

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4436

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 23, 2020

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SYNOPSIS

Establishes "Student Mental Health Task Force."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on June 17, 2021, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the “Student Mental Health Task Force.”

2

3 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
4 *of New Jersey:*

5

6 1. a. There is established the “Student Mental Health Task
7 Force.” The purpose of the task force shall be to ²examine issues
8 related to the mental health of students, including depression, anxiety,
9 stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma, or
10 disorder;² study and survey the resources that are available to schools
11 and parents to address student mental health needs ²; and develop
12 recommendations to ensure that students have access to mental health
13 care programs and services in order to allow students to meet their
14 educational goals².

15 b. The task force shall consist of ²~~15~~ ¹⁷ members, as follows:

16 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee, who shall
17 serve ex officio;

18 (2) the Commissioner of Health, or a designee, who shall serve ex
19 officio;

20 (3) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or a designee,
21 who shall serve ex officio;

22 (4) the Commissioner of Banking and Insurance, or a designee,
23 who shall serve ex officio;

24 (5) the Director of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction
25 Services in the Department of Human Services, or a designee, who
26 shall serve ex officio;

27 (6) one public member ²~~with knowledge in issues relating to the~~
28 ~~work of the task force,~~² appointed by the Speaker of the General
29 Assembly ²and one public member appointed by the Minority Leader
30 of the General Assembly, both of whom shall have demonstrated
31 expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force²;

32 (7) one public member ²~~with knowledge in issues relating to the~~
33 ~~work of the task force,~~² appointed by the Senate President ²and one
34 public member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, both
35 of whom shall have demonstrated expertise in issues related to the
36 work of the task force²; and

37 (8) eight public members appointed by the Governor, who shall
38 include: one representative of ¹~~the New Jersey Principals and~~
39 ~~Supervisors Association~~ ²[an organization representing school
40 district leaders in the State¹ the New Jersey Principals and
41 Supervisors Association², one representative of ¹~~the New Jersey~~
42 ~~School Boards Association~~ ²[an organization representing local
43 boards of education in the State¹ the New Jersey School Boards
44 Association², one representative of the National Alliance on Mental

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AED committee amendments adopted December 14, 2020.

²Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 17, 2021.

1 Illness, one representative of the New Jersey Association of Mental
2 Health and Addiction Agencies, one representative of the New Jersey
3 Association of Counties, one representative of the New Jersey League
4 of Municipalities, ² **one representative of a mental health service**
5 **provider that has entered into a partnership with one or more school**
6 **districts in the State, and one representative of any State institution of**
7 **higher education that has entered into a mental health-related**
8 **partnership with one or more school districts in the State** **one member**
9 **representing school district leaders, and one school mental health**
10 **professional who holds a valid educational services certificate issued**
11 **by the State Board of Examiners that may include, but is not limited**
12 **to, a school counselor, a school social worker, or a school**
13 **psychologist**².

14 c. Members to the task force shall be appointed within 60 days
15 following the date of enactment of this act. The Commissioner of
16 Education, or his designee, shall serve as the chairperson of the task
17 force. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable following
18 the appointment of its members and shall select a vice-chairperson
19 from among its members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary
20 who need not be a member of the task force.

21 d. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in
22 the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members
23 of the task force shall serve without compensation, but shall be
24 reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the performance of
25 their duties as members of the task force, subject to available funds.

26 e. The Department of Education shall provide such administrative
27 and professional assistance as is necessary for the task force to carry
28 out its work. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance
29 and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State agency as
30 it may require and as may be available for its purposes.

31

32 2. a. It shall be the duty of the task force to ²**examine issues**
33 **related to the mental health of students, including depression, anxiety,**
34 **stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma, or**
35 **disorder;**² study and survey all resources that are currently available to
36 the schools and parents within each county in the State, and within the
37 northern, central, and southern regions of the State, for helping a
38 student or child who experiences mental health issues ²; **and develop**
39 **recommendations to ensure that students have access to mental health**
40 **care programs and services in order to allow students to meet their**
41 **educational goals**².

42 ²**b.**² The task force shall, at a minimum, survey the availability of:

43 (1) mental health treatment services provided within each county
44 and region of the State including, but not limited to, those services
45 provided through a school district, professional mental health services
46 provider, or community mental health services organization, and any
47 other tools or resources to address the mental health needs of students;

1 (2) mental health care provider networks that offer mental health
2 treatment services within each municipality, county, and region of the
3 State;

4 (3) State, county, or municipal agencies within each county and
5 region of the State that offer funding, professional mental health
6 treatment services, or other resources to address the mental health
7 needs of students; and

8 (4) partnership opportunities with institutions of higher education
9 within each county and region of the State to address the mental health
10 needs of students.

11 ²[b.] c. The task force shall also study and make
12 recommendations regarding the following:

13 (1) the identification of public school students who experience
14 depression, anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional
15 tension, trauma, or disorder;

16 (2) the evaluation and expansion of counseling programs and
17 services available to students experiencing mental health difficulties,
18 and other programs designed to address issues related to student
19 mental health;

20 (3) the relationship of student mental health to school safety and
21 security;

22 (4) the amount of funding that may be necessary for public schools
23 to employ the appropriate staff and to establish new programs or
24 expand existing programs necessary to address student mental health;

25 (5) an examination of other states that have implemented programs
26 that have successfully addressed depression, anxiety, stress, or other
27 psychological or emotional tension, trauma, or disorder among public
28 school students and reduced the number of students experiencing such
29 difficulties; and

30 (6) any other proposals that the task force determines would
31 provide for increased access to high-quality mental health programs.

32 d. The task force shall consult with parents of general education
33 students, parents of students who receive special education and related
34 services, and teaching staff members when performing the duties
35 required pursuant to the provisions of this section.

36 e.² The task force shall issue a final report to the Governor, and to
37 the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
38 19.1), no later than one year after the organization of the task force.
39 The report shall contain the results of the survey required ²and
40 recommendations developed² pursuant to ²[subsection a. of]² this
41 section.

42 The task force shall forward a copy of the report to every school
43 district in the State.

44
45 3. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire 30
46 days after the task force issues its final report.