

HOUSE No. 617

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Natalie M. Higgins

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to safety and violence education for students (the SAVE Students Act).

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>2/9/2021</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Michael F. Rush</i>	<i>Norfolk and Suffolk</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Jessica Ann Giannino</i>	<i>16th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Daniel R. Carey</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i>	<i>12th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>Danillo A. Sena</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>Edward F. Coppinger</i>	<i>10th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>John H. Rogers</i>	<i>12th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James Arciero</i>	<i>2nd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Diana DiZoglio</i>	<i>First Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>

<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>William J. Driscoll, Jr.</i>	<i>7th Norfolk</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/22/2021</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/29/2021</i>
<i>Kate Lipper-Garabedian</i>	<i>32nd Middlesex</i>	<i>3/29/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 617

By Ms. Higgins of Leominster, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 617) of Natalie M. Higgins and others relative to safety and violence education for students. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act relative to safety and violence education for students (the SAVE Students Act).

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 97 the following section:-

3 Section 98. (a) As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context
4 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:--

5 "Department", the department of elementary and secondary education.

6 “Evidence-based”, a program or practice that (i) demonstrates a statistically significant
7 effect on relevant outcomes based on (1) strong evidence from not less than 1 well-designed and
8 well-implemented experimental study; (2) moderate evidence from not less than 1 well-designed
9 and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or (3) promising evidence from not less than 1
10 well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection
11 bias; or (ii) demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive

12 evaluation that such program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes and includes
13 ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.

14 “School”, a school administered by a school department of a city or town or regional
15 school district, a county agricultural school, a commonwealth charter school or Horace Mann
16 charter school established pursuant to section 89, an educational collaborative established
17 pursuant to section 4E of chapter 40, or an approved private day or residential school that
18 accepts, through agreement with a school committee, a child requiring special education pursuant
19 to section 10 of chapter 71B.

20 “Social Isolation”, a state in which a student engages in low relative frequencies of peer
21 interactions, and experiences or perceives low levels of peer acceptance or high levels of peer
22 rejection, which frequently excludes them from social interactions and relationships with friends,
23 classmates, and members of the community.

24 “Social Inclusion”, a state in which all students are valued and feel that they have
25 consistent opportunities to engage in meaningful activities and interactions with their friends,
26 classmates, and members of the community regardless of their identity.

27 (b) The department shall develop and provide an evidence-based model threat assessment
28 policy for use in schools serving students in grades 6-12 that at minimum (i) identifies the types
29 of threatening behavior that may represent a physical threat to the school community; (ii)
30 identifies members within the school community to whom threatening behavior should be
31 reported and the steps to be taken thereafter; (iii) establishes guidelines ensuring that where a
32 credible threat has been identified, the response is in conformance with any applicable state and
33 school disciplinary policies and that no disciplinary action is applied disproportionately to

34 students in any protected class identified in any policy of the department, district or school or in
35 federal or state law; and (iv) establishes procedures and protocol for coordinating with local law
36 enforcement, existing state reporting websites, and tip lines. The model policy shall take into
37 account the requirements of Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000 and Section 8A of
38 chapter 69. Schools may, but are not required to, adopt the model policy.

39 The department shall make a list of evidence-based threat assessment trainings, publicly
40 available on its website.

41 (c) The department shall require that each school serving students in grades 6-12 provides
42 students at least one hour or one standard class period of evidence-based suicide awareness and
43 prevention training each school year. Such training may be delivered in-person or digitally.

44 The department shall develop a list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including
45 no-cost programming, to fulfill the requirements of this paragraph. Trainings shall, at a
46 minimum, teach students how to identify the signs and signals of depression, suicide and self-
47 injury in themselves and peers, the importance of seeking help for self and peers, and the process
48 for seeking such help.

49 The department shall make a list of evidence-based suicide prevention trainings,
50 including no-cost programming, publicly available on its website.

51 (d) The department shall require that each school serving students in grades 6-12
52 provides students at least one hour or one standard class period of evidence-based youth violence
53 prevention training each school year. Such training may be delivered in-person or digitally.

54 The department shall develop a list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including
55 no-cost programming, to fulfill the requirements of this paragraph. Trainings shall, at a
56 minimum, teach students how to identify observable warning signs and signals of an individual
57 who may be a threat to themselves or others; the importance of taking threats seriously and
58 seeking help; and the steps they can take to report dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity.

59 The department shall make the list of evidence-based youth violence prevention trainings,
60 including no-cost programming, publicly available on its website. A training program combining
61 the requirements set forth in this subsection and subsection (c) shall be deemed to meet the
62 requirements of each subsection.

63 (e) The department shall require that each school serving students in grades 6-12 provides
64 students at least one hour or one standard class period of evidence-based social inclusion training
65 each school year. Such training may be delivered in-person or digitally.

66 The department shall develop a list of evidence-based trainings and materials that fulfill
67 the requirements of this paragraph. Trainings shall, at a minimum, teach students what social
68 isolation is and how to identify social isolation in others; the importance of taking social
69 isolation seriously and seeking help for peers; and how to use strategies to be more socially
70 inclusive in the classroom and community and to establish connections with peers.

71 The department shall make the list of evidence-based social inclusion trainings, including
72 no-cost programming, publicly available on its website.

73 (f) The department may allow schools to request a waiver to the requirements in Sections
74 c, d & e if they can demonstrate comparable instruction in these areas as determined by the
75 department.

76 (g) The department shall encourage each school serving students in grades 6-12 to
77 designate a student-led violence prevention club, extracurricular group, or program that is open
78 to all members of the student body and has at least one identified adult advisor.

79 The student violence prevention club, extracurricular group, or program shall, at a
80 minimum, implement and sustain suicide and violence prevention and social inclusion awareness
81 activities related to the trainings required by the department and foster opportunities for student
82 leadership development.

83 (h) The department shall, in collaboration with other agencies, make available to all
84 schools a statewide Anonymous Reporting Program. Said program shall enable any person to
85 report anonymously a dangerous, violent or unlawful activity which occurs, or is threatened, on
86 school property or which relates to an enrolled student or school personnel.

87 The department shall identify and compile a state database that includes, at a minimum,
88 the following identified individuals for the purposes of implementing and coordinating the
89 delivery of the Anonymous Reporting Program: a point of contact within each local law
90 enforcement department and a primary point of contact within each school who is responsible for
91 managing the school-based threat assessment team as defined in this section.

92 To fulfill the requirements of this section, the department shall operate a hotline,
93 multilingual crisis center, website, and mobile phone application to receive anonymous reports
94 through the Anonymous Reporting Program. Said program response shall be staffed by
95 individuals with evidence-based counseling and crisis intervention training.

96 The Anonymous Reporting Program shall, at a minimum, meet the following
97 requirements: (i) support 24/7 anonymous reporting; (ii) promptly forward reported information

98 to the appropriate school and law enforcement agencies, as applicable, and certain other persons
99 as determined by the department; (iii) support a coordinated response by schools and law
100 enforcement to an identified crisis when response by both parties is to be reasonably expected;
101 (iv) require and certify the training of school-based threat assessment teams in each school,
102 comprised of at least 3 staff members, to receive notice of any report submitted to the
103 Anonymous Reporting Program concerning the school, school personnel, or an enrolled student;
104 (v) require and certify the training of law enforcement in each local department to receive notice
105 of any report submitted to the Anonymous Reporting Program that requires law enforcement
106 response; (vi) promote public awareness and education about the Anonymous Reporting
107 Program and its reporting methods, prior to its launch; (vii) implement an evidence-based student
108 violence prevention training that teaches students how to identify observable warning signs and
109 signals of an individual who may be a threat to themselves or others, the importance of taking
110 threats seriously and seeking help, and how to report a threat using the Anonymous Reporting
111 Program; and (viii) be in compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20
112 U.S.C. § 1232g, and relevant state laws.

113 Each year following implementation of the Anonymous Reporting Program, the
114 department shall require all school districts to submit annual reports reflecting the total number
115 of anonymous tips received and total number of disciplinary actions taken. Reports shall include,
116 at a minimum: (1) the total number of reports received for the previous school year; (2) the total
117 number of reports received since the program began, disaggregated by school, and for each
118 school (i) reports by type; (ii) the method by which the report was received; (iii) the total number
119 of false reports received; (iv) any other information the department deems appropriate; and (3)
120 the total number of responses, including disciplinary actions and mental wellness referrals,

121 disaggregated by type as well as the gender and race of the student subject to the disciplinary
122 action or referral. Any data collected by the Anonymous Reporting Program or reported to the
123 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall be subject to the requirements of
124 Chapter 66.

125 False reports by anyone age 18 and older, including but not limited to reports targeting
126 students in any protected class identified in any policy of the department, district or school or in
127 federal or state law, shall be a misdemeanor if the person knowingly or intentionally makes a
128 false report to the Anonymous Reporting Program.

129 If a report filed with the Anonymous Reporting Program is determined to be a false
130 report, information about the subject of the false report shall be immediately removed from the
131 subject student's record, including records held by the district, school, and law enforcement.

132 (i) No person shall have a cause of action for loss or damage caused by an act or omission
133 resulting from the implementation of this section or resulting from the training or lack of training
134 required by this section.

135 (j) The training or lack of training required by this section shall not be construed to
136 impose a specific duty of care.

137 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect 12 months from its enactment.

138 SECTION 3. The board of elementary and secondary education may promulgate
139 regulations necessary to implement this act.