

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2023 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 3536

By Delegates Storch, Howell, and Westfall

[Introduced February 14, 2023; Referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-40 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to
2 amend and reenact §18B-1B-7 of said code, all relating to suicide prevention awareness
3 and dissemination of information concerning the same.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

CHAPTER 18. EDUCATION

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

§18-2-40. Suicide prevention awareness training; dissemination of information.

1 (a)(1) Legislative findings. — The Legislature recognizes that the state of West Virginia has
2 one of the highest rates of suicide in the nation, and that suicide serves as one of the leading
3 causes of death in our state.

4 (2) The Legislature further finds that nationwide, suicide rates amongst adolescents and
5 young adults are on the rise. As a result of disrupted families, poverty, and the opioid crises which
6 have severely affected a significant number of families across this state, West Virginia's students
7 face a number of issues which may increase their risk of suicide.

8 (3) Consequently, the Legislature finds that it is imperative that those in our education
9 system closest to our students receive training to increase their ability to better recognize students
10 who may be exhibiting signs that they are at risk of suicide.

11 (b) Each year and every year thereafter ~~On or before September 1, 2020, and each year~~
12 ~~thereafter~~, the State Board of Education shall provide for the routine education of all professional
13 educators, including principals and administrators, and those service personnel having direct
14 contact with students on warning signs and resources to assist in suicide prevention under
15 guidelines established by the state board. ~~The education may be accomplished through self-~~
16 ~~review of suicide prevention materials and resources approved by the state board.~~

17 (c) Each annual school year and every year thereafter ~~On or before September 1, 2020,~~
18 ~~and each year thereafter~~, a public middle and high school administrator shall disseminate and

19 provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention awareness information to all middle and high
 20 school students. The information may be obtained from the Bureau for Behavioral Health and
 21 Health Facilities or from a commercially developed suicide prevention training program approved
 22 by the State Board of Education in consultation with the bureau to assure the accuracy and
 23 appropriateness of the information.

24 (d) Commencing one year from the date of reenactment of this section in the 2023 regular
 25 session of the Legislature, a public school that serves students in grades 6 to 12, inclusive, and
 26 that issues student identification cards shall have printed on either side of the student identification
 27 cards the information for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which can be reached by calling or texting
 28 988; and shall have printed on either side of the student identification cards the information for the
 29 Crisis Text Line, which can be accessed by texting HOME to 741741, to disseminate and make
 30 accessible information on national suicide prevention resources.

31 ~~(d)~~(e) The provisions of this section shall be known as Jamie's Law.

CHAPTER 18B. HIGHER EDUCATION.

ARTICLE 1B. HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION.

§18B-1B-7. Student mental health policies; suicide prevention.

1 (a) Each public and private institution of higher education shall develop and implement a
 2 policy to advise students and staff on suicide prevention programs available on and off campus
 3 that includes, but is not limited to:

4 (1) Crisis intervention access, which includes information for national, state, and local
 5 suicide prevention hotlines;

6 (2) Mental health program access, which provides information on the availability of local
 7 mental health clinics, student health services, and counseling services;

8 (3) Multimedia application access, which includes crisis hotline contact information, suicide
 9 warning signs, resources offered, and free-of-cost applications;

10 (4) Student communication plans, which consist of creating outreach plans regarding
11 educational and outreach activities on suicide prevention; and

12 (5) Post intervention plans which include creating a strategic plan to communicate
13 effectively with students, staff, and parents after the loss of a student to suicide.

14 (b) Each public and private institution of higher education shall provide all incoming
15 students with information about depression and suicide prevention resources available to
16 students. The information provided to students shall include available mental health services and
17 other support services, including student-run organizations for individuals at risk of or affected by
18 suicide.

19 (c) The information prescribed by subsection (a), subdivisions (1) through (4) of this
20 section shall be posted on the website of each institution of higher education in this state.

21 (d) Any applicable free-of-cost prevention materials or programs shall be posted on the
22 websites of the public and private institutions of higher education, the Higher Education Policy
23 Commission, and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education.

24 (e) Commencing one year from the date of reenactment of this section in the 2023 regular
25 session of the Legislature, a public or private institute of higher education that issues student
26 identification cards shall have printed on either side of the student identification cards the
27 information for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which can be reached by calling or texting 988; and
28 shall have printed on either side of the student identification cards the information for the Crisis
29 Text Line, which can be accessed by texting HOME to 741741, to disseminate and make
30 accessible information on national suicide prevention resources.

31 (f) The provisions of this section shall be known as "Jamie's Law."

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to update the code concerning suicide prevention awareness and dissemination of information concerning the same.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.