

By: Representative Hines

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 252

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT A DATING VIOLENCE
 2 POLICY AND TO INCORPORATE INSTRUCTION ON THE POLICY AND ON HEALTHY
 3 RELATIONSHIPS IN MANDATORY COURSES; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF
 4 EDUCATION TO ADOPT A MODEL DATING VIOLENCE POLICY THAT MAY BE USED
 5 BY THE VARIOUS SCHOOL BOARDS IN DEVELOPING THEIR POLICIES; TO
 6 REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT TO INCLUDE THE DATING VIOLENCE POLICY
 7 IN THE DISTRICT'S CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT; TO AMEND SECTION
 8 37-11-55, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY TO THE
 9 PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Legislature finds and declares that all
 12 students have a right to work and study in a safe, supportive
 13 environment that is free from harassment, intimidation and
 14 violence. The Legislature further finds that when a student is a
 15 victim of dating violence, his or her performance in school and
 16 individual safety suffer. Therefore, in an effort to reduce the
 17 occurrence of dating violence among students in our state, the
 18 Legislature declares that the school board of each school district
 19 must adopt a policy to create a better understanding and awareness
 20 of dating violence.



21 (2) For purposes of this section, the following words and
22 phrases have the meanings ascribed in this subsection unless the
23 context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 (a) "Dating relationship" means a social relationship
25 of a romantic or intimate nature between two (2) individuals,
26 regardless of gender.

27 (b) "Dating violence" means a pattern of behavior where
28 one (1) person intentionally threatens or actually uses physical,
29 sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to harm, intimidate or control
30 another person with whom that person has a dating relationship.

31 (3) Before July 1, 2024, the State Board of Education shall
32 develop and adopt a model dating violence policy to assist school
33 districts in developing policies on dating violence. The model
34 policy must include, at a minimum, provisions addressing the
35 following:

36 (a) A definition of dating violence;

37 (b) A statement that dating violence will not be
38 tolerated;

39 (c) Safety planning for victims of dating violence,
40 protection orders and alternatives;

41 (d) Procedures for reporting, investigating and
42 addressing dating violence, including procedures for making
43 referrals to local or community resources for appropriate
44 counseling for affected students;



45 (e) Required training for teachers, administrators and
46 other appropriate staff on the policy and on healthy
47 relationships; and

48 (f) Outreach education for students and parents on the
49 dating violence policy.

50 (4) Before October 1, 2024, the school board of each school
51 district shall develop and adopt a specific dating violence policy
52 that comports with the model policy adopted by the State Board of
53 Education. Within thirty (30) days of the adoption of a policy,
54 the school board shall provide a copy of the dating violence
55 policy adopted in that district to the State Department of
56 Education, Division of Safe and Healthy Schools.

57 (5) In order to ensure that proper notice of the school
58 district's dating violence policy is provided to students and
59 their parents, the school district must distribute and publish a
60 copy of the policy in the school district's personnel policies,
61 discipline policies and code of student conduct.

62 (6) In addition to education on the dating violence policy,
63 each school district shall incorporate teaching on healthy
64 relationships, which is age-appropriate, into curriculum
65 instruction for kindergarten through Grade 12, using resources
66 approved and provided by the State Department of Education. The
67 topic of violence prevention must be taught in either the
68 comprehensive health course or family and individual health course
69 or in any successor course that is required for graduation from



70 high school. Healthy relationship education must include, but
71 need not be limited to, identifying characteristics of healthy
72 dating relationships, defining dating violence and recognizing
73 dating violence warning signs.

74 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-11-55, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
75 amended as follows:

76 37-11-55. The local school board shall adopt and make
77 available to all teachers, school personnel, students and parents
78 or guardians, at the beginning of each school year, a code of
79 student conduct developed in consultation with teachers, school
80 personnel, students and parents or guardians. The code shall be
81 based on the rules governing student conduct and discipline
82 adopted by the school board and shall be made available at the
83 school level in the student handbook or similar publication. The
84 code shall include, but not be limited to:

85 (a) Specific grounds for disciplinary action under the
86 school district's discipline plan;

87 (b) Procedures to be followed for acts requiring
88 discipline, including suspensions and expulsion, which comply with
89 due process requirements;

90 (c) An explanation of the responsibilities and rights
91 of students with regard to: attendance; respect for persons and
92 property; knowledge and observation of rules of conduct; free
93 speech and student publications; assembly; privacy; and
94 participation in school programs and activities;



95 (d) Policies and procedures recognizing the teacher as
96 the authority in classroom matters, and supporting that teacher in
97 any decision in compliance with the written discipline code of
98 conduct. Such recognition shall include the right of the teacher
99 to remove from the classroom any student who, in the professional
100 judgment of the teacher, is disrupting the learning environment,
101 to the office of the principal or assistant principal. The
102 principal or assistant principal shall determine the proper
103 placement for the student, who may not be returned to the
104 classroom until a conference of some kind has been held with the
105 parent, guardian or custodian during which the disrupting behavior
106 is discussed and agreements are reached that no further disruption
107 will be tolerated. If the principal does not approve of the
108 determination of the teacher to remove the student from the
109 classroom, the student may not be removed from the classroom, and
110 the principal, upon request from the teacher, must provide
111 justification for his disapproval;

112 (e) Policies and procedures for dealing with a student
113 who causes a disruption in the classroom, on school property or
114 vehicles, or at school-related activities;

115 (f) Procedures for the development of behavior
116 modification plans by the school principal, reporting teacher and
117 student's parent for a student who causes a disruption in the
118 classroom, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related
119 activities for a second time during the school year; * * *



120 (g) Policies and procedures specifically concerning
121 gang-related activities in the school, on school property or
122 vehicles, or at school-related activities * * *; and

123 (h) The school district's policy on dating violence, as
124 required under Section 1 of House Bill No. , 2024 Regular
125 Session.

126 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
127 and after its passage.

