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HOUSE BILL NO. 495
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Education
on February 11, 2026)
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Guzman)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-298.6 of the Code of Virginia, relating to school boards; mental health awareness training; full-time school bus drivers.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-298.6 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-298.6. Mental health awareness training.

A. Each school board shall adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and other relevant personnel, as determined by the school board, employed on a full-time basis, to complete a mental health awareness training or similar program at least once. *Any school board may adopt and implement policies that require each school bus driver employed on a full-time basis to complete a mental health awareness training or similar program at least once.*

B. Each school board shall provide required personnel the training required by subsection A and may contract with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, a community services board, a behavioral health authority, a nonprofit organization, or other certified trainer as defined in § 37.2-312.2 to provide such training. Such training may be provided via an online module.

2. That the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall consider condensing and abbreviating the existing mental health first aid training program into a two-hour module that any school board may utilize in order to train full-time school bus drivers in accordance with the provisions of subsection A of § 22.1-298.6 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act.