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SENATE BILL NO. 1300

Offered January 11, 2023

Prefiled January 10, 2023

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-298.8, relating to requirements for public primary and secondary school teachers; annual trauma-informed care training program.*

Patrons—Deeds and McClellan; Delegates: Glass and Kory

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. **That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-298.8 as follows:**

§ 22.1-298.8. Annual trauma-informed care training program; established.

A. *For the purposes of this section:*

"Childhood trauma" means any emotionally disturbing or distressing event or experience occurring during childhood that could have a lasting negative effects 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.

"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; (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.

B. The Board shall collaborate with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to develop a comprehensive trauma-informed care training program for elementary and secondary school teachers for the purpose of ensuring that all such teachers are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resources to recognize and address signs of childhood trauma in students and provide such students with the support they need. Such trauma-informed care training program shall include guidance on:

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

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

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

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

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

6. When and how to contact support services or other resources outside the classroom to ensure that students who have experienced trauma receive the support they need.

C. The trauma-informed care training program shall be overseen by the Department of Education and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and shall be conducted annually at each school division in person by a representative from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services who is a professional in trauma-informed care.

D. Each local school board shall adopt and implement policies that require annual completion of the trauma-informed care training program, as developed by this section, by each primary and secondary teacher in the school division.

INTRODUCED

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