STATE OF NEW YORK

4176

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 6, 2023

Introduced by Sen. WALCZYK -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to developing materials relating to suicide prevention for school-aged children, and to amend the education law, in relation to including suicide prevention in health education curriculum

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 7.07 of the mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new subdivision (i) to read as follows:

(i) The office shall, in consultation with the education department, identify or develop materials for educators regarding suicide prevention measures and signs of depression among school-aged children which may be used by school districts and boards of cooperative educational services, at their option, to educate students about such topics as such districts and boards deem appropriate. Such educational materials shall include, but not be limited to, information regarding symptoms of depression, how depression manifests itself in different cultures, warning signs of suicide, actions to take once a child is identified as a risk of suicide, social media safety and the prevention of cyberbullying, and a list of educational websites regarding suicide and children. Such material shall be available on the education department's website. The office shall provide a hyperlink on its website to the page of the education department's website that displays such materials.

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 804-e to read as follows:

§ 804-e. Instruction regarding the prevention of suicide among school-aged children. 1. The commissioner shall make available on the department website materials identified or developed by the office of mental health in consultation with the department pursuant to subdivision (h) of section 7.07 of the mental hygiene law.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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2. Instruction regarding the prevention of suicide may be included in the health education provided to all secondary school pupils and shall be taught by teachers certified in health education. Related courses in the secondary school curriculum may be taught in a manner supportive of health education regarding the prevention of suicide among school-aged children.

3. School authorities shall be authorized to provide the necessary facilities, time and place for the instruction set forth in this section and to provide learning aids and curriculum resource materials which contribute to effective teaching methods and learning in health education regarding the prevention of suicide among school-aged children including instruction in social media safety and the prevention of cyberbullying.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the first of July next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.