



# HOUSE BILL 253: Prevent Students From Harm Act.

2023-2024 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>	House Education - K-12. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	<b>Date:</b>	March 28, 2023
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Elmore, K. Baker, White, Clemmons	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Kara McCraw
<b>Analysis of:</b>	First Edition		Staff Attorney

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**OVERVIEW:** *HB 253 would make the following changes:*

- *Require character education in all grades and incorporate character education in addressing bullying and harassing behavior.*
- *Authorize experienced nonprofits to provide child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training programs for educators.*
- *Provide age-appropriate information and resources on prevention on suicide, abuse, and neglect as part of the health education curriculum.*

## **PART I: INCORPORATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING BULLYING AND HARASSING BEHAVIOR**

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 115C-81.60 requires local boards of education to develop and implement character education in the standard curriculum that includes the traits of courage, good judgment, integrity, kindness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline. Local boards of education are also encouraged to include instruction on respect for school personnel, responsibility for school safety, service to others, and good citizenship.

G.S. 115C-407.16 requires each local school administrative unit to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying or harassing behavior. The policy must include the consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who committee an act of bullying or harassment.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** HB 253 would clarify that the character education instruction must be high-quality and provided at all grade levels. It also requires, rather than encourages, instruction on respect for school personnel, responsibility for school safety, service to others, and good citizenship. With regards to responsibility for school safety, instruction to prevent bullying and harassing behavior would be included.

HB 253 would also provide that a local school administrative unit's policy on bullying and harassing behavior could include as remedial actions either additional high-quality instruction on the traits and responsibilities of character education or participation in a conflict resolution and mediations model.

This section would apply beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

## **PART II: AUTHORIZATION OF EXPERIENCED NONPROFITS TO PROVIDE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEX TRAFFICKING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS**

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 115C-375.20 requires that public school units implement child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program (program) for school personnel. The training may be provided by local

Jeffrey Hudson  
Director



Legislative Analysis  
Division  
919-733-2578

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nongovernmental organizations with expertise in that area, local law enforcement officers, or other officers of the court.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** HB 253 would also authorize the use of nonprofit organizations with more than 10 years of experience in providing research-based child sexual abuse prevention curriculum to provide training for the program.

## **PART III: PROVIDE AGE-APPROPRIATE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON PREVENTION ON SUICIDE, ABUSE, AND NEGLECT AS PART OF THE HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 115C-12(47) requires the State Board of Education, to adopt a rule requiring information on child abuse and neglect, including age-appropriate information on sexual abuse, to be provided by public school units to students in grades six through 12. G.S. 115C-81.25 requires that comprehensive health education instruction be provided as part of the standard course of study from kindergarten through ninth grade. The program includes age-appropriate instruction in a number of areas, including mental and emotional health.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** HB 253 would add, as part of comprehensive health education in grades kindergarten through ninth grade, instruction on the following:

- Resources, skills, and strategies for suicide prevention.
- Abuse and neglect prevention, including sexual abuse, that is age appropriate and provide high-quality information to students on reporting abuse consistent with rule adopted by the State Board of Education.

This section would apply beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** HB 253 would become effective when it becomes law.