

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2755

BY DELEGATES PUSHKIN AND HIGGINBOTHAM

[Introduced February 24, 2021; Referred to the
Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact § 18-2-40 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to suicide prevention awareness training.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

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

17 (c) On or before September 1, 2020, and each year thereafter, a public middle and high
18 school administrator shall disseminate and provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention
19 awareness information to all middle and high school students. The information may be obtained
20 from the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities or from a commercially developed
21 suicide prevention training program approved by the State Board of Education in consultation with

22 the bureau to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of the information.

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

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to name the suicide prevention awareness training section "Jamie's Law."

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