

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 certain staff support, data, and information to assist
9 the task force; requiring that the task force submit a
10 report to the Governor and Legislature by a specified
11 date; providing for future expiration of the task
12 force; providing an effective date.

13
14 WHEREAS, 44 percent of third grade boys are reading below
15 grade level, a 4 percentage-point deficit as compared to girls,
16 and 53 percent of 10th grade boys are reading below grade level,
17 an 11 percentage-point deficit as compared to girls, based on
18 the 2018-2019 statewide, standardized English Language Arts
19 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,

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2021

26 | and

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

47 | (2) The task force shall be composed of the following
48 | members, to be appointed by July 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
59 the 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
78 participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program
79 or the school 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 August 1,
86 2021, and upon the call of the chair thereafter. Meetings of the
87 task force may be held through teleconference or other
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 December 1,
95 2021.

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

97 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.