testimony for House Bill 2643 because I formerly interacted with Elena Huwe during my tenure as an instructional assistant at Enterprise High School. Elena needed extra mathematics instruction and we worked together for several months. She is a kind and caring individual, and she kept her appointments with me and worked very hard. It grieves me that I did not know anything of the difficulties she was having away from school, including suicidal intention. In fact, I did not find out about it until some time after her problems had started, and then it was not from the school but rather, her brother.

It seems that those of us working with her should have been made aware of the situation and guided in our interactions. Of course, we had received suicide prevention training at the beginning of the school year, but it was rather general. Sometimes, in the rush of achieving academic milestones, individuals who need extra help and attention are overlooked. We must remember the intrinsic value and importance of each child and have systems in place to help them the moment that help is needed. Part of the problem in this case may have been the upheaval of systems due to the pandemic. However, the pandemic has made the situation worse, and we must, now more than ever, be prepared to reach out to students in need.

Sincerely,

Dana Ingram

Academic tutor

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