

By Senator Rouson

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Task Force on Closing the
3 Achievement Gap for Boys; creating the Task Force on
4 Closing the Achievement Gap for Boys within the
5 Department of Education; providing a purpose for the
6 task force; providing for membership and meetings of
7 the task force; requiring the department to provide
8 staff, administrative support, and necessary data and
9 other relevant information to assist the task force;
10 requiring that the task force submit a report to the
11 Governor and Legislature by a specified date;
12 providing for future expiration of the task force;
13 providing an effective date.

14
15 WHEREAS, 44 percent of third grade boys are reading below
16 grade level, 4 percentage points more than girls, and 53 percent
17 of 10th grade boys are reading below grade level, 11 percentage
18 points more than girls, based on the 2018-2019 statewide,
19 standardized English Language Arts assessment, and

20 WHEREAS, research shows that boys develop literacy skills
21 later than girls, and

22 WHEREAS, in comparison to girls, boys are suspended and
23 expelled from schools more than twice as often, are diagnosed
24 with learning disabilities nearly three times as often, and are
25 diagnosed with emotional disorders over three times as often,
26 and

27 WHEREAS, boys require specialized instructional,
28 behavioral, and mental health supports in order to flourish
29 academically and personally, NOW, THEREFORE,

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31 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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33 Section 1. Task Force on Closing the Achievement Gap for
34 Boys.—

35 (1) The Task Force on Closing the Achievement Gap for Boys,
36 a task force as defined in s. 20.03(8), Florida Statutes, is
37 created within the Department of Education to examine evidence-
38 based strategies for closing the achievement gap for boys and to
39 make recommendations to the department, the Governor, and the
40 Legislature regarding boys' instructional needs through
41 professional development for instructional personnel and school
42 administrators; the selection of curriculum, supplemental
43 materials, and classroom activities in early learning programs
44 and K-12 schools; and other academic, behavioral, and mental
45 health supports necessary to help educate and raise young men
46 who are better prepared for success in school and in life.

47 (2) The task force shall be composed of the following
48 members, to be appointed by August 1, 2021:

49 (a) The Commissioner of Education, or his or her designee,
50 who shall be the chair of the task force.

51 (b) The following members appointed by the Governor:

52 1. The parent of a boy enrolled in either the Voluntary
53 Prekindergarten Education Program under part V of chapter 1002,
54 Florida Statutes, or the school readiness program under part VI
55 of chapter 1002, Florida Statutes.

56 2. The parent of a boy enrolled in a public elementary
57 school.

58 (c) The following members appointed by the President of the

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59 Senate:60 1. A school psychologist employed by a school district.61 2. An elementary classroom teacher.62 3. A prekindergarten teacher employed by a provider
63 participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program
64 or the school readiness program.65 4. The executive director of an early learning coalition.66 5. A member of the Senate.67 (d) The following members appointed by the Speaker of the
68 House of Representatives:69 1. A representative of a nonprofit organization that has
70 conducted research or implemented a program designed to close
71 the achievement gap for boys through specific instructional,
72 behavioral, and mental health supports.73 2. The superintendent of a school district that has
74 implemented programming and strategies specifically to help
75 close the achievement gap for boys through a partnership with
76 one or more nonprofit organizations.77 3. The director of an early learning provider participating
78 in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or the school
79 readiness program.80 4. The principal of a public elementary school.81 5. A member of the House of Representatives.82 (3) Members of the task force shall serve without
83 compensation, but may be entitled to receive reimbursement for
84 per diem and travel expenses.85 (4) The task force shall convene no later than October 1,
86 2021, and upon the call of the chair thereafter. Meetings of the
87 task force may be held through teleconference or other

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88 electronic means.

89 (5) The department shall provide staff, administrative
90 support, and necessary data and other relevant information to
91 assist the task force in carrying out its responsibilities.

92 (6) The task force shall submit a report containing its
93 recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
94 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1,
95 2022.

96 (7) The task force expires June 30, 2022.

97 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.