

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 355
2 AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
3 (Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health
4 on February 26, 2026)
5 (Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Gardner)

6 *A BILL to require the School Health Services Committee, in collaboration with the Department of Education,*
7 *to study and make recommendations on best practices for annual mental health screenings for public*
8 *school students in grades six through 12 utilizing evidence-based tools; report.*

9 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

10 **1. § 1.** *The School Health Services Committee (the Committee) established pursuant to Chapter 64*
11 *(§ 30-409 et seq.) of Title 30 of the Code of Virginia, in collaboration with the Department of Education,*
12 *shall study and make recommendations on best practices for annual mental health screenings for public*
13 *school students in grades six through 12 that utilize evidence-based tools. In conducting its study, the*
14 *Committee shall consider best practices relating to (i) procedures for parents to opt their children out of*
15 *such screenings; (ii) training in the effective administration of screening tools; (iii) communication with*
16 *families about the administration and results of such screenings; (iv) procedures for protecting the*
17 *confidentiality and privacy of screening results and any data collected or obtained through such screenings,*
18 *including best practices relating to the storage of mental health screening results and the protection of any*
19 *other data obtained or collected through such screenings; and (v) methods for ensuring that the screening*
20 *process (a) accommodates bilingual students, students with disabilities, and students with low reading*
21 *proficiency and (b) permits real-time evaluation of the screening results and same-day intervention by a*
22 *licensed mental health professional as indicated by such screening. The Committee shall include its findings*
23 *and recommendations in its annual report required pursuant to § 30-411 of the Code of Virginia.*