

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, Nos. 2718 and 555

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED JUNE 17, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

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Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

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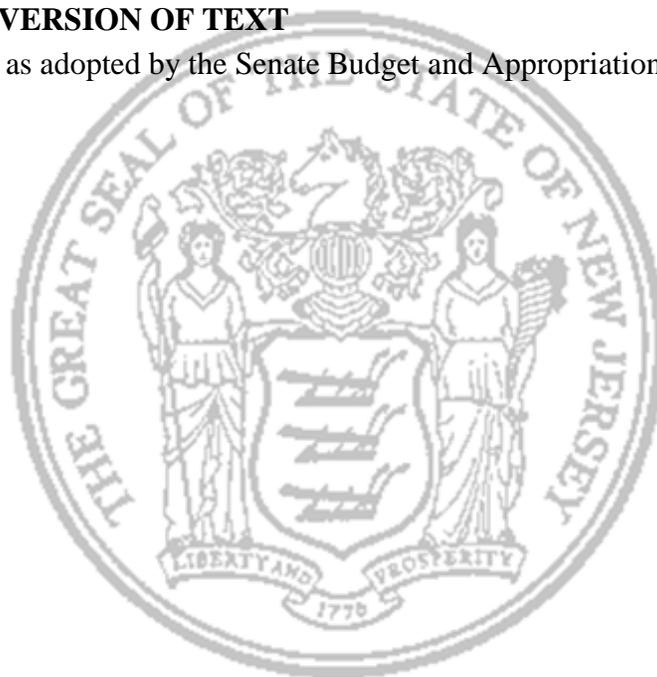
Senators A.M.Bucco, Corrado, Pou, Turner, Gopal and Gill

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Student Mental Health Task Force.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Substitute as adopted by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.



(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 examine issues
8 related to the mental health of students, including depression,
9 anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma,
10 or disorder; study and survey the resources that are available to
11 schools and parents to address student mental health needs; and
12 develop recommendations to ensure that students have access to
13 mental health care programs and services in order to allow students
14 to meet their educational goals.

15 b. The task force shall consist of 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
19 ex 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 appointed by the Speaker of the General
28 Assembly and one public member appointed by the Minority Leader
29 of the General Assembly, both of whom shall have demonstrated
30 expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force;

31 (7) one public member appointed by the Senate President and
32 one public member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate,
33 both of whom shall have demonstrated expertise in issues related to
34 the work of the task force; and

35 (8) eight public members appointed by the Governor, who shall
36 include: one representative of the New Jersey Principals and
37 Supervisors Association, one representative of the New Jersey
38 School Boards Association, one representative of the National
39 Alliance on Mental Illness, one representative of the New Jersey
40 Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, one
41 representative of the New Jersey Association of Counties, one
42 representative of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, one
43 member representing school district leaders, and one school mental
44 health professional who holds a valid educational services
45 certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners that may include,
46 but is not limited to, a school counselor, a school social worker, or a
47 school psychologist.

1 c. Members to the task force shall be appointed within 60 days
2 following the date of enactment of this act. The Commissioner of
3 Education, or his designee, shall serve as the chairperson of the task
4 force. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable
5 following the appointment of its members and shall select a vice-
6 chairperson from among its members. The chairperson shall
7 appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

8 d. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
9 in the same manner as the original appointments were made.
10 Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but
11 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the
12 performance of their duties as members of the task force, subject to
13 available funds.

14 e. The Department of Education shall provide such
15 administrative and professional assistance as is necessary for the
16 task force to carry out its work. The task force shall be entitled to
17 call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees
18 of any State agency as it may require and as may be available for its
19 purposes.
20

21 2. a. It shall be the duty of the task force to examine issues
22 related to the mental health of students, including depression,
23 anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma,
24 or disorder; study and survey all resources that are currently
25 available to the schools and parents within each county in the State,
26 and within the northern, central, and southern regions of the State,
27 for helping a student or child who experiences mental health issues;
28 and develop recommendations to ensure that students have access to
29 mental health care programs and services in order to allow students
30 to meet their educational goals.

31 b. The task force shall, at a minimum, survey the availability
32 of:

33 (1) mental health treatment services provided within each
34 county and region of the State including, but not limited to, those
35 services provided through a school district, professional mental
36 health services provider, or community mental health services
37 organization, and any other tools or resources to address the mental
38 health needs of students;

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

42 (3) State, county, or municipal agencies within each county and
43 region of the State that offer funding, professional mental health
44 treatment services, or other resources to address the mental health
45 needs of students; and

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

- 1 c. The task force shall also study and make recommendations
2 regarding the following:
- 3 (1) the identification of public school students who experience
4 depression, anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional
5 tension, trauma, or disorder;
- 6 (2) the evaluation and expansion of counseling programs and
7 services available to students experiencing mental health
8 difficulties, and other programs designed to address issues related to
9 student mental health;
- 10 (3) the relationship of student mental health to school safety and
11 security;
- 12 (4) the amount of funding that may be necessary for public
13 schools to employ the appropriate staff and to establish new
14 programs or expand existing programs necessary to address student
15 mental health;
- 16 (5) an examination of other states that have implemented
17 programs that have successfully addressed depression, anxiety,
18 stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma, or
19 disorder among public school students and reduced the number of
20 students experiencing such difficulties; and
- 21 (6) any other proposals that the task force determines would
22 provide for increased access to high-quality mental health
23 programs.
- 24 d. The task force shall consult with parents of general
25 education students, parents of students who receive special
26 education and related services, and teaching staff members when
27 performing the duties required pursuant to the provisions of this
28 section.
- 29 e. The task force shall issue a final report to the Governor, and
30 to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
31 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than one year after the organization of the
32 task force. The report shall contain the results of the survey
33 required and recommendations developed pursuant this section.
- 34 The task force shall forward a copy of the report to every school
35 district in the State.
- 36
- 37 3. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire 30
38 days after the task force issues its final report.