
DIGEST

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HB 353 Original

2023 Regular Session

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Abstract: Provides relative to student behavior, discipline, and 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 not require a certification in writing in order to be excused, 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 provides for the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline to have 29 members and specifies the particular membership. Proposed law removes the specific membership and instead provides that the council shall have a maximum of 29 members, including the state superintendent or his designee, and grants him discretion in appointing and removing the remaining members.

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 requires instruction on eating disorders. Proposed law requires that this instruction include providing the website and phone number of at least one national organization specializing in eating disorders for adolescents and requires public school governing authorities to also post this information on their websites.

Present law provides for youth suicide prevention programs, including informing students of available community youth suicide prevention services. Proposed law requires school systems to post this information on their websites.

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 adds that each public and approved nonpublic school shall 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.

Present law provides generally relative to student discipline, including that a principal may suspend a student who is guilty of "willful disobedience". Proposed law defines this term for purposes of present law and requires public school governing authorities to incorporate proposed law into their student codes of conduct and inform students and parents of proposed law. Requires the state Dept. of Education (DOE) to develop a behavior incidence checklist that each governing authority shall use to document the details of each incidence of willful disobedience. Requires each governing authority to report all such documented incidences of willful disobedience to the department. Requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to adopt rules for proposed law implementation.

Present law provides for in-service training for school employees on adverse childhood experiences (known as ACEs). Proposed law requires DOE to develop and administer a pilot program for the purpose of implementing ACEs screening, to select three school systems to participate in the program, and consult with experts in the fields of mental health, behavioral health, and trauma-informed restorative services 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), 253(B)(intro. para.) and (2) and (C), 271.1(B)(2), 280.1(A), 282.4(C)(1)(d) and (F), and 404(A); Adds R.S. 17:271.1(B)(5), 416(A)(2)(g), 416.22, and 437.2(F) and R.S. 40:31.3(B)(6); Repeals R.S. 17:253(B)(3)-(25))