

SENATE, No. 358

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN

District 20 (Union)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Greenstein and Gopal

SYNOPSIS

Requires public school instruction in mental health as it relates to suicide prevention and provides various elements which may be included in instruction.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning public school instruction in suicide prevention
2 and amending P.L.2005, c.310.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6
7 1. Section 3 of P.L.2005, c.310 (C.18A:6-113) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 3. The State Board of Education shall revise the New Jersey
10 Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical
11 Education to provide for instruction in suicide prevention , and
12 mental health as it relates to suicide prevention, in an appropriate
13 place in the curriculum of **【elementary school, middle school, and**
14 **high school pupils】** students in elementary school, middle school,
15 and high school. The instruction shall incorporate evidence-based
16 standards and shall be adapted to the age and understanding of the
17 students. The instruction may include the following elements:

18 a. the concept of wellness including self-care and personal
19 responsibility for one's own mental health and wellness;

20 b. the concept of mental health as an integral part of health;

21 c. recognition of the warning signs of suicide;

22 d. awareness of the risk of suicide and self-harm;

23 e. the relationship between mental health, substance abuse, and
24 other negative coping behaviors;

25 f. the negative impact of stigma and cultural attitudes toward
26 mental illness;

27 g. the implications of risk factors, protective factors, and
28 resiliency on mental health and wellness; and

29 h. identifying appropriate professionals, services, and family
30 supports for suicide prevention.

31 (cf: P.L.2005, c.310, s.3)

32
33 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
34 the first full school year following the date of enactment.

35 36 37 STATEMENT

38
39 Current law requires that instruction in suicide prevention be
40 included in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary
41 school, middle school, and high school students. This bill provides
42 that the instruction in suicide prevention will also include mental
43 health as it relates to suicide prevention. The instruction must
44 incorporate evidence-based standards and be adapted to the age and
45 understanding of the students. The bill also provides elements that

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 may be included as part of the instruction: (a) the concept of
2 wellness including self-care and personal responsibility for one's
3 own mental health and wellness; (b) the concept of mental health as
4 an integral part of health; (c) recognition of the warning signs of
5 suicide; (d) awareness of the risk of suicide and self-harm; (e) the
6 relationship between mental health, substance abuse, and other
7 negative coping behaviors; (f) the negative impact of stigma and
8 cultural attitudes toward mental illness; (g) the implications of risk
9 factors, protective factors, and resiliency on mental health and
10 wellness; and (h) identifying appropriate professionals, services,
11 and family supports for suicide prevention.

12 The bill:

- 13 • updates a reference to the Core Curriculum Content Standards
14 to reflect the current name of the State standards, the New
15 Jersey Student Learning Standards;
- 16 • eliminates the requirement that the revision of the standards by
17 the State Board of Education be accomplished within 180-
18 days; and
- 19 • eliminates the requirement that instruction in suicide
20 prevention be provided to students in each grade from
21 kindergarten through high school. Instead, the instruction will
22 be provided in an appropriate place in the curriculum of
23 students in elementary school, middle school, and high school,
24 as the law currently provides.