

HOUSE BILL NO. 3540

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE REUTER.

7529H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapter 160, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to the journaling for joy program.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 160, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 160.3500, to read as follows:

160.3500. 1. The department of elementary and secondary education shall develop and make available to school districts and charter schools a voluntary preventative mental wellness program known as the "Journaling for Joy Program". The program shall be designed to promote emotional resilience, self-reflection, and positive behavioral outcomes through structured journaling practices. The program shall be nonclinical in nature and shall not be construed to provide mental health diagnosis, treatment, or counseling.

2. Beginning in the 2027-28 school year, any school district or charter school may elect to implement the program for students enrolled in:

(1) Third grade;

(2) Sixth grade; and

(3) Twelfth grade.

3. The department shall approve age-appropriate curriculum for each grade level. Each curriculum shall include:

(1) A student journaling workbook;

(2) An instructor guide for classroom implementation;

(3) Structured prompts and reflective exercises;

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets ~~thus~~ in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

18 **(4) Instruction in personal responsibility, emotional regulation, goal setting, and**
19 **conflict de-escalation; and**

20 **(5) Optional family engagement resources.**

21 **4. Any school district or charter school that elects to implement the program and**
22 **purchases the approved curriculum shall ensure that participating teachers complete a**
23 **training program approved by the department prior to providing instruction. The**
24 **department may offer such training through in-person or virtual delivery and may**
25 **award professional development credit for completion.**

26 **5. The program shall be student-centered, trauma-informed, and focused on**
27 **building protective factors that reduce the risk of self-harm and interpersonal violence.**
28 **No personally identifiable student mental health data shall be collected for purposes of**
29 **the program.**

30 **6. Subject to appropriation, the department shall:**

31 **(1) Maintain a list of approved curriculum providers;**

32 **(2) Develop program guidance for participating schools; and**

33 **(3) Provide technical assistance upon request.**

34 **7. The department may seek and accept grants, gifts, donations, and federal**
35 **funds for the purpose of implementing this section.**

36 **8. No later than December first of each even-numbered year, the department of**
37 **elementary and secondary education shall submit a report to the general assembly that**
38 **includes:**

39 **(1) The number of participating schools and districts;**

40 **(2) The number of students served;**

41 **(3) Available aggregate, non-identifiable outcome data relating to school climate,**
42 **attendance, and disciplinary incidents; and**

43 **(4) Recommendations for continuation or modification of the program.**

44 **9. Implementation of this section shall be subject to appropriation.**

45 **10. The director of the department of elementary and secondary education may**
46 **promulgate all necessary rules and regulations for the administration of this section.**
47 **Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in section 536.010, that is created**
48 **under the authority delegated in this section shall become effective only if it complies**
49 **with and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section**
50 **536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested**
51 **with the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective date,**
52 **or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant**
53 **of rulemaking authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2026, shall**
54 **be invalid and void.**

55 **11. The provisions of this section shall expire on August 28, 2033.**

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