

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 17

BY REPRESENTATIVES SCHLEGEL, CARLSON, ECHOLS, FREIBERG, MELERINE,
OWEN, ST. BLANC, AND TAYLOR

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the state Department of Education, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Louisiana Department of Health to collaborate to increase mental health counseling in public schools.

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that children, adolescents, and teenagers in the U.S. are suffering tremendously with mental health issues; in early 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that, from 2011 to 2021, there were high and worsening levels of persistent sadness or hopelessness across all racial and ethnic groups of adolescents in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the CDC further reported that a combination of complex factors can place young people at high risk for suicide, depression, substance use disorder, poor academic performance, and other severe consequences; and

WHEREAS, according to the Louisiana Department of Health office of behavioral health, the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the challenges facing adolescents' and children's mental health, causing altered experiences at home, school, and during in-person social interaction; the pandemic also highlighted the need for increased access to healthcare and social services as an alarming number of young people struggle with feelings of helplessness, depression, and thoughts of suicide; and

WHEREAS, expanding services available to public school students is one way to help young people with the challenges they face today and the resulting mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, the standard of care to be followed by mental health professionals serving students in public schools should be the same as the ethical standards of licensed mental health professionals; and

WHEREAS, parental engagement, involvement, and consent is essential in moving forward with such efforts.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the state Department of Education, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Louisiana Department of Health to collaborate to increase mental health counseling in public schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departments shall submit a report to the Legislature of Louisiana not later than February 1, 2025, that presents evidence of the collaboration among the departments and of their efforts to identify and implement best practices and a framework to increase mental health counseling in public schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the state superintendent of education, the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, and the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE