

HB 3540 -- JOURNALING FOR JOY

SPONSOR: Reuter

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) shall develop a voluntary preventative mental wellness program known as "Journaling for Joy Program". The program requirements are outlined in the bill and are to be nonclinical in nature.

Beginning in the 2027-28 school year, school districts and charter schools may offer the Program for students in 3rd, 6th, or 12th grade using age-appropriate curriculum that includes a student journaling workbook, an instructor guide, structured prompts, instruction, and family engagement resources.

The bill requires schools that offer the Program to provide teacher training and that the Program be student-centered, trauma-informed, and focused on building protective factors to reduce the risk of self-harm and interpersonal violence.

A list of curriculum providers will be maintained by DESE, which will also develop program guidance, and provide technical assistance. Annually, before December 1st of even-numbered years DESE must submit a report to the General Assembly that includes information about the number of schools and students served, as well as outcome data relating to school climate, attendance, and disciplinary incidents.

This section expires August 28, 2033.