



Florida Counseling Association

A Branch of the American Counseling Association

SB 1062 Involuntary Examinations of Minors/ CS/HB 1083: Student Mental Health Procedures

The Florida Counseling Association supports this bill that ensures parents/guardians are notified immediately if a student is taken to a receiving facility for an involuntary examination. School districts should have a policy that includes de-escalation strategies to support a student before a student is removed from the school environment.

Rational for Support:

- In the 2017-2018 year, 36,078 children under the age of 18 were Baker Acted in Florida. A rise of over 3,000 from the previous year. (Reported by the USF Baker Act Reporting Center: <https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/>)
- De-escalation strategies such as reflective listening, ensuring a safe and calm space for the student, and encouraging breathing techniques have proven effective in assist students to feel more in control of their actions and environment. (De-escalate. (2019). *Curriculum Review*, 59(4), 8. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2322344423?accountid=198519>)
- Parental involvement is essential in ensuring proper care for students. Parents should be contacted immediately in regard to their student's safety needs.
- SB 1062 also includes mandatory crisis intervention training for school safety officers. It is imperative that our school safety officer have the training to respond to a student in a mental health crisis. Ensuring de-escalation strategies are included to support the student.
- SB 1062 also calls for a reduced ratio of students to staff in order to best support students. ASCA recommends a ratio of 250-1 students/counselor ratio. In 2015, Florida reported a 531 to 1 ratio. (<https://www.fl-schoolcounselor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OPPAGA-Report.pdf>)

We ask that you support these bills providing best practices for our student's safety in in our state. Please contact us below with any questions or concerns.

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