Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 230

Senators Weld, Cline, Baldwin, Lindsay, Roberts, Stollings, Jeffries, and Maroney, original sponsors

[Originating in the Committee on Children and Families; reported on January 27, 2020]
A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-40 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to suicide prevention awareness training and dissemination of information; providing findings; requiring State Board of Education to provide routine education in suicide prevention under guidelines established by board; and requiring dissemination of information.

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.

(a) This section, section seven, article one-b, chapter eighteen-b of this code and section one, article six, chapter twenty-seven of this code shall be known as “Jamie’s Law”.

(b) On or before September 1, 2015 and each year thereafter, a public middle and high school administrator shall disseminate and provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention awareness information to all middle and high school students. The information may be obtained from the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities or from a commercially developed suicide prevention training program approved by the State Board of Education in consultation with the bureau to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of the information.

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

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

(3) Consequently, the Legislature finds that it is imperative that those in our education system closest to our students receive training to increase their ability to better recognize students who may be exhibiting signs that they are at risk of suicide.
(b) On or before September 1, 2020, and each year thereafter, the State Board of Education shall provide for the routine education of all professional educators, including principals and administrators, and those service personnel having direct contact with students on warning signs and resources to assist in suicide prevention under guidelines established by the state board. The education may be accomplished through self-review of suicide prevention materials and resources approved by the state board.

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

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require the State Board of Education to provide for the routine education of all professional educators, including principals and administrators, and those service personnel having direct contact with students on warning signs and resources to assist in suicide prevention under guidelines established by the state board. This section has been completely rewritten.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added. This section has been completely rewritten.