

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 101

BY REPRESENTATIVES BEAULLIEU, ADAMS, BISHOP, CARRIER, GARY CARTER, WILFORD CARTER, COUSSAN, DUPLESSIS, ECHOLS, FIRMENT, FREEMAN, GAINES, GOUDEAU, HODGES, JEFFERSON, MIKE JOHNSON, JONES, LARVADAIN, LYONS, MOORE, SCHLEGEL, SELDERS, AND WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study the provision of mental health services in schools and the feasibility and advisability of providing mental health education to students in grades six through twelve and to submit a written report of findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for related legislation, to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana provides that it is the goal of the state's public educational system to afford every individual an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential; and

WHEREAS, one way to meet this goal is to ensure a well-rounded education by not only addressing students' academic needs but helping them to develop to be socially, emotionally, and mentally healthy; and

WHEREAS, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his community; and

WHEREAS, when young people are educated about mental health, the likelihood increases that they will be able to effectively recognize signs and symptoms of mental health issues in themselves and others and will know where to turn for help; and

WHEREAS, studies show that mental health education in schools reduces stigma surrounding mental health; education that incorporates the importance of mental health, as well as the challenges of mental illness, can not only help young people and their families and communities feel more comfortable seeking help but can improve academic performance and, most importantly, save lives; and

WHEREAS, mental health education can also support youth in the development of positive routines and practices and stress management skills; in fostering caring relationships; and in developing strong social-emotional skills; and

WHEREAS, mental health challenges can directly impact student attendance, behavior, and readiness to learn, and students with unmet mental health needs have worse educational outcomes than students who are receiving appropriate treatment and support; and

WHEREAS, when students' mental health needs are not addressed, they are more likely to experience difficulties in school, including higher rates of suspensions, expulsions, dropouts, and truancy, as well as lower grades and test scores; and

WHEREAS, many believe that schools have an important role to play in directly addressing students' mental health; and

WHEREAS, schools can be sites for conducting mental health screenings and assessments, providing treatment, linking students to services in the community, coordinating case management for students, and providing early intervention and prevention services; and

WHEREAS, in order to fulfill the state's constitutional duty of affording every student an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential, it is appropriate that the provision of mental health services in schools and the feasibility and advisability of providing mental health education to certain students receive a thorough evaluation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study the provision of mental health services in schools and the feasibility and advisability of providing mental health education to students in grades six through twelve and to submit a written report of findings and conclusions, including any

recommendations for related legislation, to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study and report shall include, at a minimum, an examination of laws, policies and best practices from other states with regard to providing mental health services to students and with regard to mental health education, including curricula and instructional materials.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES