

2021 -- H 5353

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SUICIDE PREVENTION--THE NATHAN BRUNO AND  
JASON FLATT ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Cortvriend, Ruggiero, Carson, Amore, Tanzi, Solomon,  
Cassar, McGaw, Henries, and Alzate

Date Introduced: February 05, 2021

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by  
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 21.7

4 THE NATHAN BRUNO AND JASON FLATT ACT

5 **16-21.7-1. Short title.**

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as "The Nathan Bruno and Jason Flatt Act."

7 **16-21.7-2. Training.**

8 (a) The department of education shall adopt rules and regulations supporting suicide  
9 awareness and prevention training each year for public school personnel and students.

10 (b)(1) Training shall be required of all personnel hired or contracted by the school district,  
11 including, but not limited to, teachers, administration, custodians, lunch personnel, substitutes,  
12 nurses, coaches and coaching staff, even if volunteers. The training shall occur every year.

13 (2) Training shall be required of all students starting in grade six (6) and through grade  
14 twelve (12) each academic year.

15 (c) Training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training  
16 programs offered by the department of education or as part of professional development activities.

17 (d)(1) The department of education shall, in consultation with the department of health,  
18 department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals, education and health

1 care stakeholders, mental health care stakeholders and suicide prevention experts, develop a list of  
2 approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of this chapter.

3 (2) This list shall be fully evaluated and updated at least every three (3) years.

4 (3) Approved training materials and instruction shall include training on how to identify  
5 appropriate mental health services both within the school and the larger community, and when and  
6 how to refer youth and their families to those services. These materials and instruction are to be  
7 given by qualified suicide prevention instructors as determined by the listed entities and groups  
8 listed in subsection (d)(1) of this section.

9 **16-21.7-3. Student suicide prevention policy.**

10 (a) Each public school district shall adopt a policy on student suicide prevention. This  
11 policy shall, at a minimum, address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention and  
12 postvention. For the purposes of this chapter, "postvention" means counseling, or other social care  
13 given to students after another student's suicide or attempted suicide. Postvention also means  
14 counseling to students that have made a suicide attempt or have reported ideation, this counseling  
15 shall consist of regular check-ins. For the purposes of this chapter, "regular" means a frequency as  
16 determined by a licensed mental health professional.

17 (b) To assist school districts in developing policies for student suicide prevention, the  
18 department of education shall develop and maintain a model policy, or adopt an existing policy as  
19 a model policy, to serve as a guide for school districts in accordance with this chapter to include,  
20 but not limited to, parental notification procedures, clarification of engagement with student  
21 support personnel, and language defining an in-school issue compared to an out-of-school issue.

22 **16-21.7-4. Protection from litigation.**

23 (a) No person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused by any act or  
24 omission resulting from the implementation of the provisions of this chapter or resulting from any  
25 training required by this chapter, or lack thereof, unless caused by willful or wanton misconduct.

26 (b) The training required by the provisions of this chapter, or lack thereof, shall not be  
27 construed to impose any specific duty of care except as expressly provided for herein.

28 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SUICIDE PREVENTION--THE NATHAN BRUNO AND  
JASON FLATT ACT

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1           This act would create the "Nathan Bruno and Jason Flatt Act" which would require training  
2 of teachers, students and all school personnel regarding suicide awareness and prevention, and the  
3 establishment of a conflict resolution process between teachers or school personnel and students.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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