

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:

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, at the start of a student's freshman and junior year, a
5 mental health survey. Such survey shall include, but not be limited to,
6 questions regarding a student's mental health and general well-being.
7 Participation in such survey shall be optional to each student, and the
8 results of such survey from participating students shall be sent to the
9 chancellor of the university, appropriate staff including but not limit-
10 ed to the president of each state-operated institution of the universi-
11 ty, any oversight council as mandated pursuant to section three hundred
12 fifty-six of this article and any licensed mental health practitioners
13 employed by any of the state-operated institutions of the university.

14 2. There shall be a five member committee established within the
15 university that shall be responsible for engaging with and disseminating
16 mental health resources to faculty, staff and students. Such committee
17 shall be composed of a group of individuals chosen by the chancellor of
18 the 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, at the start of a student's freshman and junior year a
18 mental health survey. Such survey shall include, but not be limited to,
19 questions regarding a student's mental health and general well-being.
20 Participation in such survey shall be optional to each student, and the
21 results of such survey from participating students shall be sent to the
22 chancellor of the city university, appropriate staff including but not
23 limited to the president of each senior and community college of the
24 city university, any oversight council of the city university and any
25 licensed mental health practitioners employed by any of the senior or
26 community colleges within the city university.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

54 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.