STATE OF NEW YORK

5085

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 2, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. GUNTHER -- read once and referred 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:

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

§ 362. Student mental health. 1. The university shall create and administer, at the start of a student's freshman and junior year, a mental health survey. Such survey shall include, but not be limited to, questions regarding a student's mental health and general well-being. Participation in such survey shall be optional to each student, and the results of such survey from participating students shall be sent to the chancellor of the university, appropriate staff including but not limited to the president of each state-operated institution of the university, any oversight council as mandated pursuant to section three hundred fifty-six of this article and any licensed mental health practitioners employed by any of the state-operated institutions of the university.

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

3. All faculty and other staff of the university shall be required on an annual basis to undergo mental health training with a focus on identifying or recognizing signs of mental distress among students. The 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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shall prescribe the form and manner in which such training shall be provided.

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

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

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

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

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

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

§ 6235. Student mental health. 1. The city university shall create and administer, at the start of a student's freshman and junior year a mental health survey. Such survey shall include, but not be limited to, questions regarding a student's mental health and general well-being. Participation in such survey shall be optional to each student, and the results of such survey from participating students shall be sent to the chancellor of the city university, appropriate staff including but not limited to the president of each senior and community college of the city university, any oversight council of the city university and any licensed mental health practitioners employed by any of the senior or community colleges within the city university.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately.