

**ASSEMBLY, No. 2678**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “Purple Ribbon Schools Program” in DOE to recognize public and nonpublic schools with positive school climate.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1   **AN ACT** concerning positive school climates and supplementing  
2       chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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4       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5       *of New Jersey:*

6  
7       1. a. There is created a Purple Ribbon Schools Program in the  
8       Department of Education. Under the program, the Commissioner of  
9       Education shall annually recognize as a Purple Ribbon School those  
10      public and nonpublic schools that provide or have made significant  
11      progress to:

12       (1) provide a safe and inclusive environment for students and  
13      staff;

14       (2) raise awareness of the issue of student suicide and suicide  
15      prevention; and

16       (3) address the issue of student mental health and teacher mental  
17      health first aid training.

18      b. The commissioner shall establish a Purple Ribbon Schools  
19      Working Group. The purpose of the working group shall be to  
20      develop criteria to be used in the selection of public and nonpublic  
21      schools as a Purple Ribbon School. The working group shall  
22      consist of members appointed by the commissioner and shall be  
23      composed of, but need not be limited to: a school principal; a  
24      school administrator; a middle school teacher; a high school  
25      teacher; a school counselor; a school social worker; a school  
26      psychologist; a person with personal or family experience with  
27      suicide; a person with knowledge and expertise in the prevention of  
28      youth suicide in high-risk populations; a person who has a  
29      background in, or special knowledge of, the legal, policy,  
30      educational, social, or psychological aspects of bullying; and a  
31      student who has been the victim of harassment, intimidation, or  
32      bullying.

33      c. The criteria established by the working group for a Purple  
34      Ribbon Schools designation pursuant to subsection b. of this section  
35      shall include, but need not be limited to, the school's efforts to:

36       (1) raise awareness and promote suicide prevention programs;

37       (2) highlight and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and  
38      belonging;

39       (3) create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all  
40      students, faculty, and staff regardless of race or sexual and gender  
41      identities, including the establishment of wellness rooms for  
42      mindfulness and social-emotional learning;

43       (4) implement policies and programs to assist students  
44      struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues;

45       (5) participate in the Anti-Defamation League's "No Place for  
46      Hate" campaign or a similar program; and

47       (6) provide teachers, faculty, and staff with opportunities for  
48      instruction in mental health issues and trauma-informed care

1 provided by a licensed health care professional with training and  
2 expertise in mental health issues.

3 d. The working group, in consultation with the commissioner,  
4 shall establish a scoring system based on the criteria developed  
5 pursuant to subsection c. of this section to be used by the  
6 commissioner in the selection of Purple Ribbon Schools.

7

8 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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## STATEMENT

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13 This bill establishes a Purple Ribbon Schools Program in the  
14 Department of Education. Under the program, the Commissioner of  
15 Education will annually recognize as a Purple Ribbon School those  
16 public and nonpublic schools that provide or have made significant  
17 progress to:

18 • provide a safe and inclusive environment for students and  
19 staff;

20 • raise awareness of the issue of student suicide and suicide  
21 prevention; and

22 • address the issue of student mental health and teacher  
23 mental health first aid training.

24 Under the bill, the commissioner will establish a Purple Ribbon  
25 Schools Working Group which will develop criteria for public and  
26 nonpublic schools to qualify for a Purple Ribbon School  
27 designation. The working group will consist of members appointed  
28 by the commissioner and will be composed of, but need not be  
29 limited to: a school principal; a school administrator; a middle  
30 school teacher; a high school teacher; a school counselor; a school  
31 social worker; a school psychologist; a person with personal or  
32 family experience with suicide; a person with knowledge and  
33 expertise in the prevention of youth suicide in high-risk  
34 populations; a person who has a background in, or special  
35 knowledge of, the legal, policy, educational, social, or  
36 psychological aspects of bullying; and a student who has been the  
37 victim of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

38 The criteria established by the working group for a Purple  
39 Ribbon Schools designation will include, but need not be limited to,  
40 the school's efforts to:

41 • highlight and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and  
42 belonging;

43 • create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for  
44 all students, faculty, and staff regardless of race or sexual  
45 and gender identities, including the establishment of  
46 wellness rooms for mindfulness and social-emotional  
47 learning;

- 1           • implement policies and programs to assist students
  - 2           struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues;
  - 3           and
  - 4           • provide teachers, faculty, and staff with opportunities for
  - 5           instruction in mental health issues and trauma-informed
  - 6           care provided by a licensed health care professional with
  - 7           training and expertise in mental health issues.
- 8       The working group, in consultation with the commissioner, will
- 9       establish a scoring system based on the criteria developed to be
- 10      used by the commissioner in the selection of Purple Ribbon
- 11      Schools.