

The Jason Flatt Act

Governor Robert Bentley signed The Jason Flatt Act 2016-310 on May 10, 2016, which requires all K-12 public schools to establish a policy, staff training program, student curriculum, and list of resources for suicide prevention services.

Q & A

Q: Will this be a program provided by the Alabama State Department of Education?

A: The Alabama State Department of Education has created the Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee who will provide a model policy, staff training, student curriculum, and list of resources which can be implemented by each Local Education Agency (LEA). However, some LEAs may prefer to use their own policy, board approved training materials and student curriculum.

Q: What should the policy and program include?

A: If a LEA prefers to develop and implement their own policy and program to prevent suicide it should include the following.

- ❖ Programs that foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- ❖ Information on making referrals and crisis intervention should be available to students, parents and school personnel.
- ❖ Annual training on suicide awareness and prevention for school personnel who counsel and supervise students.
- ❖ Strategies to increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- ❖ Training/education for students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- ❖ Information to students on available community suicide prevention services.
- ❖ Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- ❖ Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- ❖ A strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.
- ❖ Any other program or activity which the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.
- ❖ Training for **all** school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence.
- ❖ A process for discussing with students local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence.

Q: Should all school staff receive training on suicide prevention?

A: LEAs should provide annual training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence. This training may be provided during in-service training as part of required professional development offered by the LEA. Training should also provide instruction on identifying appropriate mental health services, both within the school system and within the community and materials that may be completed through self-review.