

Senate Bill 179

By: Senators Dixon of the 45th, Gooch of the 51st, Cowser of the 46th, Kennedy of the 18th,
Ginn of the 47th and others

AS PASSED SENATE

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to require that the academic and disciplinary
3 records of each transferring student shall be provided by such student's previous school to
4 the receiving school; to reduce the number of days by which a parent or guardian of a
5 transferring student shall receive copies of such records; to establish a misdemeanor offense
6 for failure to disclose required information regarding students; to provide for penalties; to
7 provide that certain officials shall be responsible for compliance; to require written reports
8 to school officials and parents or guardians of official encounters of law enforcement officers
9 with school age youth, subject to exceptions; to provide for evidence based suicide awareness
10 and training programs and a state-wide anonymous reporting program; to provide for
11 evidence based youth violence prevention training programs; to provide for student violence
12 prevention clubs; to provide for local policies for anonymous reporting; to provide for
13 definitions; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date and applicability;
14 to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

16 **SECTION 1.**

S. B. 179

17 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and
18 secondary education, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-670, relating to
19 requirements for transferring students beyond sixth grade, conditional admission, and
20 compliance, as follows:

21 "20-2-670.

22 (a) A transferring student applying for admission to a grade higher than the sixth grade
23 shall as a prerequisite to admission present a certified copy of his or her academic transcript
24 and disciplinary record from the school previously attended.

25 (b)(1)(A) In lieu of complying with the provision of subsection (a) of this Code
26 section, a transferring student may be admitted on a conditional basis if he or she and
27 his or her parent or legal guardian execute a document providing the name and address
28 of the school last attended and authorizing the release of all academic and disciplinary
29 records to the school administration. Such records shall be transferred to the school
30 administration within ten days by the local school superintendent or the school
31 principal, as applicable, of such school last attended. The parent or guardian shall be
32 notified of the transfer of such records and shall, upon written request ~~made within ten~~
33 ~~days of such notice~~, be entitled to receive a copy of such records within five days.
34 Within five days of the receipt of a copy of such records, the parent or guardian may
35 make a written request for and shall be entitled to a hearing before the local school
36 superintendent or principal of the school, as applicable, or his or her designee which is
37 the custodian of such records for the purpose of challenging the content of the records.
38 (B) Any form document to authorize the release of records which is provided by a
39 school to a transferring student or such student's parent or legal guardian shall include
40 a list of class A designated felony acts or class B designated felony acts.

41 (2) The student or his or her parent or legal guardian shall also disclose on the same
42 document as the release provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection whether the child
43 has ever been adjudicated guilty of the commission of a class A designated felony act or

44 class B designated felony act, as defined in Code Section 15-11-2 and, if so, the date of
45 such adjudication, the offense committed, the jurisdiction in which such adjudication was
46 made, and the sentence imposed. Any form document to authorize the release of records
47 which is provided by a school to a transferring student or such student's parent or legal
48 guardian shall include a list of class A designated felony acts or class B designated felony
49 acts. The student or his or her parent or legal guardian shall also disclose on the
50 document whether the student is currently serving a suspension or expulsion from another
51 school, the reason for such discipline, and the term of such discipline. Any student or the
52 parent or legal guardian of such student residing in this state who violates this Code
53 section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject
54 to a fine of not greater than \$1,000.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community
55 service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having
56 jurisdiction.

57 (3) If a student so conditionally admitted is found to be ineligible for enrollment pursuant
58 to the provisions of Code Section 20-2-751.2, or is subsequently found to be so ineligible,
59 he or she shall be dismissed from enrollment until such time as he or she becomes so
60 eligible.

61 (c) Every school system and school in this state shall be obligated to provide complete
62 information to a requesting school pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section within
63 ten days of receipt of such request.

64 (d)(1) In the case of local school systems, the local school superintendent shall be
65 responsible for transferring records as required by subsection (b) of this Code section and
66 providing complete information as required by subsection (c) of this Code section.

67 (2) Except as provided in paragraph (1) of this subsection, the school principal shall be
68 responsible for transferring records as required by subsection (b) of this Code section and
69 providing complete information as required by subsection (c) of this Code section.

70 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Code section, any transferring student in the
 71 custody of the Department of Human Services, through its Division of Family and Children
 72 Services, shall be immediately admitted to an enrolling school, even if records required for
 73 enrollment cannot be produced, in order to ensure educational stability and continuity. All
 74 records shall be transferred to the school administrator within ten days by the local school
 75 superintendent or school principal, as applicable, of the school such transferring student
 76 last attended."

77 **SECTION 2.**

78 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-700, relating to reports by
 79 peace officers to school authorities and parent or guardian, as follows:

80 "20-2-700.

81 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

82 (1) 'School age youth' means an individual who is between his or her sixth and sixteenth
 83 birthdays or who a law enforcement officer knows or reasonably believes is enrolled in
 84 a public or private elementary or secondary school in this state. Such term shall not
 85 include an individual who has successfully completed all the requirements for a high
 86 school diploma or a state approved high school equivalency (HSE) diploma.

87 (2) 'School official' means a local school superintendent or his or her designee or a
 88 school principal or other school administrator.

89 (b) Any person taking action pursuant to Code Section 20-2-699 shall report the matter and
 90 the disposition made by him or her of the child to ~~the school authorities of the county,~~
 91 ~~independent or area school system,~~ a school official of the public or private school in which
 92 such child is currently enrolled or would be enrolled by virtue of his or her primary
 93 residence and to the child's parent or guardian.

94 (c) Within seven days of a felony arrest of a school age youth in this state, the arresting
 95 agency shall provide a written report of such felony arrest to a school official of the public

96 or private school in which such school age youth is currently enrolled or would be enrolled
 97 by virtue of his or her primary residence and to his or her parent or guardian."

98 **SECTION 3.**

99 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-779.1, relating to suicide
 100 prevention and awareness training and no duty of care imposed, as follows:

101 "20-2-779.1.

102 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'evidence based' means a program or practice
 103 that:

104 (1) Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes based on:

105 (A) Strong evidence from at least one well designed and well implemented
 106 experimental study;

107 (B) Moderate evidence from at least one well designed and well implemented
 108 quasi-experimental study; or

109 (C) Promising evidence from at least one well designed and well implemented
 110 correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or

111 (2) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive
 112 evaluation that such program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes, and
 113 includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such program or practice.

114 ~~(a)(1)~~(b) The ~~Department~~ State Board of Education shall adopt rules to require that:

115 (1) All ~~all~~ certificated public school personnel receive annual training in suicide
 116 awareness and prevention. This training shall be provided within the framework of
 117 existing in-service training programs offered by the Department of Education or as part
 118 of required professional development offered by a local school system;

119 (2) Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, and continuing each school year thereafter,
 120 all public schools serving students in grades six through 12 which receive funds in any
 121 manner from the state shall provide to students at least one hour of evidence based

122 suicide awareness and prevention training each school year. Such training may be
123 delivered in person, remotely, or digitally and may be included as part of the health and
124 physical education course of study provided for in subsection (c) of Code
125 Section 20-2-142; and

126 (3) All public schools serving students in any one of grades six through 12 which receive
127 funds in any manner from the state shall provide to students at least one hour of evidence
128 based youth violence prevention training each school year. Such training may be
129 delivered in person, remotely, or digitally and may be included as part of the health and
130 physical education course of study provided for in subsection (c) of Code
131 Section 20-2-142.

132 ~~(2)(c)(1)~~ The Department of Education shall, in consultation with the Department of
133 Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Suicide Prevention Program
134 established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, and suicide prevention experts, develop
135 a list of approved evidence based training materials to fulfill the requirements of ~~this~~
136 paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of this Code section which may include training materials
137 currently being used by a local school system if such training materials meet any criteria
138 established by the department. Such materials shall include training on how to identify
139 appropriate mental health services, both within the school and also within the larger
140 community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Such
141 materials may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable
142 suicide prevention materials.

143 ~~(3) Approved materials shall include training on how to identify appropriate mental~~
144 ~~health services, both within the school and also within the larger community, and when~~
145 ~~and how to refer youth and their families to those services.~~

146 ~~(4) Approved materials may include programs that can be completed through self-review~~
147 ~~of suitable suicide prevention materials.~~

148 (2) By January 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall, in consultation with the
149 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Suicide
150 Prevention Program established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, develop and post a list
151 of approved evidence based training materials, including no-cost programming, if any,
152 to fulfill the requirements of paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of this Code section. Such
153 materials shall, at a minimum:

154 (A) Teach students how to recognize the observable signs and signals of depression,
155 suicide, and self-injury in themselves and their peers; and

156 (B) Teach students the importance of seeking help for themselves and their peers, as
157 well as the process for seeking help.

158 (3) By January 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall, in consultation with the
159 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Suicide
160 Prevention Program established pursuant to Code Section 37-1-27, develop a list of
161 approved evidence based training materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to
162 fulfill the requirements of paragraph (3) of subsection (b) of this Code section. Such
163 materials shall, at a minimum, include all of the following:

164 (A) How to recognize the observable warning signs and signals of persons who may
165 be at risk of harming themselves or others;

166 (B) The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help; and

167 (C) The steps that can be taken to report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or
168 potentially harmful behavior.

169 (4)(A) The Department of Education shall make the lists of approved evidence based
170 training materials required under this subsection, including no-cost programming, if
171 any, available on its public website.

172 (B) The Department of Education shall keep the lists of approved evidence based
173 training materials timely updated by reviewing such lists, at a minimum, every 36
174 months.

175 (5) To assist public schools and local school systems in developing their own policies
176 for student suicide awareness and prevention as provided for in this subsection, the
177 Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Behavioral Health and
178 Developmental Disabilities and the Suicide Prevention Program established pursuant to
179 Code Section 37-1-27, shall establish a model policy for use by public schools and local
180 school systems in accordance with this Code section.

181 (6)(A) By July 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall develop and operate, or
182 contract with a provider to develop and operate, and make available to all schools in
183 this state a state-wide anonymous reporting program. Such anonymous reporting
184 program shall, at a minimum:

185 (i) Be accessible by any person to report anonymously a dangerous, violent,
186 threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity which occurs on, or is threatened
187 to occur on, school property or which relates to a student or school personnel;

188 (ii) Provide support 24 hours per day, seven days per week for anonymous reporting
189 through, at a minimum, a mobile telephone application and a multilingual crisis
190 center, which shall be staffed by individuals with evidence based counseling and
191 crisis intervention training;

192 (iii) Promptly forward reported information to the appropriate school based team;

193 (iv) Support a coordinated response to an identified crisis by schools, local
194 emergency 9-1-1 public safety answering points, and local law enforcement agencies
195 when response by schools and law enforcement is to be reasonably expected;

196 (v) Require and certify the training of school based teams in each school to receive
197 notice of any report submitted to the state-wide anonymous reporting program
198 concerning the school, a student, or school personnel;

199 (vi) Require and certify the training of local emergency 9-1-1 public safety answering
200 point personnel to receive notice of any report submitted to the state-wide anonymous
201 reporting program that requires response from a local law enforcement agency;

- 202 (vii) Promote public awareness and education about the state-wide anonymous
203 reporting program and its reporting methods prior to its launch; and
- 204 (viii) Comply with all federal and state laws.
- 205 (B)(i) In the first year in which the state-wide anonymous reporting program is
206 implemented, the Department of Education shall require all local school systems to
207 submit a report on the total number of disciplinary actions in the previous 12 months,
208 disaggregated by school, type of disciplinary action, and the gender and race of the
209 student subject to the disciplinary action.
- 210 (ii) Each year following the implementation of the state-wide anonymous reporting
211 program, the Department of Education shall require all local school systems to submit
212 annual reports documenting, at a minimum:
- 213 (I) The total number of tips received for the previous school year;
- 214 (II) The total number of tips received since the state-wide anonymous reporting
215 program began, disaggregated by school and for each school: tips by type, the
216 method by which the tip was received, and the total number of false reports
217 received; and
- 218 (III) The total number of responses to incoming tips, disaggregated by disciplinary
219 actions, nondisciplinary actions, interventions, and the gender and race of each
220 student subject to such actions or interventions.
- 221 (C) Not later than May 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall identify and
222 compile a state-wide data base that includes, at a minimum, the following identified
223 individuals for the purposes of implementing and coordinating the delivery of the
224 state-wide anonymous reporting program provided for in this paragraph:
- 225 (i) A designated point of contact within each local emergency 9-1-1 public safety
226 answering point; and
- 227 (ii) A designated point of contact within each school in this state, who shall be
228 responsible for managing the school based team.

229 (D) The Department of Education shall operate, or contract with a provider to operate,
230 the following:

231 (i) A public website which educates students on the availability of the state-wide
232 anonymous reporting program and which provides guidance on how and when to use
233 such program; and

234 (ii) A toll-free telephone hotline that can be used to provide anonymous tips
235 regarding dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity
236 which occurs on, or is threatened to occur on, school property or which relates to a
237 student or school personnel.

238 (5)(A)(d)(1) Each local school system board of education or public school governing
239 body shall:

240 (A) Adopt policies, rules, and regulations adopt a policy on student suicide awareness
241 and prevention. Such policies, rules, and regulations shall be developed in consultation
242 with school and community stakeholders, school employed mental health professionals,
243 and suicide prevention experts, and shall, at a minimum, address procedures relating
244 to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention;:

245 (B) Adopt policies, rules, and regulations for providing relevant and current
246 information to students and their families and to school personnel regarding publicly
247 available resources for the anonymous reporting of a dangerous, violent, threatening,
248 harmful, or potentially harmful activity which occurs on, or is threatened to occur on,
249 school property or which relates to a student or school personnel;

250 (C) Adopt policies, rules, and regulations for the implementation of the state-wide
251 anonymous reporting program provided for in paragraph (6) of subsection (c) of this
252 Code section; and

253 (D) Implement an evidence based youth violence prevention training program to
254 instruct students how to recognize the observable warning signs and signals of someone
255 who may be at risk of harming himself, herself, or others; the importance of taking

256 threats seriously and seeking help; and how to report someone who is at risk, including
 257 by using the state-wide anonymous reporting program.

258 (2) Each local board of education or public school governing body shall require each
 259 public school that sponsors or otherwise permits student organizations or clubs to
 260 designate a student-led youth violence prevention club to sustain awareness activities
 261 related to suicide prevention and violence prevention. Such student violence prevention
 262 club, including existing clubs, shall:

263 (A) Be open to all members of the student body;

264 (B) Engage in awareness activities related to youth suicide prevention, youth violence
 265 prevention, and social inclusion;

266 (C) Foster opportunities for student leadership development; and

267 (D) Have at least one administrator, teacher, or other school personnel serve as a
 268 faculty advisor. (B) To assist local school systems in developing their own policies for
 269 student suicide prevention, the Department of Education, in consultation with the
 270 Suicide Prevention Program within the Department of Behavioral Health and
 271 Developmental Disabilities, shall establish a model policy for use by local school
 272 systems in accordance with this Code section.

273 ~~(b)~~(e) No person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused by any act or
 274 omission resulting from the implementation of the provisions of this Code section or
 275 resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by this Code section.

276 ~~(c)~~(f) The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of this Code section shall
 277 not be construed to impose any specific duty of care."

278 **SECTION 4.**

279 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
 280 without such approval and shall apply to all offenses committed on or after the effective date
 281 of this Act.

282

SECTION 5.

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