
DIGEST

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HB 353 Reengrossed

2023 Regular Session

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Abstract: Provides relative to student behavioral and mental health.

Present law provides for exemptions from compulsory school attendance, including when children are mentally, physically, or emotionally incapacitated to perform school duties as certified in writing. Proposed law adds that a student may be absent for up to three days in any school year related to the student's mental or behavioral health, that such absences shall be excused if the parent or doctor provides written certification, that the child may make up missed school work, and that the child shall be referred to school support personnel following the second day of absence.

Present law requires instruction on mental health and lists the minimum information to be included. Proposed law adds the difference between mental and physical health and the management of stress and anxiety to the list.

Present law authorizes youth suicide prevention programs to include certain components, one of which is informing students of available community youth suicide prevention services. Proposed law includes posting information on school system website in this component.

Present law requires the governing authority of each public and approved nonpublic secondary school that issues student identification cards to have printed on the cards the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline hotline number and, if available, a local suicide prevention hotline number. Proposed law additionally authorizes each such school to post this information on its website.

Present law requires school boards to establish substance abuse prevention programs. Proposed law adds that the programs may include providing the website and phone number of at least one national organization specializing in substance abuse for adolescents and that school boards may also post this contact information on their websites.

Present law provides for in-service training for school employees on adverse childhood experiences (known as ACEs). Proposed law requires the Dept. of Education to develop and administer a pilot program for the purpose of implementing ACEs and mental and behavioral health screenings, select three school systems to participate in the program, and consult with experts in developing and administering the program.

Present law requires the office of public health (OPH) to establish an adolescent school health initiative to facilitate and encourage development of comprehensive health centers in public middle and high schools and provides certain requirements for OPH with respect to this initiative. Proposed

law additionally requires OPH to require such school health centers to register with OPH.

(Amends R.S. 17:226(A)(1), 271.1(B)(2), 282.4(C)(1)(d) and (F), and 404(A); Adds R.S. 17:271.1(B)(5) and 437.2(F) and R.S. 40:31.3(B)(6))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Remove proposed law relative to school absences, Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline membership, willful disobedience, and eating disorder instruction.
2. Authorize rather than require information about suicide and substance abuse to be posted on websites.
3. Expand purpose of pilot program to include mental and behavioral health screening.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Provide for up to three days of excused absences per school year related to a student's mental or behavioral health if certified in writing by his parent or doctor.