

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

H.B. 578
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH40345-NH-158A

Short Title: The Jason Flatt Act of North Carolina.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Pickett.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION BE PART OF THE
3 SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH POLICY OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-376.5 reads as rewritten:

6 "§ 115C-376.5. School-based mental health plan required.

7 ...

8 (b) School-Based Mental Health Policy. – The State Board of Education shall adopt a
9 school-based mental health policy that includes (i) minimum requirements for a school-based
10 mental health plan for K-12 school units and (ii) a model mental health training ~~program-program,~~
11 a suicide prevention education requirement, and model suicide risk referral protocol for K-12
12 school units. Consistent with this section, the model mental health training ~~program-program,~~ a
13 suicide prevention education requirement, and model suicide risk referral protocol shall meet all
14 of the following requirements:

15 ...

16 (2) The model suicide risk referral protocol shall be provided to school personnel
17 who work with students in grades six through 12 and provide both of the
18 following:

19 a. Guidelines on the identification of students at risk of suicide.

20 b. Procedures and referral sources that address actions that should be
21 taken to address students identified in accordance with this
22 subdivision.

23 (3) Suicide prevention education shall be provided to all licensed educators. The
24 material will cover the educator's role in youth suicide awareness in more
25 detail than the model mental health training. This training may be
26 accomplished through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials
27 approved by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education and
28 the Department of Public Instruction shall make suicide prevention education
29 materials available at no cost to K-12 school units.

30 (c) School-Based Mental Health Plan. – Each K-12 school unit shall adopt a plan for
31 promoting student mental health and well-being that includes, at a minimum, the following:

32 (1) Minimum requirements for a school-based mental health plan established by
33 the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

34 (2) A mental health training ~~program-program,~~ a suicide prevention education
35 requirement, and a suicide risk referral protocol that are consistent with the



1 model programs developed by the State Board of Education pursuant to
2 subsection (b) of this section.

3 (d) Training and Protocol Requirements. – Each K-12 school unit shall provide its
4 adopted mental health training ~~program-program~~, a suicide prevention education requirement,
5 and suicide risk referral protocol to school personnel at no cost to the employee. Employees shall
6 receive an initial mental health training of at least six hours and subsequent mental health
7 trainings of at least two hours. The initial mental health training shall occur within the first six
8 months of employment. Subsequent mental health trainings shall occur in the following school
9 year and annually thereafter. Additionally, school personnel shall complete one hour of suicide
10 prevention education each year to coincide with subsequent mental health trainings. In the
11 discretion of the K-12 school unit, the initial mental health training may be waived in the event
12 the employee completed an initial mental health training at another K-12 school unit. School
13 personnel may meet mental health training and suicide prevention education requirements in any
14 of the following ways:

15 (1) Electronic delivery of instruction.

16 (2) Videoconferencing.

17 (3) Group, in-person training.

18 (4) Self-study.

19 (5) Completion of approved programs.

20 (e) Review and Update. – Beginning August 1, 2025, and every five years thereafter, the
21 Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review the State Board of Education's minimum
22 requirements for a school-based mental health plan, model mental health training program,
23 suicide prevention education, and model suicide risk referral protocol and recommend any
24 needed changes to the State Board of Education. The State Board shall update its policies to
25 reflect those recommendations and publish the updates to K-12 school units. A K-12 school unit
26 shall update its adopted school-based mental health plan in accordance with any updates provided
27 by the State Board.

28 (f) Reporting; State Audit. – By September 15 of each year, each K-12 school unit shall
29 report to the Department of Public Instruction on (i) the content of the school-based mental health
30 plan adopted in the unit, including the mental health training ~~program-program~~, a suicide
31 prevention education requirement, and suicide risk referral protocol, and (ii) prior school year
32 compliance with requirements of this section. The Department of Public Instruction may also
33 audit K-12 school units at appropriate times to ensure compliance with the requirements of this
34 section. The Department shall report the information it receives pursuant to this subsection to the
35 Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
36 on Health and Human Services by December 15 of each year.

37 ...

38 (h) Limitation of Civil Liability. – No governing body of a K-12 school unit, nor its
39 members, employees, designees, agents, or volunteers, shall be liable in civil damages to any
40 party for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission relating to the provision of,
41 participation in, or implementation of any component of a school-based mental health plan,
42 mental health training program, a suicide prevention education requirement, or suicide risk
43 referral protocol required by this section, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence,
44 wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose
45 any specific duty of care or standard of care on a K-12 school unit."

46 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 115C-218.75(h) reads as rewritten:

47 "(h) School-Based Mental Health Plan Required. – A charter school shall adopt a
48 school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training ~~program-program~~, a suicide
49 prevention education requirement, and suicide risk referral protocol, in accordance with
50 G.S. 115C-376.5."

51 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 115C-238.66(16) reads as rewritten:

1 "(16) School-based mental health plan required. – A regional school shall adopt a
2 school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training ~~program~~
3 program, a suicide prevention education requirement, and suicide risk referral
4 protocol, in accordance with G.S. 115C-376.5."
5 **SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 116-239.8(b)(18) reads as rewritten:
6 "(18) School-based mental health plan required. – A laboratory school shall adopt a
7 school-based mental health plan, including a mental health training ~~program~~
8 program, a suicide prevention education requirement, and suicide risk referral
9 protocol, in accordance with G.S. 115C-376.5."
10 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
11 the 2025-2026 school year.