

House Bill 1131

By: Representatives Townsend of the 179<sup>th</sup>, Ballard of the 147<sup>th</sup>, Sainz of the 180<sup>th</sup>, Glaize of the 67<sup>th</sup>, Vance of the 133<sup>rd</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia  
2 Annotated, relating to health of students in elementary and secondary education, so as to  
3 provide for evidence based suicide awareness and training programs; to provide for a  
4 definition; to provide for evidence based youth violence prevention training programs; to  
5 provide for student violence prevention clubs; to provide for local policies for anonymous  
6 reporting; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
10 relating to health of students in elementary and secondary education, is amended by revising  
11 Code Section 20-2-779.1, relating to suicide prevention and awareness training and no duty  
12 of care imposed, as follows:

13 "20-2-779.1.

14 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'evidence based' means a program or practice  
15 that:

16 (1) Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes based on:

- 17 (A) Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented  
18 experimental study;
- 19 (B) Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented  
20 quasi-experimental study; or
- 21 (C) Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented  
22 correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- 23 (2) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive  
24 evaluation that such program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes, and  
25 includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such program or practice.
- 26 (a)(1)(b) The ~~Department~~ State Board of Education shall adopt rules to require that:
- 27 (1) All ~~all~~ certificated public school personnel receive annual training in suicide  
28 awareness and prevention. This training shall be provided within the framework of  
29 existing in-service training programs offered by the Department of Education or as part  
30 of required professional development offered by a local school system;:
- 31 (2) Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, and continuing each school year thereafter,  
32 all public schools serving students in grades six through 12 which receive funds in any  
33 manner from the state shall provide to students at least one hour of evidence based  
34 suicide awareness and prevention training each school year. Such training may be  
35 delivered in person, remotely, or digitally and may be included as part of the health and  
36 physical education course of study provided for in subsection (c) of Code  
37 Section 20-2-142; and
- 38 (3) All public schools serving students in any one of grades six through 12 which receive  
39 funds in any manner from the state shall provide to students at least one hour of evidence  
40 based youth violence prevention training each school year. Such training may be  
41 delivered in-person, remotely, or digitally and may be included as part of the health and  
42 physical education course of study provided for in subsection (c) of Code  
43 Section 20-2-142.

44 ~~(2)(c)(1)~~ The Department of Education shall, in consultation with the Department of  
45 Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Suicide Prevention Program  
46 established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, and suicide prevention experts, develop  
47 a list of approved evidence based training materials to fulfill the requirements of ~~this~~  
48 paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section which may include training materials  
49 currently being used by a local school system if such training materials meet any criteria  
50 established by the department. Such materials shall include training on how to identify  
51 appropriate mental health services, both within the school and also within the larger  
52 community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Such  
53 materials may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable  
54 suicide prevention materials.

55 ~~(3) Approved materials shall include training on how to identify appropriate mental~~  
56 ~~health services, both within the school and also within the larger community, and when~~  
57 ~~and how to refer youth and their families to those services.~~

58 ~~(4) Approved materials may include programs that can be completed through self-review~~  
59 ~~of suitable suicide prevention materials.~~

60 (2) By January 1, 2025, the Department of Education shall, in consultation with the  
61 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Suicide  
62 Prevention Program established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, develop and post a list  
63 of approved evidence based training materials, including no-cost programming, if any,  
64 to fulfill the requirements of paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of this Code section. Such  
65 materials shall, at a minimum, do all of the following:

66 (A) Teach school personnel how to identify the signs and symptoms of depression,  
67 suicide, and self-injury in students;

68 (B) Teach school personnel when and how to refer youth and their families to  
69 appropriate mental health services for assessment both within the school and the larger  
70 community;

- 71 (C) Teach students how to recognize the observable signs and signals of depression,  
72 suicide, and self-injury in themselves and their peers; and
- 73 (D) Teach students the importance of seeking help for themselves and their peers, as  
74 well as the process for seeking help.
- 75 (3) By January 1, 2025, the Department of Education shall, in consultation with the  
76 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Suicide  
77 Prevention Program established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, develop a list of  
78 approved evidence based training materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to  
79 fulfill the requirements of paragraph (3) of subsection (a). Such materials shall, at a  
80 minimum, include all of the following:
- 81 (A) How to recognize the observable warning signs and signals of persons who may  
82 be at risk of harming themselves or others;
- 83 (B) The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help; and
- 84 (C) The steps that can be taken to report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or  
85 potentially harmful behavior.
- 86 (4)(A) The Department of Education shall make the lists of approved evidence based  
87 training materials required under this subsection, including no-cost programming, if  
88 any, publicly available on its website.
- 89 (B) The Department of Education shall keep the list of approved evidence based  
90 training materials timely updated by reviewing such list, at a minimum, every 36  
91 months.
- 92 (5) To assist public schools and local school systems in developing their own policies  
93 for student suicide awareness and prevention as provided for in subsection (c) of this  
94 Code section, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of  
95 Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Suicide Prevention Program  
96 established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, shall establish a model policy for use by  
97 public schools and local school systems in accordance with this Code section.

98 ~~(5)(A)(d)(1)~~ Each local ~~school system~~ board of education or public school governing  
 99 body shall:

100 (A) ~~Adopt~~ adopt a policy on student suicide awareness and prevention. Such policies  
 101 shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school  
 102 employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts, and shall, at a  
 103 minimum, address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and  
 104 ~~postvention;~~ and

105 (B) Adopt a policy for providing relevant and current information to students and their  
 106 families and to school personnel regarding publicly available resources for the  
 107 anonymous reporting of a dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially  
 108 harmful activity which occurs or is threatened to occur on school property or which  
 109 relates to students or school personnel. ~~To assist local school systems in developing~~  
 110 ~~their own policies for student suicide prevention, the Department of Education, in~~  
 111 ~~consultation with the Suicide Prevention Program within the Department of Behavioral~~  
 112 ~~Health and Developmental Disabilities, shall establish a model policy for use by local~~  
 113 ~~school systems in accordance with this Code section.~~

114 (2) Each public school serving students in any one of grades six through 12 that sponsors  
 115 student clubs shall sponsor a student-led student violence prevention club to sustain  
 116 awareness activities related to suicide prevention and violence prevention.

117 ~~(b)(e)~~ No person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused by any act or  
 118 omission resulting from the implementation of the provisions of this Code section or  
 119 resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by this Code section.

120 ~~(e)(f)~~ The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of this Code section shall  
 121 not be construed to impose any specific duty of care."

122 **SECTION 2.**

123 This Act shall become effective July 1, 2024.

124

**SECTION 3.**

125 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.