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SENATE BILL NO. 39

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled November 19, 2025

A BILL to direct the Department of Education to identify best practices relating to implementing technology tools to assist with identifying students at risk of engaging in self-harm or intending to inflict harm on others.

Patron—Favola

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *The Department of Education (the Department) shall convene a work group for the purpose of identifying best practices for the procurement, implementation, and use in public schools of technology tools designed to assist with the identification of students at risk of engaging in self-harm or intending to inflict harm on others. The work group shall include the following representatives: (i) a school counselor, (ii) a school social worker, (iii) a school psychologist, (vi) a representative of a school board, (v) representatives of appropriate technology industries, (vi) a school level administrator, (vii) a division-level administrator, and (viii) such other stakeholders as the Department deems necessary or appropriate. The Department shall consult with and consider suggestions obtained from statewide education organizations and appropriate technology industries in selecting the representatives described in clauses (i) through (viii) for inclusion in the work group.*

The work group shall:

1. Consider, for each technology tool, (a) the parameters of the tool, (b) how the tool would impact the timeliness and scope of a school's ability to respond to a student identified as at risk of engaging in self-harm or intending to inflict harm on others, (c) the impact of using such tool on the protection of student privacy and ways to mitigate any related concerns, (d) the ability of a school to evaluate data collected by such tool, and (e) potential fiscal impacts to school divisions in procuring, implementing, using, and maintaining such tool;

2. Identify school divisions for placement in a pilot program, to be established by the Department by July 1, 2027, for the implementation of any such technology tools;

3. Make recommendations on best practices for the procurement, implementation, and use of such technology tools in public schools, including best practices for schools on (a) immediate responses to any student identified through the use of such a tool as intending to engage in self-harm or inflict harm on others, (b) the implementation of procedures aimed at preventing any such student from harming himself or others, and (c) the implementation of follow-up services for any such student after the immediate risk of harm has been addressed; and

4. Submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the chairs of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education by November 15, 2026.

INTRODUCED

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