



2018 New York State YMCA

Youth And Government

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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment: Assembly Liberty 3

Bill #:AL-21

1 **Sponsors:** Joshua Penna, Joshua Seura-Muriel, Jack Krzemien, Damien Htun

2

3 **An Act To**

4 Amend section § 4402 of the Education Law by implementing mental health days
5 into New York State public schools.

6

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

8

9 **Purpose**

10 To allow students diagnosed with severe anxiety, depression or other mental health
11 issues to take off five excused days of school within each three month period of the
12 school year to recover and better cope with their illnesses.

13

14 **Summary of Provisions**

15 Section 1: Definitions

16 Mental Illness: A wide range of conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior.

17 Anxiety Disorder: A mental health disorder characterized by feelings of worry,
18 anxiety, or fear that are strong enough to interfere with one's daily activities

19 Depression: A mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood
20 or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life.

21 Section 2: Provisions

22 Education Law § 4402 Upon their child's enrollment or attendance in a public
23 school, such school shall notify every parent or person in parental relation of their
24 rights regarding referral and evaluation of their child for the purposes of special
25 education services or programs pursuant to applicable federal and state laws,
26 including in severe cases where the child requires services due to their mental
27 health state, such as days off. Such notification be provided by directing parents or
28 persons in parental relation to obtain information located on the department's
29 website relating to a parent's guide to special education in New York State for
30 children ages three through twenty-one provided the notification shall also
31 contain the name and contact information for the chairperson of the school
32 district's committee on special education or other individual who is charged with
33 processing referrals to the committee in the district.

34

35 **Justification**

36 The modern day school system asks a lot for our youth, children are expected to do
37 work from when they enter building to when they leave, and even after they leave
38 with homework, and all of this can cause stress. Now, think about the students who
39 are already in major stress over a disorder they cannot control, if we keep pushing
40 these students in particular more and more with work while already undergoing
41 problems, it can lead to their illness only getting worse and could possibly lead to



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42 them doing something dangerous. In 2017, 17.2 percent of high schoolers reported
43 seriously considering suicide, which is up by 25 percent since 2009, when just 13.8
44 percent of students reported seriously considering suicide. The rate of suicide
45 increased by 33 percent, from 7.5 to 10.0 suicides per 100,000 15- to 19-year-olds
46 from 2009 to 2016. Students with severe anxiety and/or depression need a day of
47 recovery for their own good, so they can focus more on calming their issues and
48 not feel like they're expected to run themselves into the ground.

49

50 **Fiscal Implications**

51 There are no fiscal implications.

52

53 **Effective Date**

54 This bill will go into effect one year after its passage.