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HOUSE BILL NO. 355

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health
on February 26, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Gardner)

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

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

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

SENATE SUBSTITUTE

HB35551