

MAR 16 2026

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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED ABSENCES ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND  
WELL-BEING.

1 WHEREAS, student mental health is a critical component of  
2 overall well-being and academic success; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, many students experience mental and behavioral  
5 health challenges that may affect their ability to attend school  
6 regularly; and

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8 WHEREAS, untreated or unaddressed mental health needs can  
9 contribute to chronic absenteeism, declining academic  
10 performance, and reduced student engagement; and

11  
12 WHEREAS, the Department of Education (DOE) currently tracks  
13 student attendance pursuant to Board of Education policy 106-3  
14 and the state compulsory attendance law; and

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16 WHEREAS, within the current DOE system chronic absenteeism  
17 can trigger intervention efforts; and

18  
19 WHEREAS, the current DOE system does not disaggregate  
20 attendance data to track whether a student's absence is linked  
21 to a behavioral or mental health need; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, most Hawaii public schools have attendance  
24 policies that generally recognize physical illness, medical  
25 appointments, family bereavement, or authorized school  
26 activities as a reason for an excused absence, but do not  
27 explicitly categorize absences for mental health reasons as  
28 excused; and

29  
30 WHEREAS, understanding how frequently students miss school  
31 due to mental health needs and how such absences affect



1 attendance patterns and academic outcomes could help inform  
2 future education policy in the State; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the  
6 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of  
7 Education is requested to conduct a study on the impact of  
8 mental health-related absences on student attendance and well-  
9 being; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study is requested to  
12 include:

- 13 1. An analysis of how often students in the public  
14 school system miss school due to behavioral or  
15 mental health concerns;
- 16  
17 2. A review of policies in other states that  
18 recognize or allow mental health-related absences  
19 for students;
- 20  
21 3. An evaluation of whether recognizing mental  
22 health-related absences as excused absences may  
23 improve student attendance, well-being, or  
24 academic outcomes; and
- 25  
26 4. Any recommendations for administrative, policy,  
27 or legislative changes the Department of  
28 Education deems appropriate; and

29  
30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is  
31 requested to submit a report of its findings and  
32 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
33 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
34 the Regular Session of 2027; and

35  
36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
37 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the  
38 Board of Education and the Superintendent of Education.

39  
40 OFFERED BY: *Kurt Ferrel*

