

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 934

Short Title: Threat Assessment Teams/Peer to Peer Counsels. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Torbett, Dobson, and Lewis (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Education - K-12, if favorable, Appropriations

May 17, 2018

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO CODIFY THE NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS, TO
3 REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS IN PUBLIC
4 SCHOOLS, TO REQUIRE PEER TO PEER STUDENT COUNSELING PROGRAMS FOR
5 STUDENTS, AND TO PROVIDE GRANTS FOR PEER TO PEER STUDENT
6 COUNSELING PROGRAMS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE HOUSE SELECT
7 COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL SAFETY.

8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 115C-5 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

10 "(11) The term "public school unit" means any of the following:

- 11 a. Local school administrative unit.
12 b. Charter school.
13 c. Regional school.
14 d. A school or schools providing elementary or secondary instruction
15 operated by one of the following:
16 1. Department of Public Instruction.
17 2. The University of North Carolina.
18 3. Department of Health and Human Services.
19 4. Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice of the
20 Department of Public Safety."

21 **SECTION 2.** Article 8C of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
22 adding a new section to read:

23 "**§ 115C-105.75. North Carolina Center for Safer Schools.**

24 (a) There is established the North Carolina Center for Safer Schools located within the
25 Department of Public Instruction, referred to as the Center in this Article.

26 (b) The Center shall be responsible for the following:

- 27 (1) Serve as a resource and referral center for public schools by conducting
28 research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current
29 school safety concerns.
30 (2) Provide training for public school personnel.
31 (3) Maintain and disseminate information to public schools on effective school
32 safety initiatives in North Carolina and across the nation.
33 (4) Collect, analyze, and disseminate various North Carolina school safety data.
34 (5) Encourage the development of partnerships between the public and private
35 sectors to promote school safety in North Carolina.



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- 1 (6) Provide technical assistance to North Carolina public schools in the
2 development and implementation of initiatives promoting school safety.
- 3 (7) Develop model policies for threat assessment teams for public schools,
4 including procedures for the assessment of and intervention with students
5 whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students. The
6 Center shall consult with and involve the Task Force for Safer Schools and
7 relevant State government agencies in development of the model policies.
- 8 (c) The Center shall receive guidance and advice from the Task Force for Safer Schools.
- 9 (d) The Center shall coordinate, collaborate, and seek information as necessary to carry
10 out its duties and responsibilities from State and local government agencies, who shall provide
11 information upon request to the Center. These agencies include the following:
- 12 (1) Department of Public Safety.
- 13 (2) Department of Health and Human Services.
- 14 (3) Department of Public Instruction.
- 15 (4) North Carolina Justice Academy.
- 16 (5) Governor's Crime Commission.
- 17 (6) Local boards of education.
- 18 (7) Local law enforcement agencies."

19 **SECTION 3.** Article 8C of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
20 adding a new section to read:

21 **"§ 115C-105.76. Threat assessment teams.**

22 (a) The local board of education of a local school administrative unit and the governing
23 body of each public school unit shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment
24 teams, including the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a
25 threat to the safety of school staff or students consistent with the model policies developed by
26 the Center in accordance with G.S. 115C-105.75. Such policies shall include procedures for
27 referrals to health care providers for evaluation or treatment, when appropriate.

28 (b) The superintendent may establish a committee charged with oversight of the threat
29 assessment teams operating within the unit, which may be an existing committee established by
30 the unit. The committee shall include individuals with expertise in human resources, education,
31 school administration, mental health, and law enforcement.

32 (c) Each superintendent shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team that
33 shall include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law
34 enforcement. Threat assessment teams may be established to serve one or more schools as
35 determined by the superintendent. Each team shall do the following:

- 36 (1) Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of
37 threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community,
38 school, or self.
- 39 (2) Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior
40 should be reported.
- 41 (3) Implement policies adopted by the governing body pursuant to subsection (a)
42 of this section.

43 (d) Upon a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical
44 harm to self or others, a threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the
45 superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The superintendent or designee shall
46 immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. The superintendent may
47 delegate the responsibility for notification to the principal of the school and require notice to also
48 be made directly to the principal. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude public school
49 personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.

1 (e) Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall report
2 quantitative data on its activities to the Center for Safer Schools according to guidance developed
3 by the Center.

4 (f) Upon a preliminary determination by the threat assessment team that a student poses
5 a threat of violence to self or others or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for
6 assistance, a threat assessment team may obtain criminal history record information and health
7 records, subject to confidentiality, privacy, and other laws to ensure compliance. No member of
8 a threat assessment team shall redisclose any criminal history record information or health
9 information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond
10 the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.

11 (g) For purposes of this section, the term "superintendent" shall mean the superintendent
12 of a local school administrative unit or the staff member with the highest decision-making
13 authority for all other public school units."

14 **SECTION 4.(a)** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

15 "(64) Peer to peer student counseling programs. – Local boards of education shall
16 require peer to peer student mentoring, counseling, and support programs be
17 established at all schools with grades six and higher and are encouraged to
18 implement peer to peer mentoring, counseling, and support programs as
19 appropriate in other grades."

20 **SECTION 4.(b)** G.S. 115C-316.1 reads as rewritten:

21 "**§ 115C-316.1. Duties of school counselors.**

22 (a) School counselors shall implement a comprehensive developmental school
23 counseling program in their schools. Counselors shall spend at least eighty percent (80%) of their
24 work time providing direct services to students. Direct services do not include the coordination
25 of standardized testing. Direct services shall consist of:

- 26 (1) Delivering the school guidance curriculum through large group guidance,
27 interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent
28 workshops.
- 29 (2) Guiding individual student planning through individual or small group
30 assistance and individual or small group advisement.
- 31 (3) Providing responsive services through consultation with students, families,
32 and staff; individual and small group counseling; crisis counseling; referrals;
33 and peer facilitation.
- 34 (4) Performing other student services listed in the Department of Public
35 Instruction school counselor job description that has been approved by the
36 State Board of Education.

37 (b) School counseling program support activities do not include the coordination of
38 standardized testing. During the remainder of their work time, school counselors may assist other
39 staff with the coordination of standardized testing.

40 (c) School counselors, as part of the direct services provided in subsection (a) of this
41 section, shall coordinate and provide training for students in peer to peer student mentoring,
42 counseling, and support programs that address areas such as mental health, general health and
43 wellness, and mentoring."

44 **SECTION 5.** There is appropriated one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the
45 Department of Public Instruction for one-time grants to local school administrative units for
46 training and materials for peer to peer student mentoring, counseling, and support programs in
47 schools serving students in grades six and higher to be administered as follows:

- 48 (1) The State Board of Education shall award grants to local school administrative
49 units in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per school to be used for
50 training and materials to implement or expand a peer to peer student
51 mentoring, counseling, or support program that has been identified by the

1 Center for Safer Schools as an evidence-based peer to peer student program
2 that addresses issues of mental health, general health and wellness, and
3 mentoring. The Center for Safer Schools shall consult with the Department of
4 Public Instruction, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the
5 Department of Public Safety, as appropriate, in identifying the programs.

6 (2) The State Board of Education shall award grants to applicants based on the
7 following criteria in the order in which they are received.

8 a. An initial grant may be for no more than twenty thousand dollars
9 (\$20,000) total per local school administrative unit. If funds remain
10 after initial grants have been awarded, the State Board of Education
11 may award a second round of grants using the same criteria as for the
12 initial grants.

13 b. Applications for grants from local school administrative units in Tier
14 1 counties shall be given priority in award of initial grants.

15 **SECTION 6.** Section 5 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2018. The remainder of
16 this act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.