

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2023 SESSION

## CHAPTER 572

*An Act to require the Department of Education and the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Research and Implementation Center to modify the existing Trauma Learning Modules to incorporate certain definitions and concepts relating to childhood trauma and trauma-informed care.*

[S 1300]

Approved March 26, 2023

### **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1.** *§ 1. The Department of Education (the Department) shall collaborate with the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Research and Implementation Center (VTSS-RIC) to make modifications to the existing Trauma Learning Modules provided by VTSS-RIC. In making such modifications, the Department and VTSS-RIC shall incorporate:*

*1. The following definitions:*

*"Childhood trauma" means any emotionally disturbing or distressing event or experience occurring during childhood that could have a lasting negative effect on a child's physical, emotional, and behavioral development and health, including adverse childhood experiences, or childhood physical or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse, alcohol or substance abuse in the home, mental illness in the home, incarceration of a family member, witnessing domestic violence, and parental divorce or separation; and*

*"Trauma-informed" means an approach to childhood care and education that includes (i) an understanding of the impact childhood trauma has on a child's physical, emotional, and behavioral development and health; (ii) the ability to recognize signs that a child has experienced childhood trauma; (iii) the skills, knowledge, and resources to provide necessary and timely support to a child who has experienced childhood trauma; and (iv) the knowledge to facilitate a safe, stable, and trauma-sensitive classroom environment;*

*2. Information or guidance on concepts including:*

*a. Childhood trauma and the impacts of childhood trauma on a child's physical, emotional, and behavioral development and health;*

*b. The importance of mental health and wellness for both teachers and students;*

*c. How to handle childhood trauma in the classroom and foster a trauma-informed classroom environment;*

*d. How to recognize the signs of childhood trauma in students;*

*e. How to respond when a student discloses or informs a teacher of a traumatic experience or exhibits signs that such student has had a traumatic experience; and*

*f. When and how to contact support services or other resources outside the classroom to ensure that any student who has experienced trauma receives the support he needs.*

*§ 2. The Department of Education and the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Research and Implementation Center shall provide a report on the modification of the Trauma Learning Modules as required by this act to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 2023.*