



New York State YMCA
Youth And Government

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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment: Assembly Liberty 4

Bill #:AL-25

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2 **Sponsors:** Nathan Slawson, Savannah Werner, Emera Aquila, Moriah Clendenin,
3 Hayley Brown

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5 **An Act To** Amend the education law, § 504 in relation to clarifying health education
6 access for all.

7

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

9

10 **Purpose** Require all public-school districts to include an online assistance referral
11 system on their district website and provide instruction on the use of the platform.

12

13 **Summary of Provisions**

14 **Section 1:**

15 Section 1 adds a new paragraph to Education Law § 504 to declare that mental health as well as
16 physical health is part of health education in the schools. Section 2 makes the bill effective on July 1,
17 2018. Section 3 will require districts to provide a mental health referral system on their district
18 websites as well as provide education to students and the community it serves on how to access the
19 platform.

20

21 **Justification**

22 Having an online assistance referral system in school districts will help
23 eliminate teen mental illness and suicide. Researchers estimated that 50% of
24 mental illness begins at age 14. Unfortunately, researchers have also shown that
25 many children and adolescence do not receive treatment. Using this assistance
26 system will help children and adolescence receive treatment. It has been said that
27 over 80% of students with emotional and behavioral disorders have scored below
28 the general population in reading, writing, and math. Half of all cases of anxiety
29 disorders begin as early as age 8 and about 22% of youth aged 13-18 experience
30 serious mental disorders. The average cost for a teenage funeral is \$6,000 and the
31 average amount for districts to have the online system is between \$6,000-\$10,000.
32 In school it is mandatory for teachers to include Mental Health in their curriculum,
33 so students are aware, but it is embarrassing to go to the guidance office and ask
34 for help. Instituting a reporting interface that is easily accessible on any electronic
35 device, customizable, and allows student to find resources to help with a multitude
36 of issues from bullying to substance abuse to knowing who to contact for any
37 situation that may cause additional stressors that can trigger anxiety. It also
38 provides an anonymous way for students to seek help without the stigma of going



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39 to the guidance office at the same time providing data that the schools and the
40 members of their community may be facing allowing them to be proactive in
41 offering services, classes, or other resources as needed. Teens say that 96% of kids
42 in their community struggle with anxiety and depression, and 90% struggle with
43 bullying. Having this online system in schools and communities will help save lives
44 of loved ones.

45

46 **Fiscal Implications**

47 A popular platform much like the one we are suggesting costs \$6,000 per year. \$1
48 million in grant money was set aside in the initial passage of this bill for districts
49 across NYS to implement the teaching of mental health in schools. This equates to
50 less than .01% of the grant money set aside for teaching about mental health in
51 schools. Therefore, there would be no immediate tax burden on the taxpayers of
52 the state.

53

54

55 **Effective Date**

56 September 1st, 2021