

[First Reprint]
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

As Amended by the Senate on May 26, 2022.



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

3
 4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
 5 of New Jersey:

6
 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
 10 New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council established
 11 in the Department of Children and Families pursuant to P.L.2003,
 12 c.214 (C.30:9A-22 et seq.), shall, as part of the professional
 13 development requirement established by the State board for public
 14 school teaching staff members, require each public school teaching
 15 staff member to complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide
 16 prevention, to be provided by a licensed health care professional
 17 with training and experience in mental health issues, in each
 18 professional development period. The instruction in suicide
 19 prevention shall include information on the relationship between the
 20 risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation, and
 21 bullying and information on reducing the risk of suicide in students
 22 who are members of communities identified as having members at
 23 high risk of suicide.

24 b. Not including teaching staff members subject to the
 25 requirements of subsection a. of this section ¹and not including
 26 licensed mental health care professionals¹, a school employee or an
 27 employee of a contracted service provider who has regular and
 28 direct contact with students, as determined by the board of
 29 education, shall complete a one-time training program in suicide
 30 prevention, awareness, and response developed or identified by the
 31 Department of Education pursuant to subsection c. of this section.
 32 A person subject to the requirements of this subsection shall
 33 complete the required training program not less than 12 months
 34 from the date of the ¹development or¹ identification by the
 35 department of training programs ¹and the development of the fact
 36 sheet¹ or 12 months from the person's date of hire, whichever
 37 occurs later.

38 c. The Department of Education, in consultation with the
 39 Department of Children and Families, the Department of Human
 40 Services, the New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory
 41 Council, suicide prevention experts, and interested stakeholders in
 42 the education community, shall¹:

43 (1) develop or¹ identify training programs on suicide
 44 prevention, awareness, and response that persons subject to the

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

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate floor amendments adopted May 26, 2022.

1 requirements of subsection b. of this section may access and
2 complete, free of charge, to fulfill the requirements. The
3 department may enter into an agreement with one or more private
4 entities to make a training program available, free of charge, to
5 persons subject to the requirements of subsection b. of this
6 section¹; and

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

16 The educational fact sheet shall be made available on the
17 department's website and shall be distributed, at no charge, to all
18 school districts. The department shall update the educational fact
19 sheet on an annual basis in accordance with trends in the field of
20 youth suicide prevention¹.

21 d. ¹Beginning in the first full school year Not less than 12
22 months¹ following the date of the ¹development or¹
23 identification by the department of the training programs ¹and the
24 development of the educational fact sheet, or not less than 12
25 months from the person's date of hire,¹ and annually thereafter,
26 each school district and contracted service provider shall provide to
27 their employees who are subject to the requirements of subsection a.
28 or b. of this section, in a hard copy paper form or in an electronic
29 form ¹;

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

32 (2)¹guidelines on the school district's reporting and suicide
33 prevention, awareness, and response protocols including, but not
34 limited to, contact information for each school's designated staff
35 who should be notified whenever an employee believes a student
36 may be at risk for suicide.

37 e. A school district shall provide information concerning its
38 compliance with the requirements of this section in the New Jersey
39 Quality Single Accountability Continuum Statement of Assurance
40 submitted by the district to the executive county superintendent of
41 schools. A contracted service provider shall annually provide a
42 statement of assurance to the school district concerning its
43 compliance with the provisions of subsections b. and d. of this
44 section.

45 f. ¹(1) No person shall have a cause of action for any loss or
46 damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the

1 implementation of the provisions of this section or resulting from
2 any training, or lack thereof, required by this section.

3 (2) The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of
4 this section shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of
5 care.】 Each person who is required pursuant to subsection a. or
6 subsection b. of this section to complete a suicide prevention
7 training program shall have a duty to warn and protect when the
8 following conditions exist:

9 (1) a student has communicated to that person a clearly
10 identifiable threat of imminent, serious physical violence against
11 oneself and the circumstances are such that a reasonable person
12 would believe the student intended to carry out the threat; or

13 (2) the circumstances are such that a reasonable person would
14 believe the student intended to carry out an act of imminent, serious
15 physical violence against oneself.

16 A person acting in good faith and who takes reasonable steps to
17 discharge a duty to warn and protect shall be immune from civil and
18 criminal liability in regard to that disclosure.¹

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

20
21 2. This act shall take effect immediately, but shall remain
22 inoperative until the Department of Education has ¹【developed or】¹
23 identified and made available to school districts the training
24 programs ¹【and developed the educational fact sheet】¹ required
25 pursuant to subsection c. of section 2 of P.L.2005, c.310 (C.18A:6-
26 112).