

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 548

By Senator Grady

[Introduced February 20, 2025; referred
to the Committee on Education; and then to the
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
 2 designated §18-36-1, §18-36-2, §18-36-3, §18-36-4, §18-36-5, §18-36-6, and §18-36-7,
 3 relating to the creation of the Safety and Violence Education for Students Act; providing for
 4 training programs; providing for the Department of Education to develop trainings and
 5 materials; and setting forth minimum standards.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 36. SAFETY AND VIOLENCE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS ACT.

§18-36-1. School Personnel and Student Suicide Prevention Training.

1 (a) The Department of Education shall require that all schools serving students grades six-
 2 12 provide to students at least one hour, or one standard class period, of evidence-based suicide
 3 awareness and prevention training each school year. Such training may be delivered in-person,
 4 live-virtual, or digitally.

5 (1) Training shall begin within two years of the development of the list required in this
 6 section.

7 (2) Training programs which combine the training requirements set forth in this section may
 8 be used to fulfill the requirements of this section.

9 (b) The Department of Education shall, within one year of this law taking effect, develop a
 10 list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to fulfill the
 11 requirements of this section. These trainings shall, at a minimum, do all of the following:

12 (1) Teach school personnel how to identify the signs and symptoms of depression, suicide,
 13 and self-injury in students;

14 (2) Teach school personnel when and how to refer youth and their families to appropriate
 15 mental health services for assessment both within the school and the larger community;

16 (3) Teach students how to identify the signs and signals of depression, suicide, and self-
 17 injury in themselves and peers; and

18 (4) Teach students the importance of seeking help for self and peers, as well as the process

19 for seeking help.

20 (c) The Department of Education shall make the list of evidence-based suicide prevention
21 trainings, including no-cost programming, if any, publicly available on its website.

22 (1) The Department of Education shall keep the list of available training options updated in
23 a timely manner by reviewing the list, at a minimum, every 36 months.

§18-36-2. Student Safety and Violence Prevention Training.

1 (a) The Department of Education shall require that all schools serving students grades six-
2 12 provide to students at least one hour, or one standard class period, of evidence-based youth
3 violence prevention training each school year. Such training may be delivered in-person, live-
4 virtual, or digitally.

5 (1) Training shall begin within two years of the development of the list required in this
6 section.

7 (2) Training programs which combine the training requirements set forth in this section,
8 may be used to fulfill the training requirements of this section.

9 (b) The Department of Education shall, within one year of this law taking effect, develop a
10 list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to fulfill the
11 requirements of this section. Trainings shall, at a minimum, teach students the following:

12 (1) How to identify observable warning signs and signals of an individual who may be at risk
13 of harming themselves or others;

14 (2) The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help; and

15 (3) The steps they can take to report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially
16 harmful activity.

17 (c) The Department of Education shall make the list of evidence-based youth violence
18 prevention trainings, including no-cost programming, if any, publicly available on its website.

19 (1) The Department of Education shall keep the list of available training options updated in
20 a timely manner by reviewing the list, at a minimum, every 36 months.

§18-36-3. Student Social Inclusion Training.

1 (a) The Department of Education shall require that all schools serving students grades K-
2 12 provide to students at least one hour, or one standard class period, of evidence-based social
3 inclusion training each school year. Such training may be delivered in-person, live-virtual, or
4 digitally.

5 (1) Training shall begin within two years of the development of the list required in this
6 section.

7 (b) The Department of Education shall, within one year of this law taking effect, develop a
8 list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to fulfill the
9 requirements of this section. Trainings shall, at a minimum, teach students the following:

10 (1) What social isolation is and how to identify social isolation in others;

11 (2) The importance of taking social isolation seriously and seeking help for peers; and

12 (3) How to utilize strategies to be more socially inclusive in the classroom and community
13 and to establish connections with peers.

14 (c) The Department of Education shall make the list of evidence-based social inclusion
15 trainings, including no-cost programing, if any, publicly available on its website.

16 (1) The Department of Education shall keep the list of available training options updated in
17 a timely manner by reviewing the list, at a minimum, every 36 months.

§18-36-4. Student-Led Violence Prevention Clubs.

1 (a) The Department of Education shall require all schools serving students grades K-12, to
2 designate a student-led violence prevention club within one year of this law taking effect. The club
3 shall:

4 (1) Be open to all members of the student body; and

5 (2) Have at least one identified adult advisor.

6 (b) The student violence prevention club shall, at a minimum, do any of the following:

7 (1) Sustain awareness activities related to suicide prevention, violence prevention, or

8 social inclusion trainings; and

9 (2) Foster opportunities for student leadership development.

§18-36-5. Anonymous Reporting Program.

1 (a) The Department of Education shall, in collaboration with other agencies, make
2 available to all schools a statewide Anonymous Reporting Program.

3 (1) The program shall enable any person to report anonymously a dangerous, violent,
4 threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity which occurs, or is threatened on, school
5 property or which relates to an enrolled student or school personnel.

6 (b) The Department of Education shall require that every school within the state have
7 implemented the Anonymous Reporting Program within 36 months of this law taking effect.

8 (c) The Department of Education shall, within six months of this law taking effect, identify
9 and compile a state database that includes, at a minimum, the following identified individuals for
10 the purposes of implementing and coordinating the delivery of the Anonymous Reporting
11 Program:

12 (1) A point of contact within each local office of public safety telecommunicators; and

13 (2) A primary point of contact, within each school, who is responsible for managing the
14 school-based team as defined in this section.

15 (d) To fulfill the requirements of this section, the Department of Education shall operate, or
16 contract with a provider to operate, the following:

17 (1) A website to educate students on the availability of the state's Anonymous Reporting
18 Program and which provides guidance on how, and when, to use the Program; and

19 (2) A toll-free hotline that can be used to provide anonymous tips regarding dangerous,
20 violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity which occurs, or is threatened on,
21 school property or which relates to an enrolled student or school personnel.

22 (e) The Anonymous Reporting Program shall, at a minimum, meet the following
23 requirements:

24 (1) Support 24/7 anonymous reporting through, at a minimum, a mobile phone application
25 and a multilingual crisis center;

26 (2) Crisis centers shall be staffed by individuals with evidence-based counseling and crisis
27 intervention training;

28 (3) Promptly forward reported information to the appropriate school-based team which is
29 comprised of at least three staff members;

30 (4) Support a coordinated response by schools, public safety telecommunicators, and
31 sworn law enforcement to an identified crisis when response by schools and sworn law
32 enforcement is to be reasonably expected;

33 (5) Require and certify the training of school-based teams in each school, comprised of at
34 least three staff members, to receive notice of any report submitted to the program concerning the
35 school, school personnel, or an enrolled student;

36 (6) Require and certify the training of public safety telecommunicators in each local
37 dispatch, to receive notice of any report submitted to the Program that requires response from
38 sworn law enforcement;

39 (7) Promote public awareness and education about the program and its reporting methods,
40 prior to launching the program;

41 (A) Implement an evidence-based student violence prevention training that teaches
42 students how to identify observable warning signs and signals of an individual who may be at risk
43 of harming themselves or others, the importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help, and
44 how to report a person who is at risk, using the program; and

45 (8) Be in compliance with FERPA and relevant state laws.

46 (f) In the first year in which an Anonymous Reporting Program is implemented, the
47 Department shall require all school districts to submit a report containing the following:

48 (1) Total number of disciplinary actions in the previous 12 months, disaggregated by
49 school, type of disciplinary action, as well as the gender and race of the student subject to the

50 disciplinary action.

51 (2) The requirements of this subsection may be fulfilled by existing reporting requirements
52 meeting the standards of this subsection

53 (g) Each year following implementation of the program, the Department of Education shall
54 require all school districts to submit annual reports reflecting the total number of anonymous tips
55 received. Reports shall include, at a minimum, the following:

56 (1) The total number of tips received for the previous school year;

57 (2) The total number of tips received since the program began, disaggregated by school
58 and for each school, the following:

59 (A) Tips by type;

60 (B) Method by which the tip was received; and

61 (C) Total number of false reports received.

62 (3) The total number of responses to incoming tips, disaggregated by disciplinary actions,
63 non-disciplinary actions, and interventions, as well as the gender and race of the student subject to
64 the disciplinary action, non-disciplinary action, or intervention.

65 (h) If a report filed with the program is determined to be a false report, information about the
66 subject of the false report shall be immediately removed from the subject student's record,
67 including records held by the district, school, and law enforcement agencies.

§18-36-6. State and federal funding.

1 To offset any costs associated with the implementation of the requirements of this article,
2 the Department of Education is encouraged to apply for any state or federal funding made
3 available to it for the purposes of increasing school safety.

§18-36-7. Definitions.

1 (a) In this legislation, terms used are defined as follows unless otherwise specified:

2 (1) "Department" means the state Department of Education

3 (2) "Evidence-based" means a program or practice that-

- 4 (A) Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes based on-
- 5 (i) Strong evidence from not less than one well-designed and well-implemented
- 6 experimental study;
- 7 (ii) Moderate evidence from not less than one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-
- 8 experimental study; or
- 9 (iii) Promising evidence from not less than one well-designed and well-implemented
- 10 correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- 11 (B) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive
- 12 evaluation that such program or practice, is likely to improve relevant outcomes, and includes
- 13 ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.
- 14 (3) "Public safety telecommunicators" means police or law enforcement dispatchers or
- 15 other emergency communicators relaying emergency information to sworn law enforcement.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill relates to the creation of the Safety and Violence Education for Students Act. The bill provides for training programs. The bill provides for the Department of Education to develop trainings and materials. Finally, the bill provides for minimum standards.

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