

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the expansion of school counseling
3 resources; establishing the Blue Ribbon Panel Task
4 Force within the Department of Education; providing
5 the purpose, membership, and initial meeting time of
6 the task force; providing for the election of a chair
7 and vice chair of the task force; providing the method
8 for filling a vacancy in the position of chair or vice
9 chair; providing the duties of the task force;
10 requiring the task force to study the impact on
11 students of increasing the number of school counselors
12 in public schools; requiring the task force to review
13 and recommend revisions to Florida's School Counseling
14 and Guidance Framework; requiring the department to
15 provide staff and administrative support to the task
16 force; providing meeting times for the task force;
17 providing a quorum; providing that members of the task
18 force serve without compensation; providing that
19 members are entitled to per diem and travel expenses;
20 requiring the task force to submit a report to the
21 Governor and the Legislature; providing for
22 termination of the task force; providing an effective
23 date.

24
25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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27 Section 1. The Blue Ribbon Panel Task Force.—

28 (1) To ensure that public school students in this state
29 have access to high-quality, evidence-based school counseling
30 programs and to support the funding of additional school
31 counselor positions in the public schools where the positions
32 are needed, the Blue Ribbon Panel Task Force is established
33 within the Department of Education. The purpose of the task
34 force is to study whether there is a demonstrable relationship
35 between expanding counseling resources in public schools and
36 early detection of mental health issues in students, improved
37 academic performance and student attendance, higher graduation
38 rates, and decreased behavioral disruptions on the part of
39 students. The task force shall comply with the requirements of
40 s. 20.052, Florida Statutes, except as otherwise provided in
41 this section.

42 (2) The task force is comprised of the following nine
43 members:

44 (a) A member from one of the regional workforce boards
45 from Workforce Florida, Inc., appointed by the Governor.

46 (b) A principal, or the principal's designee, of a public
47 school that received the Recognized-ASCA-Model-Program (RAMP)
48 designation from the American School Counselor Association
49 (ASCA), appointed by the Commissioner of Education.

50 (c) A member of a parent-teacher organization or parent-
51 teacher association in this state, appointed by the Commissioner
52 of Education.

53 (d) The president of the governing board of the Florida
 54 School Counselor Association, or his or her designee.

55 (e) The president of the ASCA, or his or her designee.

56 (f) The chair of the board of directors of the Education
 57 Foundation of Collier County, Inc., also trademarked as
 58 Champions for Learning, or his or her designee.

59 (g) A school administrator in this state, appointed by the
 60 Commissioner of Education.

61 (h) A member of the Senate, appointed by the President of
 62 the Senate.

63 (i) A member of the House of Representatives, appointed by
 64 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

65 (3) The appointments to the task force must be completed
 66 by August 1, 2014. The task force shall hold its initial meeting
 67 by October 1, 2014, and elect a chair and vice chair. A vacancy
 68 in the office of chair or vice chair shall be filled by a vote
 69 of the remaining members.

70 (4) The task force shall:

71 (a) Subject to legislative appropriation, use funds
 72 appropriated to the Department of Education to study whether
 73 increasing the number of certified school counselors in the
 74 public schools is demonstrably beneficial to students and to
 75 recommend a methodology for assessing the impact of such
 76 increased staffing.

77 (b) Review and recommend updates to Florida's School
 78 Counseling and Guidance Framework for the enhancement of

79 district-level leadership and support.

80 (5) The Department of Education shall provide staff and
81 administrative support to the task force.

82 (6) The task force shall meet quarterly and at other times
83 at the call of the chair or as determined by a majority of task
84 force members.

85 (7) Five members of the task force constitute a quorum,
86 and an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present is
87 required for final action.

88 (8) Members of the task force shall serve without
89 compensation. Members are entitled to reimbursement for per diem
90 and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

91 (9) (a) By December 15, 2016, the task force shall submit a
92 report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the
93 Speaker of the House of Representatives which states the task
94 force's:

95 1. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding
96 the study described in paragraph (4) (a); and

97 2. Recommended updates for Florida's School Counseling and
98 Guidance Framework as provided in paragraph (4) (b).

99 (b) The task force terminates upon submission of the
100 report.

101 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.