

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS15292-NH-43

Short Title: SAVE Students Act.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lowe and Hanig (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS TO RECEIVE EVIDENCE-BASED
3 TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE, VIOLENCE,
4 AND SOCIAL ISOLATION.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1. Article 25B of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
7 adding a new section to read:

8 "**§ 115C-376.7. Evidence-based mental health training.**

9 (a) This section may be referred to as the Suicide, Safety, and Violence Education
10 (SAVE) Students Act.

11 (b) As used in this section, "evidence-based" means a program or practice that does either
12 of the following:

13 (1) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive
14 evaluation that such a program or practice is likely to improve relevant
15 outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program
16 or practice.

17 (2) Has a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes based on at least one
18 of the following:

19 a. Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and
20 well-implemented experimental study.

21 b. Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and
22 well-implemented quasi-experimental study.

23 c. Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and
24 well-implemented correlation study with statistical controls for
25 selection bias.

26 (c) The Department of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Health
27 and Human Services, shall maintain a list of approved evidence-based training programs,
28 including at least one option that is free or of no cost to a school, to be posted on the Department
29 of Public Instruction's web site, for the following topics:

30 (1) Suicide awareness and prevention and violence prevention. To qualify as a
31 training program for this topic, the training course shall include all of the
32 following:

33 a. How to instruct school personnel to identify the signs and symptoms
34 of depression, suicide, and self-harm in students.

35 b. How to instruct student to identify the signs and symptoms of
36 depression, suicide, and self-harm in their peers.



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- 1 c. How to identify appropriate mental health services within schools and
 2 within larger communities, and when and how to refer youth and their
 3 families to those services.
 4 d. How to teach students about mental health and depression, warning
 5 signs of suicide, and the importance of and processes for seeking help
 6 on behalf of self and peers and reporting of these behaviors.
 7 e. How to identify observable warning signs and signals of individuals
 8 who may be a threat to themselves or others.
 9 f. The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help.
 10 g. How students can report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or
 11 potentially harmful activity, including the use of the anonymous tip
 12 line.
- 13 (2) Social inclusion. To qualify as a training program for this topic, the training
 14 course shall include the following:
- 15 a. What social isolation is and how to identify it in others.
 16 b. What social inclusion is and the importance of establishing
 17 connections with peers.
 18 c. When and how to seek help for peers who may be socially isolated.
 19 d. How to utilize strategies for more social inclusion in classrooms and
 20 the school community.
- 21 (d) All public school students in grades 6 through 12 shall receive two hours or two
 22 standard class periods, whichever is shorter, of training per school year from a program approved
 23 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. One hour shall be training and instruction on suicide
 24 awareness and prevention and violence prevention and the other hour shall be training and
 25 instruction on social inclusion. Each hour of training is not required to be conducted
 26 consecutively.
- 27 (e) Schools may use student assemblies, classroom instruction, digital learning,
 28 homework, or any combination thereof to provide students the training required by this section.
- 29 (f) Upon written request of a student's parent or legal guardian, a student shall be excused
 30 from any training required under this section.
- 31 (g) All public school employees who have significant interaction with students as part of
 32 their routine duties shall receive one hour of training per school year from a program approved
 33 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section on suicide awareness and prevention and violence
 34 prevent.
- 35 (h) Training provided to students pursuant to this section may be credited toward any
 36 health education requirements under G.S. 115C-81.25 and any training provided to teachers
 37 pursuant to this section may be credited toward the training hour requirement under
 38 G.S. 115C-376.5.
- 39 (i) The governing body of a public school unit shall allow the creation of a student-led
 40 club focused on suicide prevention, student safety, and violence and social isolation prevention
 41 for each school within the public school unit that has student in grades 6 through 12. Each club
 42 shall:
- 43 (1) Be open to all students in grade 6 through 12.
 44 (2) Have at least one school employee serve as an advisor.
 45 (3) Develop and maintain awareness of activities related to suicide prevention or
 46 student safety and violence and social isolation prevention training.
 47 (4) Foster opportunities for student leadership development."
- 48 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:
 49 "(70) School-based mental health plan required. – A local board of education shall
 50 adopt a school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training

1 program and suicide risk referral protocol, in accordance with
2 G.S. 115C-376.5 and G.S. 115C-376.7."

3 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 115C-150.12C(16) reads as rewritten:

4 "(16) School-based mental health plan required. – A regional school shall adopt a
5 school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training program
6 and suicide risk referral protocol, in accordance with
7 G.S. ~~115C-376.5~~115C-376.5 and G.S. 115C-376.7."

8 **SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

9 "(h) A charter school shall adopt a school-based mental health plan, including a mental
10 health training program and suicide risk referral protocol, in accordance with
11 G.S. ~~115C-376.5~~115C-376.5 and G.S. 115C-376.7."

12 **SECTION 2.(d)** G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

13 "(16) School-based mental health plan required. – A regional school shall adopt a
14 school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training program
15 and suicide risk referral protocol, in accordance with
16 G.S. ~~115C-376.5~~115C-376.5 and G.S. 115C-376.7."

17 **SECTION 2.(e)** G.S. 116-239.8(b) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

18 "(18) School-based mental health plan required. – A laboratory school shall adopt a
19 school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training program
20 and suicide risk referral protocol, in accordance with
21 G.S. ~~115C-376.5~~115C-376.5 and G.S. 115C-376.7."

22 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
23 the 2025-2026 school year.