House Bill 198
By: Representatives Dempsey of the 13th, Dickson of the 6th, Cooper of the 43rd, Chandler of the 105th, Coleman of the 97th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to student health in elementary and secondary education, so as to require annual suicide prevention education training for certificated school system personnel; to provide that no cause of action is created; to provide that no duty of care is created; to provide a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.
This Act shall be known and may be referred to as the "Jason Flatt Act-Georgia."

SECTION 2.
The General Assembly finds that:
(1) Suicide cuts across ethnic, economic, social, and age boundaries and has a tremendous and traumatic impact on surviving family members, friends, and the community at large; and
(2) After unintentional injury, suicide has become the leading cause of death among young people between the ages of ten and 24. At a time when unintentional injuries have been on the decline, suicides have increased; and
(3) Suicide is a complex issue that requires school, family, and community resources be harnessed for appropriate and timely help to be available in order to prevent suicide.

SECTION 3.
Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to student health in elementary and secondary education, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:
(a)(1) The Department of Education shall adopt rules to require that all certificated public school personnel receive annual training in suicide awareness and prevention. This training shall be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs offered by the Department of Education or as part of required professional development offered by a local school system.

(2) The Department of Education shall, in consultation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Suicide Prevention Program established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, and suicide prevention experts, develop a list of approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of this subsection which may include training materials currently being used by a local school system if such training materials meet any criteria established by the department.

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

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

(5)(A) Each local school system shall adopt a policy on student suicide prevention. Such policies shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts, and shall, at a minimum, address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

(B) To assist local school systems in developing their own policies for student suicide prevention, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Suicide Prevention Program within the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, shall establish a model policy for use by local school systems in accordance with this Code section.

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

(c) The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of this Code section shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of care.

SECTION 4.

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