

By: Representative Paden

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 139

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE INSTRUCTION IN  
 2 MENTAL ILLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE HEALTH EDUCATION COMPONENT  
 3 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM; TO DESCRIBE  
 4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MENTAL HEALTH INSTRUCTION; TO REQUIRE  
 5 IN-SERVICE TRAINING ON MENTAL ILLNESS FOR LICENSED SCHOOL  
 6 EMPLOYEES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

8 **SECTION 1.** (1) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year,  
 9 the health education component of the Comprehensive School Health  
 10 Education Program must include instruction in mental illness and  
 11 mental health. The Office of Comprehensive School Health  
 12 Education shall identify the elementary grade level that is most  
 13 appropriate for incorporating the mental illness and mental health  
 14 instruction into health education and shall require  
 15 age-appropriate mental illness and mental health instruction to be  
 16 included in the curriculum for that grade and all higher grade  
 17 levels. The mental illness and mental health instruction must be  
 18 taught during the minimum instructional time required under  
 19 Section 37-13-134(1) to be dedicated to health education  
 20 instruction.



21 (2) The mental illness and mental health instruction must  
22 include, at a minimum, the following objectives for students:

23 (a) Understanding mental health problems and gaining an  
24 awareness of the myths and realities of mental illness;

25 (b) Destigmatizing mental illness and improving  
26 attitudes toward seeking help for mental health problems;

27 (c) Recognizing signs and symptoms of mental illness;

28 (d) Employing positive coping techniques to address  
29 stress that does not rise to a level requiring professional  
30 treatment but if left unattended, may lead to mental illness; and

31 (e) Utilizing professional resources available to  
32 students to address mental health issues affecting a student or  
33 member of a student's family, including telephone numbers of  
34 assistance hotlines and Internet websites of mental health  
35 agencies that serve the region in which a school is located.

36 (3) The State Department of Education shall require each  
37 local school district to conduct in-service training on mental  
38 illness for all licensed school district employees. The  
39 department, in conjunction with the State Department of Mental  
40 Health, shall develop the content and materials for the training  
41 which, at a minimum, must include recognizing signs and symptoms  
42 of mental illness in students.

43 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
44 and after July 1, 2022.

