

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 285  
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/22/17  
Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 4/20/17

Short Title: Suicide Prevention/Awareness School Personnel.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 9, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A TRAINING PROGRAM ON YOUTH SUICIDE  
3 AWARENESS AND PREVENTION AND RISK REFERRAL PROTOCOL FOR  
4 SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 115C-5 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

7 "(11) The term "public school unit" means a local school administrative unit,  
8 charter school, or regional school."

9 **SECTION 2.** Article 25A of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by  
10 adding a new section to read:

11 "**§ 115C-375.10. Youth suicide awareness and prevention training and risk referral**  
12 **protocol for school personnel.**

13 (a) State Board Training Program and Protocol. – The State Board of Education, in  
14 consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health,  
15 shall develop a youth suicide awareness and prevention training program and a model risk  
16 referral protocol for public school units to provide to school personnel who work directly with  
17 students in grades six through 12, including teachers, teacher assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria  
18 workers, janitorial staff, media coordinators, athletic coaches, administrators, administrative  
19 assistants, school safety resource officers, school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and  
20 counselors. The training program shall consist of at least two hours of evidence-informed  
21 instruction to increase awareness of suicide, identification of risk factors and signs, and  
22 information for student referral for suicide prevention resources and support. The model risk  
23 referral protocol shall provide guidelines to public school unit on identification of at-risk  
24 students, suicide prevention procedures, and referral sources. The training program and model  
25 risk referral protocol shall be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. Any mental  
26 health training requirements established by the State Board of Education shall be fulfilled in  
27 part by the youth suicide awareness and prevention training program.

28 (b) Training and Protocol Requirements. – Each public school unit shall provide the  
29 training program and model risk referral protocol developed by the State Board of Education  
30 under subsection (a) of this section, or a locally developed plan that meets the requirements of  
31 subsection (c) of this section, to school personnel who work directly with students in grades six  
32 through 12 at no cost to the employee. A school employee who works directly with students in  
33 grades six through 12 shall receive training within 12 months of employment with a board of a  
34 public school unit and every two years thereafter while employed with that board. The training  
35 may be offered in various formats, including electronically, through videoconferencing, or



1 through an individual program of study of designated materials consisting of at least two hours  
2 of instruction.

3 (c) Locally Developed Training and Risk Referral Protocols. – A board of a public  
4 school unit may comply with the training and protocol requirements of this section by  
5 developing a local plan that includes, at a minimum, (i) conveying information on State and  
6 national data on suicide deaths and attempts, suicide methods, and at-risk populations, (ii)  
7 myths and attitudes about suicide, (iii) warning signs and symptoms for suicide, (iv)  
8 identification of at-risk students and steps for referring students to support services, (v)  
9 protective factors for prevention of suicide, and (vi) safe messaging to children. In addition, a  
10 local plan shall include protocols for implementation and mandatory training that include at  
11 least the following:

12 (1) A plan to include specialized training for student support personnel,  
13 including administrators, school nurses, counselors, social workers, and  
14 psychologists.

15 (2) A safety plan for the school in the event of (i) identification of a student as  
16 being at-risk of suicide, including a student help plan and immediate  
17 assistance, and (ii) a suicide death or suicide attempt by a student enrolled in  
18 the school, including a care plan for peers and school personnel.

19 (3) Designation of a school employee as the school suicide prevention  
20 responder.

21 (4) A plan for communication with a parent or legal guardian of a student  
22 identified as at-risk, including safe transfer of the student to the parent or  
23 legal guardian.

24 (5) A plan for post-intervention for a student who has been identified as at-risk  
25 or has attempted suicide, including reentry into the classroom.

26 (d) Reporting. – By September 15 of each year, each public school unit shall report to  
27 the Department of Public Instruction on prior school year compliance with the mandatory  
28 training requirements and prevention activities required by this section. The report may be  
29 made in conjunction with other student health reporting requirements required by State Board  
30 of Education policy.

31 (e) Limitations. – Notwithstanding the requirements in subsection (a) of this section,  
32 nothing in this section shall be construed to impose any obligation or responsibility on public  
33 school units to provide referral, treatment, follow-up, or other services related to identification  
34 of students at-risk of suicide and suicide prevention procedures beyond what may be required  
35 by other State law or federal law.

36 (f) Liability. – No board of a public school unit, nor its members, employees,  
37 designees, agents, or volunteers, shall be liable in civil damages to any party for any loss or  
38 damage caused by any act or omission relating to the provision of, participation in, or  
39 implementation of any component of the plan, referral protocol, or training program required  
40 by this section, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or  
41 intentional wrongdoing. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose any specific duty  
42 of care or standard of care."

43 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

44 "(g) Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Risk Referral Protocol. – A  
45 charter school is subject to and shall comply with all requirements of G.S. 115C-375.10. "

46 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

47 "(14) Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Risk Referral  
48 Protocol. – A regional school is subject to and shall comply with all  
49 requirements of G.S. 115C-375.10."

50 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 116-239.8 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

1                    "(17) Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Risk Referral  
2                    Protocol. – A lab school is subject to and shall comply with all requirements  
3                    of G.S. 115C-375.10. For purposes of G.S. 115C-375.10, a lab school shall  
4                    be a public school unit."

5                    **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
6 the 2018-2019 school year.