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Ventura measure to enhance physical, emotional health in schools passes Senate

SPRINGFIELD – School has become increasingly stressful for students, leading State Senator Rachel Ventura to spearhead legislation that would help students reduce anxiety and focus on their physical and emotional needs during school time.

“A student’s life consists of a variety of stressors – from homework to friend groups and life at home. Giving them at least 20 minutes to relax and focus on their mental health will help them feel less stress and in turn produce better outcomes in the classroom,” said Ventura (D-Joliet). “Helping students identify ways to manage stress and anxiety is just one benefit that could come from this legislation.”

[Senate Bill 2872](#) would provide instruction for school districts on relaxation activities, such as yoga or meditation, once a week for 20 minutes, in addition to recess, to enhance physical and emotional health.

Relaxation activities may include, but are not limited to, mindful-based movements, yoga, stretching, meditation, breathing exercises, guided relaxation techniques, quiet time, walking, in-person conversation, and other activities. The measure would allow a school district to partner with a local community-based organization to provide the activities.

If a school district wishes, the activities could take place in a physical education class, social-emotional learning class, student-support or advisory class, or as part of another class, including a new class, providing ample opportunities and flexibility for schools to adopt.

[Statistics](#) from the American Psychological Association show that 4.1 million children in the U.S. between the ages of 3 and 17 years old have been diagnosed with anxiety.

“Yoga Alliance extends its gratitude to Senator Ventura for her hard work in crafting this important bill to provide opportunities for Illinois students to participate in yoga and other mindfulness activities at school,” said Toni Carey, Head of Strategic Communications at

Yoga Alliance, the largest nonprofit association representing the yoga community.

“Research has shown that activities like yoga and meditation can improve students' mental and physical health, reducing stress and promoting overall emotional balance. We believe that greater access to yoga will improve the well-being of Illinois’ children and the Yoga Alliance community is delighted to endorse this initiative and assist in its implementation. We have appreciated the opportunity to consult with Senator Ventura on this legislation since it was first introduced, and we look forward to its passage.”

Senate Bill 2872 passed the Senate on Wednesday and now heads to the House for further consideration.

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