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SENATE BILL NO. 1239

Offered January 21, 1999

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-253.13:5 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-275.2, relating to suicide prevention in public schools.*

Patron—Newman

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-253.13:5 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-275.2 as follows:

§ 22.1-253.13:5. Standard 5. Training and professional development.

A. The General Assembly and the Board of Education find that effective educational leadership and personnel and appropriate programs of professional development and training are essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth.

B. Each member of the Board of Education shall participate in in-service programs on personnel, curriculum and current issues in education as part of his service on the Board.

C. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, the Board of Education shall develop leadership standards for superintendents and principals.

D. The Board of Education shall sponsor, conduct or provide advice on (i) training and professional development of teachers, principals, supervisors, division superintendents and other school staff; (ii) in-service programs for school board members on personnel, curriculum and current issues in education; ~~and~~ (iii) in cooperation with the Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped, in-service programs in Braille for teachers of the blind and visually impaired; *and (iv) in cooperation with the Board of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, in-service programs on suicide prevention for licensed administrative and instructional personnel.* The Board shall provide technical assistance on professional development to local school boards designed to seek to ensure that all instructional personnel are proficient in the use of educational technology consistent with its Six-Year Educational Technology Plan for Virginia.

E. Each local school board shall require (i) its members to participate annually in in-service programs on personnel, curriculum and current issues in education as part of their service on the local board and (ii) require the division superintendent to participate annually in professional development activities at the local, state or national levels.

F. Each local school board shall provide (i) a program of professional development, as part of the license renewal process, to assist teachers and principals in acquiring the skills needed to work with gifted students and handicapped students ~~and~~; (ii) a program to increase student achievement, *consistent with the relevant Standards of Learning and Standards of Accreditation*; ~~(iii)~~ (iii) a program of professional development in educational technology for all instructional personnel; ~~and (iv)~~ (iv) a program of professional development for administrative personnel designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, *including in-service training in suicide prevention in accordance with the guidelines developed pursuant to § 22.1-275.2.*

§ 22.1-275.2. Board guidelines.

The Board of Education shall develop, in cooperation with the Board of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, suicide prevention guidelines for licensed administrative and instructional personnel. These guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, (i) criteria to assess the suicide risks of students, (ii) characteristics to identify potentially suicidal students, (iii) appropriate responses to students expressing suicidal intentions, (iv) available and appropriate community services for students expressing suicidal intentions, (v) suicide prevention strategies which may be implemented by local schools for students expressing suicidal intentions, (vi) criteria for notification of and discussions with parents of students expressing suicidal intentions, (vii) appropriate sensitivity to religious beliefs, and (viii) the legal requirements and criteria for notification of public service agencies, including, but not limited to, the local or state social services and mental health agencies. These guidelines may include case studies and problem-solving exercises and shall be designed as materials for in-service training programs for licensed administrative and instructional personnel.

INTRODUCED

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