

2025 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 121

BY SENATOR SELDERS

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

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH. Provides for mental health screenings in schools. (8/1/25)

AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:416.24 and 3996(B)(89), relative to mental health screenings in schools; to require public schools to offer annual mental health screenings for students; to require notification of parents; to provide for parental consent; to provide for duties of the Louisiana Department of Health and the state Department of Education; to provide for confidentiality; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:416.24 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§416.24. Mental health screenings

A. Each city, parish, or other local public school board shall offer mental health screenings for all students in grades kindergarten through twelve during the first semester of the school year.

B. The school shall notify the parent or legal guardian of each student that screenings are being offered and shall give the parent or legal guardian the option to consent to the screening. A school shall not conduct a mental health screening on a student whose parent or legal guardian has not consented to the screening.

C. If the results of a student's screening indicate a potential mental health condition, the school shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian of the results and provide a list of resources available to the student in the school or community.

D. The Louisiana Department of Health shall select a mental health screener appropriate to the provisions of this Section and provide the screener at no cost to each city, parish, and other local public school board.

E. Results of the screenings shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure except to the student's parent or legal guardian. Within thirty days following notification of the parent or legal guardian, the mental health screening data collected by a school shall be destroyed.

F. No city, parish, or other school board shall use the results of any mental health screening to make any decision relating to student instruction, academic opportunities, or discipline.

G. There shall be no cause of action against the public school governing authority, or any employee thereof, related to the results of the screening provided for in this Section.

H. The provisions of this Section are subject to the approval and funding by the school board of a city, parish, or other local public school system.

Section 2. R.S. 17:3996(B)(89) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

* * *

B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

* * *

(89) Mental health screenings, R.S. 17:416.24.

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Section 3. Schools shall conduct the mental health screenings as required by this Act beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

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 121 Engrossed

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Selders

Proposed law (R.S. 17:416.24) requires each city, parish, or other local public school board to offer mental health screenings for all students in grades K-12 during the first semester of the school year.

Proposed law requires the school to notify the parent or legal guardian of each student of the offered screenings and to give the parent or legal guardian the option to consent or decline the screening.

Proposed law requires schools to notify parents if the screening results indicate a potential mental health condition and to provide the parent or guardian a list of resources available to the student in the school or community.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health to select an appropriate mental health screener at no cost to each city, parish, and other local public school board.

Proposed law provides for the confidentiality of the screening results and for the destruction of the results within 30 days after the parent or legal guardian has been notified.

Proposed law prohibits a city, parish, or other school board from using the results of any mental health screening to make any decision relating to student instruction, academic opportunities, or discipline.

Proposed law provides that there must be no cause of action against the public school governing authority, or any employee related to the results of the screener.

Proposed law provides that proposed law is subject to the approval and funding by the school board of a city, parish, or other local public school system.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:3996(B)(89)) provides for applicability to charter schools.

Proposed law requires that schools begin the mental health screening in the 2026-2027 school year.

Effective August 1, 2025.

(Adds R.S. 17:416.24 and 3996(B)(89))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by SenateCommittee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Make technical changes.
2. Provide that the mental health screener will be provided at no cost to the city, parish, and other local public school board.
3. Provide that the mental health screening data will be destroyed within 30 days of notification of the parent or legal guardian.
4. Provide that there must be no cause of action against the public school governing authority, or any employee related to the results of the screener.
5. Make proposed law subject to the approval and funding by the school board of a city, parish, or other local public school system
6. Make proposed law applicable to charter schools.