

MAR 16 2026

SENATE 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
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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
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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
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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
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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
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30 WHEREAS, understanding how frequently students miss school
31 due to mental health needs and how such absences affect
32 attendance patterns and academic outcomes could help inform
33 future education policy in the State; now, therefore,



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

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 8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study is requested to
 9 include:

- 10 1. An analysis of how often students in the public
 11 school system miss school due to behavioral or
 12 mental health concerns;
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 14 2. A review of policies in other states that
 15 recognize or allow mental health-related absences
 16 for students;
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 18 3. An evaluation of whether recognizing mental
 19 health-related absences as excused absences may
 20 improve student attendance, well-being, or
 21 academic outcomes; and
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 23 4. Any recommendations for administrative, policy,
 24 or legislative changes the Department of
 25 Education deems appropriate; and
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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
 28 requested to submit a report of its findings and
 29 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
 30 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
 31 the Regular Session of 2027; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 34 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
 35 Education and the Superintendent of Education.
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OFFERED BY: Kurt Favelle

