

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4491

BY DELEGATES PUSHKIN, ESTEP-BURTON,

HIGGINBOTHAM, BYRD AND PYLES

[Introduced January 23, 2020; Referred to the Committee
on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-40 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to requiring the State Board of Education to provide for the routine education of all
 3 professional educators, including principals and administrators, and those service
 4 personnel having direct contact with students, on warning signs and resources to assist in
 5 suicide prevention under guidelines established by the state board.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-40. Suicide prevention awareness training; dissemination of information.

1 ~~(a) This section, section seven, article one-b, chapter eighteen-b of this code and section~~
 2 ~~one, article six, chapter twenty-seven of this code shall be known as "Jamie's Law".~~

3 ~~(b) On or before September 1, 2015 and each year thereafter, a public middle and high~~
 4 ~~school administrator shall disseminate and provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention~~
 5 ~~awareness information to all middle and high school students. The information may be obtained~~
 6 ~~from the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities or from a commercially developed~~
 7 ~~suicide prevention training program approved by the State Board of Education in consultation with~~
 8 ~~the bureau to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of the information~~

9 (a)(1) Legislative Findings. -- The Legislature recognizes that the State of West Virginia
 10 has one of the highest rates of suicide in the nation, and that suicide serves as one of the leading
 11 causes of death in our state.

12 (2) The Legislature further finds that nationwide, suicide rates amongst adolescents and
 13 young adults are on the rise. As a result of disrupted families, poverty, and the opioid crises which
 14 has severely affected a significant number of families across this state, West Virginia's students
 15 face a number of issues which may increase their risk of suicide.

16 (3) Consequently, the Legislature finds that it is imperative that those in our education
 17 system closest to our students receive training to increase their ability to better recognize students
 18 who may be exhibiting signs that they are at risk of suicide.

19 (b) On or before September 1, 2020, and each year after, the State Board of Education
20 shall provide for the routine education of all professional educators, including principals and
21 administrators, and those service personnel having direct contact with students on warning signs
22 and resources to assist in suicide prevention under guidelines established by the state board.
23 The education may be accomplished through self-review of suicide prevention materials and
24 resources approved by the state board.

25 (c) On or before September 1, 2020, and each year thereafter, a public middle and high
26 school administrator shall disseminate and provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention
27 awareness information to all middle and high school students. The information may be obtained
28 from the Bureau for Behavior Health and Health Facilities or from a commercially developed
29 suicide prevention training program approved by the State Board of Education in consultation with
30 the bureau to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of the information.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require the State Board of Education to provide for the routine education of all professional educators, including principals and administrators, and those service personnel having direct contact with students on warning signs and resources to assist in suicide prevention under guidelines established by the state board. This section has been completely rewritten.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added. This section has been completely rewritten.