

2025 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 215

BY SENATOR SELDERS

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES. Provides for mental health days for faculty, staff, and students in public education institutions. (8/1/25)

AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:1208 and to enact R.S. 17:226(C), 1208.1(D), and 3312.1, relative to absences for leave of mental health days; to provide relative to faculty, staff, and students; to provide for excused absences for students; to provide for proof related to the absences under certain circumstances; to provide for a definition; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:1208 is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:226(C), 1208.1(D), and 3312.1 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§226. Exemptions from compulsory attendance

\* \* \*

**C.(1) Children who are mentally stressed and may be suffering from stress, anxiety, or emotional exhaustion and whose attendance in school may endanger their academic performance shall be allowed to be absent from school for not more than two days per semester.**

**(2) A parent or legal guardian of a student may request a mental health day by submitting a notification in writing, by hand delivery or electronic mail,**

1 to the student's school principal or counselor at least twenty-four hours in  
2 advance. Requests on the day of absence are permitted for emergencies. Upon  
3 the child's return to school, a doctor's or mental health professional's excuse  
4 note is not required for using a mental health day unless absences exceed two  
5 days per semester.

6 (a) Mental health days cannot be used on test dates, project deadlines,  
7 or during final exams unless a valid medical or psychological emergency is  
8 documented.

9 (b) Any school work the student misses due to the mental health absence  
10 shall be made up before the semester ends.

11 (3) For purposes of this Subsection "mental health day" means a day off  
12 to address mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or emotional  
13 exhaustion, without requiring a traditional medical illness.

14 \* \* \*

15 §1208. Amount of personal leave

16 A. Every teacher employed by a parish or city school board of this state,  
17 except those employees who receive annual leave, shall be entitled to and shall be  
18 allowed to use up to two days absence during each school year to be used for such  
19 purposes as may be determined by the individual teacher without loss of pay. The  
20 teacher requesting such leave shall give his principal at least twenty-four hours  
21 notice prior to taking the leave without loss of pay. Personal leave shall be charged  
22 to and deducted from the teacher's sick leave for the current year or sick leave  
23 accumulated as provided in R.S. 17:1201. Personal leave shall not be accumulated  
24 from year to year, nor shall personal leave be compensated for upon death or  
25 retirement or paid in any other manner except as provided for in this Section.

26 B.(1) Every teacher employed by a city, parish, or other local school  
27 board of this state shall be entitled to and shall be allowed to use up to two days  
28 absence during each school semester to be used for mental health days without  
29 loss of pay. The teacher requesting such leave shall give his principal at least

1 twenty-four hours notice prior to taking the leave without loss of pay. In cases  
2 of emergencies, notice can be given on the day of absence, subject to existing  
3 school board policies.

4 (2) For purposes of this Subsection "mental health day" means a day off  
5 to address mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or emotional  
6 exhaustion, without requiring a traditional medical illness.

7 §1208.1. School employees; amount and use of personal leave

8 \* \* \*

9 D.(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, all  
10 employees, as defined in R.S. 17:1205, employed by a city, parish, or other local  
11 school board of this state shall be entitled to and shall be allowed to use up to  
12 two days absence during each school semester to be used for mental health days  
13 without loss of pay. The employee requesting such leave shall give the principal  
14 of the school where he is employed at least twenty-four hours notice prior to  
15 taking the leave without loss of pay. In cases of emergencies, notice can be given  
16 on the day of absence, subject to existing school board policies.

17 (2) For purposes of this Subsection, "mental health day" means a day off  
18 to address mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or emotional  
19 exhaustion, without requiring a traditional medical illness.

20 \* \* \*

21 §3312.1. Use of mental health leave

22 A. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, each  
23 board vested with management and supervision of colleges and universities shall  
24 provide and allow all unclassified and academic personnel to use up to two days  
25 absence during each semester to be used for mental health days without loss of  
26 pay. The employee requesting such leave shall give his immediate supervisor of  
27 the postsecondary institution where he is employed at least twenty-four hours  
28 notice prior to taking the leave without loss of pay. In cases of emergencies,  
29 notice can be given on the day of absence, subject to existing policies of the

- 1            **institution.**
- 2                    **B. For purposes of this Section "mental health day" means a day off to**
- 3            **address mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or emotional**
- 4            **exhaustion, without requiring a traditional medical illness.**

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

## DIGEST

SB 215 Original

2025 Regular Session

Selders

Proposed law provides for excused absences of faculty, staff, and students who take off from school or work for two mental health days per semester.

Proposed law provides for a parent or legal guardian of a student to request a mental health day by submitting a notification in writing, by hand delivery or electronic mail, to the student's school principal or counselor at least 24 hours in advance. Additionally, proposed law allows requests on the day of absence to be permitted for emergencies.

Proposed law mandates that every teacher employed by a city, parish, or other local school board of this state to be entitled to and allowed to be absent up to two days during each school semester for mental health days without loss of pay. Furthermore, the teacher requesting such leave must give his principal at least 24 hours notice prior to taking the leave without loss of pay; however, in cases of emergencies, notice can be given on the day of absence, subject to existing school board policies.

Proposed law mandates that all employees, as defined in present law, employed by a city, parish, or other local school board of this state must allowed to be absent up to two days during each school semester for mental health days without loss of pay. Furthermore, proposed law provides that the employee requesting leave must give his immediate supervisor at least 24 hours notice prior to taking the leave without loss of pay and in cases of emergencies, notice can be given on the day of absence, subject to existing school board policies.

Proposed law mandates that each board vested with management and supervision of colleges and universities must provide and allow all unclassified and academic personnel to use up to two days of leave during each semester to be used for mental health days without loss of pay. Furthermore, proposed law provides that the employee requesting leave must give his immediate supervisor at least 24 hours notice prior to taking the leave without loss of pay and in cases of emergencies, notice can be given on the day of absence, subject to existing school board policies.

Proposed law defines mental health days as a day off to address mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or emotional exhaustion, without requiring a traditional medical illness.

Effective August 1, 2025.

(Amends R.S. 17:1208; adds R.S. 17:226(C), 1208.1(D), and 3312.1)