

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-934

AN ACT REQUIRING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION CONCERNING

Title: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH RESOURCES BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

Vote Date: 3/11/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/2/2021

File No.: 189

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

To have local and regional school boards compile and annually update a list of every mental and emotional health resource available to students and families. The list must include resources provided by the board, community providers, school-based health centers or the state. There must be a telephone number, e-mail address or an internal link to each resource. The boards will post the list of resources on its website and distribute the list to parents of all students in the district at least semiannually, in September and May of each year. Beginning in 2021-22 school year it is required that local and regionally school boards distribute an age and developmentally appropriate list of available mental and emotional health resources to students which must include the national youth suicide prevention helplines accessible by text message.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None submitted

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Virginia DeLong, The Connecticut School Counselor Association testified that providing access to mental health resources will be beneficial to many families. Access to resources is important to helping students get the mental health support they need. Education surrounding the increased mental resources is critical for families and can only come from an actual human being. Connecticut ranks 37th in the nation for average counselor ratios. Less than 25% of our students have access to an elementary school counselor. We need more counselor's in our schools for the critical and important conversations around children's mental health.

Jonathan S. Budd, Superintendent, Woodbridge School District testified in support of the bill.

With the unsettling of today's world, it is no wonder our children are concerned. As our children return to school fully their emotions and health are vital to their success. We as educators must endorse methods to ensure that all children and their families have at their fingertips the resources to support each child fully. The language requiring annual updating will reinforce the understanding that strong mental and emotional health are not only at times of crisis.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

April 13, 2021