

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 642

Short Title:   SAVE Students Act. (Public)

Sponsors:    Senators Lowe and Hanig (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:   Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 26, 2025

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

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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- c. How to identify appropriate mental health services within schools and within larger communities, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services.
- d. How to teach students about mental health and depression, warning signs of suicide, and the importance of and processes for seeking help on behalf of self and peers and reporting of these behaviors.
- e. How to identify observable warning signs and signals of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others.
- f. The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help.
- g. How students can report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity, including the use of the anonymous tip line.

(2) Social inclusion. To qualify as a training program for this topic, the training course shall include the following:

- a. What social isolation is and how to identify it in others.
- b. What social inclusion is and the importance of establishing connections with peers.
- c. When and how to seek help for peers who may be socially isolated.
- d. How to utilize strategies for more social inclusion in classrooms and the school community.

(d) All public school students in grades 6 through 12 shall receive two hours or two standard class periods, whichever is shorter, of training per school year from a program approved pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. One hour shall be training and instruction on suicide awareness and prevention and violence prevention and the other hour shall be training and instruction on social inclusion. Each hour of training is not required to be conducted consecutively.

(e) Schools may use student assemblies, classroom instruction, digital learning, homework, or any combination thereof to provide students the training required by this section.

(f) Upon written request of a student's parent or legal guardian, a student shall be excused from any training required under this section.

(g) All public school employees who have significant interaction with students as part of their routine duties shall receive one hour of training per school year from a program approved pursuant to subsection (c) of this section on suicide awareness and prevention and violence prevent.

(h) Training provided to students pursuant to this section may be credited toward any health education requirements under G.S. 115C-81.25 and any training provided to teachers pursuant to this section may be credited toward the training hour requirement under G.S. 115C-376.5.

(i) The governing body of a public school unit shall allow the creation of a student-led club focused on suicide prevention, student safety, and violence and social isolation prevention for each school within the public school unit that has student in grades 6 through 12. Each club shall:

- (1) Be open to all students in grade 6 through 12.
- (2) Have at least one school employee serve as an advisor.
- (3) Develop and maintain awareness of activities related to suicide prevention or student safety and violence and social isolation prevention training.
- (4) Foster opportunities for student leadership development."

**SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(70) School-based mental health plan required. – A local board of education shall 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.