

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 285  
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/22/17  
Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 4/20/17  
Fourth Edition Engrossed 4/24/17

Short Title: Suicide Prevention/Awareness School Personnel.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 9, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A TRAINING PROGRAM ON YOUTH SUICIDE  
AWARENESS AND PREVENTION AND RISK REFERRAL PROTOCOL FOR  
SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 115C-5 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(11) The term "public school unit" means a local school administrative unit, charter school, or regional school."

**SECTION 2.** Article 25A of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**§ 115C-375.10. Youth suicide awareness and prevention training and risk referral protocol for school personnel.**

(a) State Board Training Program and Protocol. – The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, shall develop a youth suicide awareness and prevention training program and a model risk referral protocol for public school units to provide to school personnel who work directly with students in grades six through 12, including teachers, teacher assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitorial staff, media coordinators, athletic coaches, administrators, administrative assistants, school safety resource officers, school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and counselors. The training program shall consist of at least two hours of evidence-informed instruction to increase awareness of suicide, identification of risk factors and signs, and information for student referral for suicide prevention resources and support. The model risk referral protocol shall provide guidelines to public school unit on identification of at-risk students, suicide prevention procedures, and referral sources. The training program and model risk referral protocol shall be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. Any mental health training requirements established by the State Board of Education shall be fulfilled in part by the youth suicide awareness and prevention training program.

(b) Training and Protocol Requirements. – Each public school unit shall provide the training program and model risk referral protocol developed by the State Board of Education under subsection (a) of this section, or a locally developed plan that meets the requirements of subsection (c) of this section, to school personnel who work directly with students in grades six through 12 at no cost to the employee. A school employee who works directly with students in grades six through 12 shall receive training within 12 months of employment with a board of a public school unit and every two years thereafter while employed with that board. The training



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1 may be offered in various formats, including electronically, through videoconferencing, or  
2 through an individual program of study of designated materials consisting of at least two hours  
3 of instruction.

4 (c) Locally Developed Training and Risk Referral Protocols. – A board of a public  
5 school unit may comply with the training and protocol requirements of this section by  
6 developing a local plan that includes, at a minimum, (i) conveying information on State and  
7 national data on suicide deaths and attempts, suicide methods, and at-risk populations, (ii)  
8 myths and attitudes about suicide, (iii) warning signs and symptoms for suicide, (iv)  
9 identification of at-risk students and steps for referring students to support services, (v)  
10 protective factors for prevention of suicide, and (vi) safe messaging to children. In addition, a  
11 local plan shall include protocols for implementation and mandatory training that include at  
12 least the following:

13 (1) A plan to include specialized training for student support personnel,  
14 including administrators, school nurses, counselors, social workers, and  
15 psychologists.

16 (2) A safety plan for the school in the event of (i) identification of a student as  
17 being at-risk of suicide, including a student help plan and immediate  
18 assistance, and (ii) a suicide death or suicide attempt by a student enrolled in  
19 the school, including a care plan for peers and school personnel.

20 (3) Designation of a school employee as the school suicide prevention  
21 responder.

22 (4) A plan for communication with a parent or legal guardian of a student  
23 identified as at-risk, including safe transfer of the student to the parent or  
24 legal guardian.

25 (5) A plan for post-intervention for a student who has been identified as at-risk  
26 or has attempted suicide, including reentry into the classroom.

27 (d) Audits. – The Department of Public Instruction shall periodically randomly audit  
28 public school units to ensure compliance with the mandatory training requirements and  
29 prevention activities required by this section. The Department may also audit a public school  
30 unit if the Department has reason to believe the public school unit is not in compliance. The  
31 Department of Public Instruction shall report on the results of the audits by December 15  
32 annually to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the  
33 Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

34 (e) Limitations. – Notwithstanding the requirements in subsection (a) of this section,  
35 nothing in this section shall be construed to impose any obligation or responsibility on public  
36 school units to provide referral, treatment, follow-up, or other services related to identification  
37 of students at-risk of suicide and suicide prevention procedures beyond what may be required  
38 by other State law or federal law.

39 (f) Liability. – No board of a public school unit, nor its members, employees,  
40 designees, agents, or volunteers, shall be liable in civil damages to any party for any loss or  
41 damage caused by any act or omission relating to the provision of, participation in, or  
42 implementation of any component of the plan, referral protocol, or training program required  
43 by this section, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or  
44 intentional wrongdoing. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose any specific duty  
45 of care or standard of care."

46 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

47 "(g) Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Risk Referral Protocol. – A  
48 charter school is subject to and shall comply with all requirements of G.S. 115C-375.10."

49 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

1            "(14) Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Risk Referral  
2            Protocol. – A regional school is subject to and shall comply with all  
3            requirements of G.S. 115C-375.10."

4            **SECTION 5.** G.S. 116-239.8 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

5            "(17) Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Risk Referral  
6            Protocol. – A lab school is subject to and shall comply with all requirements  
7            of G.S. 115C-375.10. For purposes of G.S. 115C-375.10, a lab school shall  
8            be a public school unit."

9            **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
10           the 2018-2019 school year.