

HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

HB 353

2023 Regular Session

Marcelle

STUDENTS: Provides relative to student behavior, discipline, and behavioral and mental health

Synopsis of Senate Amendments

1. Require rather than authorize information about suicide and substance abuse to be posted on websites.
2. Change purpose of pilot program from adverse childhood experiences screening to trauma-informed mental health screening.
3. Require excusing mental or behavioral absences upon written certification in accordance with student handbook rather than written certification from parent or doctor.

Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate

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 certified in writing in accordance with the student handbook, 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 requires 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 shall include providing the website and phone number of at least one national organization specializing in substance abuse for adolescents and that school boards shall also post this contact information on their websites.

Proposed law requires the Dept. of Education to develop and administer a pilot program for the purpose of implementing 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))