

SENATE, No. 528

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Senator NELLIE POU

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Codey

SYNOPSIS

Requires certain additional school district personnel to complete training program on suicide prevention.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning annual suicide prevention instruction for public
2 school teaching staff members and amending P.L.2005, c.310.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7 1. Section 2 of P.L.2005, c.310 (C.18A:6-112) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 2. a. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the New
10 Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council established in the
11 Department of Children and Families pursuant to P.L.2003, c.214
12 (C.30:9A-22 et seq.), shall, as part of the professional development
13 requirement established by the State board for public school teaching
14 staff members, require each public school teaching staff member to
15 complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide prevention, to be
16 provided by a licensed health care professional with training and
17 experience in mental health issues, in each professional development
18 period. The instruction in suicide prevention shall include
19 information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and
20 incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying and information
21 on reducing the risk of suicide in students who are members of
22 communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.

23 b. Not including teaching staff members subject to the
24 requirements of subsection a. of this section, a school employee or
25 an employee of a contracted service provider who has regular and
26 direct contact with students, as determined by the board of education,
27 shall complete a one-time training program in suicide prevention,
28 awareness, and response developed or identified by the Department
29 of Education pursuant to subsection c. of this section. A person
30 subject to the requirements of this subsection shall complete the
31 required training program not less than 12 months from the date of
32 the development or identification by the department of training
33 programs and the development of the fact sheet or 12 months from
34 the person's date of hire, whichever occurs later.

35 c. The Department of Education, in consultation with the
36 Department of Children and Families, the Department of Human
37 Services, the New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory
38 Council, suicide prevention experts, and interested stakeholders in
39 the education community, shall:

40 (1) develop or identify training programs on suicide prevention,
41 awareness, and response that persons subject to the requirements of
42 subsection b. of this section may access and complete, free of charge,
43 to fulfill the requirements. The department may enter into an
44 agreement with one or more private entities to make a training
45 program available, free of charge, to persons subject to the
46 requirements of subsection b. of this section; and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 (2) develop an educational fact sheet on suicide prevention,
2 awareness, and response. The educational fact sheet shall include,
3 but not be limited to, model guidance, best practices, and educational
4 resources that will assist school districts in developing their own
5 suicide prevention, awareness, and response protocols. Among the
6 best practices that districts are encouraged to consider in staff
7 training and in the development of school district protocols is the use
8 of table-top exercises where appropriate staff rehearse scenarios in
9 the event of a suicide impacting the school district.

10 The educational fact sheet shall be made available on the
11 department's website and shall be distributed, at no charge, to all
12 school districts. The department shall update the educational fact
13 sheet on an annual basis in accordance with trends in the field of
14 youth suicide prevention.

15 d. Beginning in the first full school year following the date of
16 the development or identification by the department of the training
17 programs and the development of the educational fact sheet, and
18 annually thereafter, each school district and contracted service
19 provider shall provide to their employees who are subject to the
20 requirements of subsection a. or b. of this section, in a hard copy
21 paper form or in an electronic form:

22 (1) the educational fact sheet developed pursuant to paragraph (2)
23 of subsection c. of this section; and

24 (2) guidelines on the school district's reporting and suicide
25 prevention, awareness, and response protocols including, but not
26 limited to, contact information for each school's designated staff who
27 should be notified whenever an employee believes a student may be
28 at risk for suicide.

29 e. A school district shall provide information concerning its
30 compliance with the requirements of this section in the New Jersey
31 Quality Single Accountability Continuum Statement of Assurance
32 submitted by the district to the executive county superintendent of
33 schools. A contracted service provider shall annually provide a
34 statement of assurance to the school district concerning its
35 compliance with the provisions of subsections b. and d. of this
36 section.

37 f. (1) No person shall have a cause of action for any loss or
38 damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the
39 implementation of the provisions of this section or resulting from any
40 training, or lack thereof, required by this section.

41 (2) The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of this
42 section shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of care.

43 (cf: P.L.2010, c.122, s.4)

44
45 2. This act shall take effect immediately, but shall remain
46 inoperative until the Department of Education has developed or
47 identified and made available to school districts the training

1 programs and developed the educational fact sheet required pursuant
2 to subsection c. of section 2 of P.L.2005, c.310 (C.18A:6-112).

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5 STATEMENT

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7 Under current law, public school teaching staff members receive
8 instruction in suicide prevention as part of their professional
9 development requirements. This bill provides that a school district
10 employee who is not subject to the current professional development
11 requirement and an employee of a contracted service provider, who
12 have regular and direct contact with students as determined by the
13 board of education, will be required to complete a one-time training
14 program in suicide prevention, awareness, and response developed or
15 identified by the Department of Education.

16 The bill also directs the Department of Education, in consultation
17 with the Department of Children and Families, the Department of
18 Human Services, the New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory
19 Council, suicide prevention experts, and interested stakeholders in
20 the education community to: 1) develop or identify training programs
21 on suicide prevention, awareness, and response that persons subject
22 to the bill's training requirements may access and complete free of
23 charge; and 2) develop an educational fact sheet on suicide
24 prevention, awareness, and response. The educational fact sheet will
25 be made available on the department's website and distributed at no
26 charge to all school districts.

27 Under the bill's provisions, each school district and contracted
28 service provider is to annually provide to its employees the
29 educational fact sheet and guidelines on the school district's
30 reporting and suicide prevention, awareness, and response protocols,
31 including contact information for each school's designated staff who
32 should be notified whenever an employee believes a student may be
33 at risk for suicide.

34 The bill specifies that a person will not have a cause of action for
35 any loss or damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the
36 implementation of the bill's provisions.