



New York State YMCA
Youth And Government

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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment: Senate Freedom 2

Bill #:SF-16

1 **Sponsors:** Ryleigh Hesler, Syd Banks, Zachary Nicita, Phoebe Rigley

2
3 **An Act To:** Amend §41.49 of New York State Mental Hygiene Law to add biennial
4 mental health screenings in public schools for all students starting in 6th grade.

5
6 *The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

7
8 **Purpose** The purpose of this bill is to add mental health screenings in public
9 schools for all students, starting in 6th grade, administered by trained personnel
10 already present in the building.

11 **Summary of Provisions**

12 **Section 1: Definitions**

13 Mental Health-a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional
14 well-being.

15 Screening-the testing of a person or group of people for the presence of a disease
16 or other condition.

17 **Section 2**

18 c 41.49 Adolescent suicide prevention program.

19 1. Within amounts appropriated, the office of mental health is hereby
20 authorized and directed to establish and conduct, in consultation with
21 and upon the approval of the council on children and families, a special
22 program, the purpose of which shall be to provide grants to public or
23 private not-for-profit organizations, or public or private schools,
24 acting alone or in concert with others, in order to educate the general
25 population, and in particular parents, teachers, clergy, health and
26 mental health professionals and adolescents themselves of the positive
27 actions that can be taken to identify and treat adolescents who are at high risk
28 for suicide. The commissioner of health and human services shall have the power to
29 oversee mental health screenings in public schools. This will be mandatory in sixth
30 grade and then every other academic year administered by trained professionals
31 already existing in public schools. For purposes of this section, the term
32 "adolescent" shall mean any person under the age of twenty-one.

33
34 **Justification** This bill is a crucial addition to New York State law because it
35 provides a higher level of safety in schools. These screenings will allow students
36 access to follow up services and resources if the screening reveals such a need.
37 This would reduce negative thoughts and poor mental health among students since
38 they will have access to a professional to talk with and to help them if needed.
39 Multiple studies done by the American Counseling Association determined that
40 these tests help to make communities better. These screenings will help make safer



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41 communities. These tests will allow students to express their feelings in a safe
42 setting.

43

44 **Fiscal Implications** The foreseeable fiscal implications of this bill are the cost of
45 training the people who will administer these tests. Some expense is anticipated
46 concerning the committee that constructs the screening instrument.

47

48 **Environmental Implications** This bill will have no foreseeable implications on the
49 Environment.

50

51 **Effective Date** This bill will take effect the next academic year after its passage.