

1 HB398
2 175529-1
3 By Representative Clouse
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 15-MAR-16

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would establish the Jason Flatt
9 Act.

10 This bill would provide for annual suicide
11 awareness prevention education training for
12 certificated public K-12 school personnel.
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14 A BILL
15 TO BE ENTITLED
16 AN ACT
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18 To establish the Jason Flatt Act, relating to
19 student health in grades K-12 public school systems; to amend
20 Section 16-28B-8, Code of Alabama 1975; to provide for annual
21 suicide prevention education training for certificated school
22 system personnel; to provide that no cause of action is
23 created; to provide that no duty of care is created; to
24 provide for legislative findings; and to provide for an
25 advisory committee and related matters.

26 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited
2 as the Jason Flatt Act.

3 Section 2. The Legislature finds as follows:

4 (1) Suicide in youth cuts across ethnic, economic,
5 social, and age boundaries and has a tremendous and traumatic
6 impact on surviving family members, friends, and the community
7 at large.

8 (2) After unintentional injury, suicide has become
9 the leading cause of death among young people. At a time when
10 unintentional injuries have been on the decline, suicides have
11 increased.

12 (3) Suicide is a complex issue that requires school,
13 family, and community resources be harnessed for appropriate
14 and timely help to be available in order to prevent suicide.

15 Section 3. Section 16-28B-8 of the Code of Alabama
16 1975, is amended to read as follows:

17 "§16-28B-8.

18 "(a) To the extent that the Legislature shall
19 appropriate funds, or to the extent that any local board may
20 provide funds from other sources, each school system shall
21 implement the following standards and policies for programs in
22 an effort to prevent student suicide:

23 "(1) Foster individual, family, and group counseling
24 services related to suicide prevention.

25 "(2) Make referral, crisis intervention, and other
26 related information available for students, parents, and
27 school personnel.

1 "(3) Foster training for school personnel who are
2 responsible for counseling and supervising students.

3 "(4) Increase student awareness of the relationship
4 between drug and alcohol use and suicide.

5 "(5) Educate students in recognizing signs of
6 suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of
7 suicide.

8 "(6) Inform students of available community suicide
9 prevention services.

10 "(7) Promote cooperative efforts between school
11 personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.

12 "(8) Foster school-based or community-based, or
13 both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.

14 "(9) Develop a strategy to assist survivors of
15 attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping
16 with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the
17 death of a student, and healing.

18 "(10) Engage in any other program or activity which
19 the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the
20 efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.

21 "(11) Provide training for school employees and
22 volunteers who have significant contact with students on the
23 local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation,
24 violence, and threats of violence.

25 "(12) Develop a process for discussing with students
26 local board policies relating to the prevention of student

1 suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation,
2 violence, and threats of violence.

3 "(13) Provide annual training for all certificated
4 school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This
5 training may be provided within the framework of existing
6 inservice training programs or as a part of required
7 professional development offered by the local school system.

8 "(b) (1) The State Department of Education shall
9 create an advisory committee consisting of practitioners and
10 representatives from all of the following organizations:

11 "a. The School Superintendents of Alabama.

12 "b. The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools.

13 "c. The Alabama Education Association.

14 "d. The Alabama Association of School Boards.

15 "e. Other pertinent mental health and suicide
16 prevention organizations as determined by the department.

17 (2) The advisory committee shall assist the
18 department in developing and adopting rules to provide for the
19 training of certificated school employees in suicide awareness
20 and prevention pursuant to subdivision (13) of subsection (a).

21 "(3) The department and the advisory committee may
22 develop a list of approved training materials to fulfill the
23 requirements of subdivision (13) of subsection (a). Approved
24 training materials may include, but not be limited to, any of
25 the following:

26 "a. Training materials that are currently being used
27 by a local school system.

1 "b. Training materials that provide instruction on
2 identifying appropriate mental health services, both within
3 the school system and within the larger community.

4 "c. Training materials that may be completed through
5 self-review.

6 "(c) Each local school system shall adopt a policy
7 on student suicide prevention. To assist local school systems
8 in developing their own policies for student suicide
9 prevention, the department and advisory committee shall
10 establish a model policy for use by local school systems in
11 accordance with this section.

12 "(d) Any person involved in a cause of action or
13 omission resulting from the implementation of this section or
14 resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by this
15 section, shall be subject to Section 36-1-12."

16 Section 4. This act shall become effective on the
17 first day of the third month following its passage and
18 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.