A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION expressing Kentucky's support for the Crisis Recovery Support Network coordinated by the Southern Regional Education Board, expressing support for Kentucky's participation in the network, and recognizing the network as a trusted support for Kentucky schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions to know they may call upon if the need arises.

WHEREAS, after natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods, after school shootings, and in public emergencies, recovery must be prioritized as a long-term process, rather than an immediate response only; and

WHEREAS, states, school districts, and postsecondary institutions have focused on crisis prevention and management, but may not have the capacity to provide sustained counseling support for their students, teachers, communities, and even their own counselors during the recovery stage; and

WHEREAS, rural school districts and institutions in particular tend to have fewer counselors and limited access to additional counseling resources; and

WHEREAS, school counselors are often expected to respond to student needs after tragedy, even as they themselves grapple with the emotional toll, underscoring the need for external support for the entire school community; and

WHEREAS, schools and institutions affected by crisis may require at least a year of dedicated support to fully recover; and

WHEREAS, recovery efforts can strain resources that are already stretched thin, given that a National Center for Education Statistics study showed that less than half of public schools surveyed believe that their school is equipped to provide mental health services to all students in need; and

WHEREAS, recovery is an extended healing process for students and adults alike, and having additional counselors come to the aid of a school or institution in extreme need supports the healing process of all people in the community, including teachers and counselors; and

WHEREAS, specialized training for counselors is essential to ensure they have received psychological first aid training and provide counseling that aligns with the unique needs of an educational environment; and

WHEREAS, research shows that students who receive adequate support after a crisis are more likely to succeed academically, remain in school, and contribute positively to society; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), with its 75-year history of partnering with states to improve education, is uniquely equipped to lead this effort because of its ability to mobilize key education and policymaking stakeholders at all levels; and

WHEREAS, SREB will cover the cost of a coordinator to operate the network, as well as travel costs for network counselors during training and deployment; and

WHEREAS, SREB has secured funding for the first two years of training for a pool of counselors from each SREB state; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky General Assembly is aware that SREB will ask states for $10,000 in additional funding in two years to sustain training of counselors;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the House of Representatives concurring therein:

➔Section 1. To meet the urgent need for a coordinated, region-wide effort to provide consistent long-term counseling capacity that is ready to deploy immediately after a crisis is managed, the Kentucky General Assembly supports the mission of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Crisis Recovery Support Network. The SREB, in close collaboration with governors' offices, state education agencies, local school districts, and postsecondary institutions, will complement existing school and district crisis management efforts by focusing on long-term healing and psychological resilience by deploying counselors with specialized training to schools in extreme need.

➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Dr. Stephen Pruitt, President, Southern Regional Education Board; Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education; Dr. Aaron Thompson, President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education; and Governor Andy Beshear.