

HOUSE No. 4540

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 31, 2022.

The committee on Education to whom were referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 575) of Shawn Dooley and Alyson M. Sullivan relative to establishing mandatory lockdown drills in public and private elementary and secondary schools, the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 617) of Natalie M. Higgins and others relative to safety and violence education for students, the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 719) of Thomas P. Walsh and John Nelson relative to requiring critical incident drills in schools and the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4225) of Edward R. Philips and Michelle L. Ciccolo that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education be authorized to offer two hours of evidence based in-service suicide awareness and prevention training once every other year to certain employees, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4540) ought to pass.

For the committee,

ALICE HANLON PEISCH.

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In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

An Act relative to safety and violence education for students (the SAVE Students Act).

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 97 the following section:-

3 Section 98. (a) As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context
4 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:--

5 "Department", the department of elementary and secondary education.

6 "Evidence-based", a program or practice that (i) demonstrates a statistically significant
7 effect on relevant outcomes based on (1) strong evidence from not less than 1 well-designed and
8 well-implemented experimental study; (2) moderate evidence from not less than 1 well-designed
9 and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or (3) promising evidence from not less than 1
10 well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection
11 bias; or (ii) demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive
12 evaluation that such program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes and includes
13 ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.

14 “School”, a school administered by a school department of a city or town or regional
15 school district, a county agricultural school, a commonwealth charter school or Horace Mann
16 charter school established pursuant to section 89, an educational collaborative established
17 pursuant to section 4E of chapter 40, or an approved private day or residential school that
18 accepts, through agreement with a school committee, a child requiring special education pursuant
19 to section 10 of chapter 71B.

20 “Social Isolation”, a state in which a student engages in low relative frequencies of peer
21 interactions, and experiences or perceives low levels of peer acceptance or high levels of peer
22 rejection, which frequently excludes them from social interactions and relationships with friends,
23 classmates, and members of the community.

24 “Social Inclusion”, a state in which all students are valued and feel that they have
25 consistent opportunities to engage in meaningful activities and interactions with their friends,
26 classmates, and members of the community regardless of their identity.

27 (b) The department shall develop a model threat assessment policy for schools serving
28 students in grades 6-12 that, at minimum, (i) identifies the types of threatening behavior that may
29 represent a physical threat to the school community; (ii) identifies members within the school
30 community to whom threatening behavior should be reported and the steps to be taken thereafter;
31 (iii) establishes guidelines ensuring that where a credible threat has been identified, the response
32 is in conformance with any applicable state and school disciplinary policies and that no
33 disciplinary action is applied disproportionately to students in any protected class identified in
34 any policy of the department, district or school or in federal or state law; and (iv) establishes
35 procedures and protocol for coordinating with local law enforcement, existing state reporting

36 websites, and tip lines. The model policy shall take into account the requirements of Section 363
37 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000 and Section 8A of chapter 69. The department shall make the
38 model policy available to schools serving grades 6-12. Schools may, but are not required to,
39 adopt the model policy.

40 (c) The department shall make a list of evidence-based threat assessment trainings
41 publicly available on its website.

42 (d) The department shall make a list of evidence-based suicide awareness and prevention
43 trainings publicly available on its website.

44 (e) The department shall make a list of evidence-based youth violence prevention
45 trainings publicly available on its website.

46 (f) The department shall make a list of evidence-based social inclusion trainings publicly
47 available on its website.

48 SECTION 2. The board of elementary and secondary education may promulgate
49 regulations necessary to implement this act.