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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 301

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend Subchapter I, Chapter 41, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by
2 strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

3 § 4116A. Mental health educational programs.

4 (a) For purposes of this section:

5 (1) “Charter school” means as defined under § 4161 of this title.

6 (2) “Contracted school year” means the period defined under § 1305(e) of this title.

7 (3) “Grade” means kindergarten through grade 12.

8 (4) “School district” means as defined under § 4161 of this title.

9 (b) The Department of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall establish and implement
10 statewide mental health educational programs for each grade in each school district and charter school in this State.

11 (c) The statewide mental health education programs established and implemented under this section must meet all
12 of the following:

13 (1) Recognize the multiple dimensions of health by including instruction in mental health and the relationship
14 between physical and mental health to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that promote health,
15 well-being, and human dignity.

16 (2) Be taught by appropriately trained, certified educators.

17 (3) Be comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, and sequential in nature.

18 (d) In establishing and implementing statewide mental health programs under this section, the Department of
19 Education shall consult with mental health experts, including individuals with the Department of Health and Social

20 Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Mental Health Association of Delaware,
21 Delaware Guidance Services, National Alliance of Mental Illness Delaware, and National Council for Behavioral Health.

22 (e) A school district or charter school shall provide in-service training required under this section within the
23 contracted school year.

24 (f) The Department of Education may, with the approval of the State Board of Education, adopt regulations to
25 implement and enforce this section.

26 (g) The Department of Education shall submit a written report to the Governor, the members of the General
27 Assembly, the Director and the Librarian of the Division of Research of Legislative Council, and the Public Archives no
28 later than January 15 of each year. The report must include a description of the educational programming provided under
29 subsection (b) of this section, how the programming complies with subsection (c) of this section, and how the programming
30 has been implemented by each school district and charter school.

SYNOPSIS

A 2017 survey of Delaware high school students found that during the 12 months before the survey the following occurred:

- (1) 27.6% of the students felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks in a row so that they stopped some usual activities.
- (2) 16.1% of students seriously considered attempting suicide.
- (3) 12% of students made a plan about how they would attempt suicide.
- (4) 7.2% of students attempted suicide.

This Act increases student awareness of mental health by requiring the Department of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, to establish and implement statewide mental health educational programs for each grade, kindergarten through grade 12, in each school district and charter school in this State.

Finally, this Act requires the Department of Education to annually report to the Governor and General Assembly regarding the implementation of this Act.