

STATE OF NEW YORK

7659

IN SENATE

January 5, 2022

Introduced by Sen. KAPLAN -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to requiring the state university of New York and the city university of New York to adopt certain provisions related to student mental health

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 362 to
2 read as follows:

3 § 362. Student mental health. 1. The university shall create and
4 administer to all students a mental health survey twice per year. Such
5 survey shall include, but not be limited to, questions regarding a
6 student's mental health and general well-being. Participation in such
7 survey shall be optional to each student, and the results of such survey
8 from participating students shall be sent to the chancellor of the
9 university, appropriate staff including but not limited to the president
10 of each state-operated institution of the university, any oversight
11 council as mandated pursuant to section three hundred fifty-six of this
12 article and any licensed mental health practitioners employed by any of
13 the state-operated institutions of the university.

14 2. There shall be a committee established within the university that
15 shall be responsible for engaging with and disseminating mental health
16 resources to faculty, staff and students. Such committee shall be
17 composed of a group of individuals chosen by the chancellor of the
18 university in conjunction with the presidents of each state-operated
19 institution of the university. Such committee shall also be responsible
20 for making recommendations to the regents of the university regarding
21 how often and in what manner faculty of the university shall provide
22 mental health wellness days and excused absences from class for
23 students.

24 3. All faculty and other staff of the university shall be required on
25 an annual basis to undergo mental health training with a focus on iden-
26 tifying or recognizing signs of mental distress among students. The
27 chancellor of the university, in conjunction with the commissioner,

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 shall prescribe the form and manner in which such training shall be
2 provided.

3 4. The university shall also take the following actions regarding
4 student mental health:

5 (a) review enrollment and re-enrollment policies of the university and
6 create specific provisions for students that may require extended mental
7 health leave;

8 (b) create opportunities for telehealth and virtual counseling
9 options;

10 (c) require a mental health seminar to be included in all orientation
11 programs for newly enrolled students; and

12 (d) institute other programs to address and improve student mental
13 health.

14 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 6235 to read
15 as follows:

16 § 6235. Student mental health. 1. The city university shall create and
17 administer to all students a mental health survey twice per year. Such
18 survey shall include, but not be limited to, questions regarding a
19 student's mental health and general well-being. Participation in such
20 survey shall be optional to each student, and the results of such survey
21 from participating students shall be sent to the chancellor of the city
22 university, appropriate staff including but not limited to the president
23 of each senior and community college of the city university, any over-
24 sight council of the city university and any licensed mental health
25 practitioners employed by any of the senior or community colleges within
26 the city university.

27 2. There shall be a committee established within the city university
28 that shall be responsible for engaging with and disseminating mental
29 health resources to faculty, staff and students. Such committee shall be
30 composed of a group of individuals chosen by the chancellor of the city
31 university in conjunction with the presidents of each city-operated
32 institution of the university. Such committee shall also be responsible
33 for making recommendations to the board of trustees regarding how often
34 and in what manner faculty of the city university shall provide mental
35 health wellness days and excused absences from class for students.

36 3. All faculty and other staff of the city university shall be
37 required on an annual basis to undergo mental health training with a
38 focus on identifying or recognizing signs of mental distress among
39 students. The chancellor of the city university, in conjunction with the
40 commissioner, shall prescribe the form and manner in which such training
41 shall be provided.

42 4. The city university shall also take the following actions regarding
43 student mental health:

44 (a) review enrollment and re-enrollment policies of the city universi-
45 ty and create specific provisions for students that may require extended
46 mental health leave;

47 (b) create opportunities for telehealth and virtual counseling
48 options;

49 (c) require a mental health seminar to be included in all orientation
50 programs for newly enrolled students; and

51 (d) institute other programs to address and improve student mental
52 health.

53 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.