

1-1 By: Zaffirini, Blanco S.B. No. 1521  
 1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 11, 2021; March 24, 2021, read  
 1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Higher Education;  
 1-4 April 22, 2021, reported adversely, with favorable Committee  
 1-5 Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0; April 22, 2021,  
 1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8				
1-9	X			
1-10	X			
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13	X			
1-14	X			
1-15			X	
1-16	X			
1-17	X			

1-18 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 1521 By: West

1-19 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
 1-20 AN ACT

1-21 relating to creating a mental health task force to study mental  
 1-22 health services provided at institutions of higher education.

1-23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-24 SECTION 1. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is  
 1-25 amended by adding Section 51.91931 to read as follows:

1-26 Sec. 51.91931. COLLABORATIVE TASK FORCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
 1-27 MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. (a) In this section:

1-28 (1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher  
 1-29 Education Coordinating Board.

1-30 (2) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning  
 1-31 assigned by Section 61.003.

1-32 (3) "Task force" means the Collaborative Task Force on  
 1-33 Higher Education Mental Health Services.

1-34 (b) The Collaborative Task Force on Higher Education Mental  
 1-35 Health Services is established to study and evaluate mental health  
 1-36 services provided at institutions of higher education directly to  
 1-37 students enrolled at the institution. The task force shall:

1-38 (1) research the capacity of institutions of higher  
 1-39 education to identify and address the mental health needs of  
 1-40 students, including for each institution:

1-41 (A) performing an equity analysis of the  
 1-42 provision of services at the institution, including analyzing the  
 1-43 number of mental health providers on campus, the length of time a  
 1-44 student must wait for an appointment, partner referrals, length of  
 1-45 treatment, and the types of services provided;

1-46 (B) the mental health provider-to-student  
 1-47 ratios;

1-48 (C) the number of community partnerships and  
 1-49 referrals for inpatient or outpatient mental health treatment;

1-50 (D) the total amount of funds and the total  
 1-51 amount of funds as a percentage of the institution's budget  
 1-52 allocated to direct mental health support services;

1-53 (E) campus-wide needs assessment of mental  
 1-54 health climate and student experiences accessing mental health  
 1-55 care; and

1-56 (F) staff and faculty mental health training  
 1-57 opportunities, such as mental health first aid and suicide  
 1-58 prevention initiatives, as well as staff and faculty opportunities  
 1-59 to receive mental health care;

1-60 (2) identify institutional, environmental, and social

2-1 barriers that directly impact student mental health and well-being;  
2-2 and  
2-3 (3) explore innovative and effective approaches to  
2-4 meeting the mental health needs of students, with specific focus on  
2-5 first generation college students, students of color, economically  
2-6 disadvantaged students, students who are parents, students of  
2-7 various sexual orientations, survivors of sexual assault, students  
2-8 who are immigrants, students who are or were previously in the  
2-9 conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective  
2-10 Services, and students from rural communities, including:  
2-11 (A) stigma reduction and awareness initiatives;  
2-12 (B) peer support initiatives;  
2-13 (C) action plans based on campus assessment;  
2-14 (D) recruiting and retaining counseling staff of  
2-15 color;  
2-16 (E) telehealth accessibility and expansion; and  
2-17 (F) addressing trauma and cultivating  
2-18 resiliency.  
2-19 (c) The task force is composed of:  
2-20 (1) the commissioner of higher education or the  
2-21 commissioner's designee;  
2-22 (2) the following additional members appointed by the  
2-23 commissioner of higher education:  
2-24 (A) three students who are enrolled at an  
2-25 institution of higher education in this state, at least one of whom  
2-26 is enrolled in a certificate program or a junior college;  
2-27 (B) two persons who provide mental health  
2-28 services at an institution of higher education and who are:  
2-29 (i) a psychologist, as defined by Section  
2-30 501.002, Occupations Code;  
2-31 (ii) a licensed professional counselor, as  
2-32 defined by Section 503.002, Occupations Code; or  
2-33 (iii) a licensed clinical social worker, as  
2-34 defined by Section 505.002, Occupations Code;  
2-35 (C) one person who is a psychiatrist;  
2-36 (D) two persons who are higher education  
2-37 administrators and who oversee the provision of mental health  
2-38 services at an institution of higher education;  
2-39 (E) one person who is a member of a foundation  
2-40 that invests in mental health services provided at institutions of  
2-41 higher education;  
2-42 (F) one person who is an employee of an  
2-43 institution of higher education designated under Subsection (k) or  
2-44 (l); and  
2-45 (G) three people who are employees of nonprofit  
2-46 organizations that specialize in mental health for young adults or  
2-47 college students; and  
2-48 (3) for any other entity the task force considers  
2-49 necessary, one person appointed by the task force for each such  
2-50 entity.  
2-51 (d) Persons appointed to serve on the task force shall be  
2-52 selected to represent the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic  
2-53 diversity of this state.  
2-54 (e) Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not apply to the  
2-55 task force.  
2-56 (f) The commissioner of higher education is designated as  
2-57 the interim presiding officer for purposes of calling and  
2-58 conducting the initial meeting of the task force.  
2-59 (g) The task force:  
2-60 (1) shall at its initial meeting select a presiding  
2-61 officer from among its members for the purpose of calling and  
2-62 conducting meetings; and  
2-63 (2) may select an assistant presiding officer and a  
2-64 secretary from among its members.  
2-65 (h) A member of the task force may not receive compensation  
2-66 or reimbursement for service on the task force.  
2-67 (i) After its initial meeting, the task force shall meet at  
2-68 least twice each year at a time and place determined by the  
2-69 presiding officer. The task force may meet at other times the task

3-1 force considers appropriate. The presiding officer may call a  
3-2 meeting on the presiding officer's own motion.

3-3 (j) The task force may meet by teleconference.

3-4 (k) The commissioner of higher education shall designate  
3-5 one institution of higher education with experience in evaluating  
3-6 mental health services to serve as the lead institution for the task  
3-7 force. The institution designated under this subsection shall  
3-8 provide faculty, staff, and administrative support services to the  
3-9 task force as determined necessary by the task force.

3-10 (l) The commissioner of higher education shall designate  
3-11 two institutions of higher education with experience in evaluating  
3-12 mental health services to assist the task force and the lead  
3-13 institution.

3-14 (m) In making a designation under Subsections (k) and (l),  
3-15 the commissioner of higher education shall give preference to at  
3-16 least one predominantly black institution, as defined by 20 U.S.C.  
3-17 Section 1067q(c)(9).

3-18 (n) The coordinating board shall maintain the data  
3-19 collected by the task force and the work product of the task force.

3-20 (o) The task force shall ensure that data gathered,  
3-21 information studied, and evaluations conducted under this section:

3-22 (1) are collected and maintained in compliance with  
3-23 federal law regarding confidentiality of student medical or  
3-24 educational information, including the Health Insurance  
3-25 Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Section 1320d  
3-26 et seq.) and any state law relating to the privacy of student or  
3-27 health information; and

3-28 (2) may not be shared with a federal agency or state  
3-29 agency, except as otherwise provided by law.

3-30 (p) The coordinating board may accept gifts, grants, or  
3-31 donations on behalf of the task force to carry out the task force's  
3-32 duties under this section.

3-33 (q) Not later than December 1, 2024, the task force shall  
3-34 submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the  
3-35 house of representatives, and the coordinating board a report of  
3-36 the results of the task force's activities conducted under this  
3-37 section and any recommendations for legislative or other action.

3-38 (r) The task force is abolished and this section expires  
3-39 September 1, 2025.

3-40 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.

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