

2024 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 252

BY SENATOR MIZELL

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH. Requires city, parish and other local public school boards to adopt and implement a program to facilitate behavior health intervention and referral for treatment. (8/1/24)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:416.23, relative to behavioral health of students; to require the adoption of a program by a local public school board; to provide for program requirements; to provide for reporting on the program; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:416.23 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§416.23. Behavioral or emotional challenges; referral for assessment and treatment; reporting

A. Except as provided in R.S. 17:173, not later than thirty days prior to the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, each city, parish, or other local public school board shall adopt rules and regulations and implement a program to:

(1) Assist school personnel in identifying signs and symptoms of a student with behavioral or emotional challenges that may cause the student to be at risk of their behavior escalating into aggression or disruption, disciplinary actions including suspension or expulsion, or juvenile delinquency.

(2) Designate a specific employee at each school who shall be responsible

1 for identifying behavioral and mental health support services available in the
2 community, and when appropriate, facilitating a referral to those services for
3 assessment and treatment, including services provided through the Louisiana
4 Coordinated System of Care and its Medicaid provider network.

5 (3)(a) Require that prior to any second suspension of a student during
6 the same school year, the principal or his designee and the employee designate
7 pursuant to Paragraph (2) of this Subsection shall consult on whether the
8 student's behavior could be attributable to behavioral or emotional challenges.

9 (b) Require that if it is determined that the behavior is attributable to
10 behavioral or emotional challenges and rises to the level that supportive services
11 could be beneficial, the principal or his designee and the employee designated
12 pursuant to Paragraph (2) of this Subsection shall schedule a conference with
13 the student's parent or legal guardian to discuss the student's behavior and
14 counseling as well as the referral of the student and family to support services
15 for assessment and treatment.

16 B. A city, parish, or other local public school board shall report to the
17 state Department of Education and the House and Senate committees on
18 Education the number of students identified as possibly having behavioral or
19 emotional challenges, the number of students for which a conference was
20 scheduled, and the number of students referred for assessment and supportive
21 services pursuant to this Section. The reports shall be submitted annually on
22 July first and shall reflect data from the previous school year. The reports may
23 be used to evaluate needs and capacity for behavioral health services
24 throughout the state.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Dawn Romero Watson.

Proposed law requires each city, parish, or other local public school board to adopt rules and regulations and implement a program not later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year to:

- (1) Assist school personnel in identifying signs and symptoms of a student with behavioral or emotional challenges that may cause the student to be at risk of their behavior escalating into aggression or disruption, disciplinary actions including suspension or expulsion, or juvenile delinquency.
- (2) Designate a specific employee at each school who shall be responsible for identifying behavioral and mental health support services available in the community, and when appropriate, facilitating a referral.
- (3) Require that prior to any second suspension of a student during the same school year, the principal and the designated employee consult on whether the student's behavior rises to the level of willful disobedience and could be attributed to behavioral or emotional challenges. Requires that if it is determined that the behavior is at such a level and supportive services could be beneficial, the principal and the designated employee shall schedule a conference with the student's parent or legal guardian to discuss the student's behavior and counseling as well as the referral of the student and family to support services for assessment and treatment.

Proposed law requires a city, parish, or other local public school board to report annually to the state DOE and the House and Senate committees on Education:

- (1) The number of students identified as possibly having behavioral or emotional challenges.
- (2) The number of students for which a conference was scheduled.
- (3) The number of students referred for assessment and supportive services.

Effective August 1, 2024.

(Adds R.S. 17:416.23)