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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 586

Requesting the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to study the benefits of offering voluntary mental health screenings to students in public elementary schools. Report.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 2015
Agreed to by the Senate, February 24, 2015

WHEREAS, public school students in the Commonwealth are required to be tested and screened for various impairments, including vision impairments, hearing impairments, and scoliosis; and

WHEREAS, public school students in the Commonwealth are not routinely screened for mental illness; and

WHEREAS, an accurate picture of student mental health and early diagnosis of mental illness in students are crucial to ensuring the social and academic development of students in the public schools of the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services be requested to study the benefits of offering voluntary mental health screenings to students in public elementary schools.

In conducting its study, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall convene a workgroup of experts. The workgroup shall develop a feasible study plan and implementation timeline. The workgroup shall (i) review existing research on screening of elementary school children and whether there is an ideal year to administer such screenings, (ii) review available screening instruments that may be appropriate for elementary school children, (iii) recommend methods of notifying parents of the availability of screening and recommend procedures for seeking parental consent, and (iv) consider what in-school and other services may be available for children whose screening indicates a need for follow-up.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services by the Department of Education. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for this study, upon request.

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall complete its meetings for the first year and submit a preliminary report by November 30, 2015. For the second year, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall submit its final report to the Governor and the General Assembly, including findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document by November 30, 2016. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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