

House Bill 855 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Wiedower of the 119<sup>th</sup>, Jasperse of the 11<sup>th</sup>, Gaines of the 117<sup>th</sup>, McCall of the 33<sup>rd</sup>, Reeves of the 34<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia  
2 Annotated, relating to educational programs, so as to direct the State Board of Education to  
3 adopt rules, regulations, and protocols for the immediate and deliberate assessment of  
4 whether exposure to trauma has adversely impacted a foster care student's educational  
5 performance; to require the Department of Education to provide guidance to local school  
6 systems; to require local school systems to immediately and deliberately assess newly  
7 enrolled foster care students; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for definitions;  
8 to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

11 Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
12 relating to educational programs, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as  
13 follows:

14 "20-2-152.2.

15 (a) The General Assembly finds that foster care students are particularly vulnerable to  
16 exposure to traumatic events and situations. The General Assembly also finds that a foster  
17 care student's exposure to trauma can be exacerbated by changing schools, particularly  
18 when the student may be eligible for special education and related services. Therefore, it  
19 is the intent of the General Assembly that a protocol be developed for use by each school  
20 that receives state funds under this article to immediately and deliberately assess foster care  
21 students upon their enrollment at a new school and determine whether exposure to trauma  
22 has had or is likely to have an adverse impact on the foster care student's educational  
23 performance, including both academics and classroom behavior.

24 (b) As used in this Code section, the term:

25 (1) 'Foster care student' means a student who is placed in a foster family home, child care  
26 institution, or another substitute care setting approved by the Department of Human  
27 Services.

28 (2) 'Trauma' means exposure of a foster care student, as a witness or direct participant,  
29 to one or more traumatic events or traumatic situations.

30 (c) No later than January 1, 2021, the State Board of Education shall adopt any rules,  
31 regulations, and protocols necessary for use by public school personnel to immediately and  
32 deliberately assess whether exposure to trauma has had or is likely to have an adverse  
33 impact on the foster care student's educational performance, including both academics and  
34 classroom behavior. Such rules, regulations, and protocols shall also provide that the  
35 impact of trauma shall be considered at the appropriate time among the relevant criteria  
36 considered by school personnel to determine the eligibility of foster care students for  
37 special education and related services as provided for in Code Section 20-2-152. Further,  
38 the Department of Education shall provide guidance to local school systems regarding  
39 trauma, the impacts of trauma on students, including, but not limited to, foster care  
40 students, and procedures for the immediate and deliberate assessment of newly enrolled  
41 foster care students.

42 (d) Upon the enrollment of a foster care student, a local school system shall immediately  
43 and deliberately assess whether exposure to trauma has had or is likely to have an adverse  
44 impact on the foster care student's educational performance, including both academics and  
45 classroom behavior. The local school system's assessment shall be part of its overall  
46 determination of whether the initial evaluation process for determining eligibility for  
47 special education and related services should be commenced for such foster care student."

48 **SECTION 2.**

49 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.