SPONSOR: Rep. S. Moore & Sen. Lockman & Rep. Wilson-Anton
Reps. Baumbach, Heffernan, K. Johnson, Lynn, Minor-Brown; Sens. Pinkney, Sokola, Sturgeon, Townsend

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88

ENCOURAGING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PRIORITIZE FUNDING FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS AND TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROMOTE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING.

WHEREAS, social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which people acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions; and

WHEREAS, Delaware currently participates in the SEL and Workforce Initiative, which was launched by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in 2020 with the goal of preparing students for success in their future careers; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Department of Education supports the Delaware Social and Emotional Learning Collaborative and a core group of educators and community partners who have met monthly for the last three years for the purpose of developing an implementation framework that includes the development of K-12 SEL competencies, confirming alignment between the preschool SEL standards, crosswalking the competencies with the academic content standards, and creating as well as curating tools for implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Department of Education hosts public convenings quarterly of the Delaware Social and Emotional Learning Collaborative to report on the progress of the core group, respond to public comments, and provide learning opportunities to deepen collaborations; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Department of Education promotes the social competence of all educators by sponsoring the Delaware Chapter of the Coalition of Schools Educating Mindfully (DE-COSEM) and high quality professional learning to expand coping repertoires, reduce dysregulation, and increase the retention of a resilient workforce; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Department of Education developed a state-level Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Wellbeing (SEBW) Plan to aid districts and charter schools in responding to and supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students; and

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WHEREAS, federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds provided through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act will be used to implement the SEBW plan, with the goals of improving students' wellbeing and quality of life, improving attendance, self-regulation, behavior, and academic outcomes, and decreasing symptoms of serious behavioral health challenges, including self-harm, suicide, and substance use, that impede participation in school; and

WHEREAS, the ESSER II funds will be available for obligation until September 30, 2023, and American Rescue Plan ESSER funds may allow for continued funding of the SEBW plan through September 30, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the state's ESSER II funds will not provide additional funding to schools to hire mental health staff; and

WHEREAS, schools are not required to participate in the professional learning opportunities and related resources provided by the SEBW plan; and

WHEREAS, trauma-informed SEL is an approach to Social Emotional Learning that recognizes and addresses the needs of children who have experienced trauma; and

WHEREAS, Governor John Carney signed Executive Order 24 on October 17, 2018, making the State of Delaware a trauma-informed state; and

WHEREAS, the Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study found that childhood exposure to traumatic experiences increases the likelihood of physical and psychological illness later in life; and

WHEREAS, data from the 2019-2020 National Survey of Children's Health indicates that 22.8% of children in Delaware have experienced one adverse childhood experience, while 19.1% have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences; and

WHEREAS, the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated mental and behavioral health challenges for students of all ages; and

WHEREAS, according to the US. Department of Health & Human Services, social and emotional competence among children is a protective factor against adverse childhood experiences.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the Senate concurring therein, that the General Assembly should prioritize funding for Social Emotional Learning and fostering Restorative Justice in school districts and charter schools, including funding for professional development and funding to develop schoolwide action plans that address the needs of traumatized children and measures to decrease punitive responses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly should work collaboratively with the Delaware Department of Education and other stakeholders to identify additional opportunities to promote the integration of SEL into academic instruction, school environments and create additional positions and funding for SEL leads for each LEA that specifically targets the SEL work contained within this resolution and promulgated by the Department of Education.

SYNOPSIS

This Concurrent Resolution encourages the General Assembly to prioritize funding for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools, and to work collaboratively with the Delaware Department of Education and other stakeholders to promote the use of SEL in school districts and charter schools.

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