

ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 381

Introduced by Fredrickson, 20.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to examine the feasibility, effectiveness, and safeguards associated with implementing universal youth mental health screenings in public schools. Students continue to experience rising rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral health challenges, and early identification may improve access to timely intervention and support. Implementation of screenings must address workforce capacity, parental consent, student privacy, referral systems, and equitable access to follow-up services.

Universal youth mental health screenings may offer opportunities to identify concerns before they escalate into crisis situations, improve academic engagement, and reduce disciplinary involvement. Ensuring that any screening framework is evidence-based, transparent, and appropriately resourced is critical to protecting students and maximizing positive outcomes.

This study shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Assessment of the current landscape of youth mental health supports within Nebraska schools, including the availability of counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and partnerships with community behavioral health providers;

(2) Evaluation of evidence-based mental health screening models, including universal and targeted approaches, and their documented outcomes in comparable states;

(3) Analysis of workforce capacity across urban and rural school districts, including staffing ratios, training needs, and shortages that may impact implementation;

(4) Examination of parental consent procedures, student assent practices,

and compliance with state and federal student privacy laws, including protections under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act;

(5) Review of referral pathways and follow-up services to determine whether adequate community-based treatment capacity exists to support students who screen positive for mental health needs;

(6) Evaluation of potential disparities in access, outcomes, and discipline-related consequences to ensure equitable implementation across race, disability status, and geographic region;

(7) Estimation of fiscal impacts, including costs associated with screening tools, training, staffing, data systems, and potential funding sources such as Medicaid reimbursement or state grant programs; and

(8) Identification of best practices, implementation safeguards, and policy options, including pilot programs or voluntary statewide guidelines.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.