

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

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

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

8 **SECTION 1.**

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

10 **SECTION 2.**

11 The General Assembly finds that:

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

19 **SECTION 3.**

20 Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
21 relating to student health in elementary and secondary education, is amended by adding a
22 new Code section to read as follows:

23 "20-2-779.1.

24 (a)(1) The Department of Education shall adopt rules to require that all certificated
 25 public school personnel receive annual training in suicide awareness and prevention.

26 This training shall be provided within the framework of existing in-service training
 27 programs offered by the Department of Education or as part of required professional
 28 development offered by a local school system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

55 **SECTION 4.**

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