

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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SENATE BILL DRS45532-MTa-187

Short Title: Student Mental Health Support Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Batch, Fitch, and Garrett (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR A SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH GRANT
3 PROGRAM.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. Article 25B of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
6 adding a new section to read:

7 **"§ 115C-377. School Mental Health Grant Program.**

8 (a) Definitions. – For purposes of this section, the term "mental health support personnel"
9 refers to any of the following:

- 10 (1) School counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.
11 (2) Psychiatrists licensed in accordance with Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the
12 General Statutes.
13 (3) Psychologists, as defined in G.S. 90-270.136(6).
14 (4) Licensed psychological associates, as defined in G.S. 90-270.136(7).
15 (5) Licensed clinical mental health counselors, as defined in G.S. 90-330(a).
16 (6) Substance use disorder professionals, as defined in G.S. 90-113.31A(26).
17 (7) Social workers engaged in clinical social work practice, as defined in
18 G.S. 90B-3(6).

19 (b) Program; Purpose. – The Department of Public Instruction shall establish the School
20 Mental Health Grant Program (Program). To the extent funds are made available for the Program,
21 its purpose is to increase student access to mental health support personnel in public school units.

22 (c) Applications. – The Department shall make grant applications available to public
23 school units pursuant to this section. The Department shall establish (i) deadlines for receipt of
24 applications and the award of funds and (ii) any information to be included in the applications.

25 (d) Award of Funds. – The Department shall award funds to selected public school units
26 based on the need of the public school unit. In evaluating the need of the unit, the Department
27 shall prioritize the award of funds to units with a greater proportion of students who have limited
28 or no access to mental health services, including students who do not have health insurance and
29 students with disabilities.

30 (e) Use of Funds. – A public school unit shall use funds received pursuant to the Program
31 to contract with mental health support personnel to provide mental health services in one or more
32 schools in the unit.

33 (f) Supplement Not Supplant. – Grants provided to public school units pursuant to the
34 Program shall be used to supplement and not supplant State or non-State funds already provided
35 for mental health services in schools.



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1 (g) Report. – No later than March 15, 2023, and every year thereafter in which funds are
2 provided for the Program, the Department shall report on the Program to the Joint Legislative
3 Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and
4 Human Services. The report shall include at least the following information:

5 (1) The identity of each public school unit that received a grant through the
6 Program.

7 (2) The amount of funding received by each public school unit.

8 (3) The services purchased with grant funds by each public school unit that
9 received a grant.

10 (4) Recommendations for the implementation of additional measures to improve
11 student mental health, especially among students with limited or no access to
12 mental health services."

13 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
14 Public Instruction for the 2022-2023 fiscal year the sum of forty million dollars (\$40,000,000) in
15 recurring funds to provide grants for school mental health services in public school units in
16 accordance with G.S. 115C-377, as enacted by this act. The Department may use up to fifty
17 thousand dollars (\$50,000) of these funds each year for administrative costs related to the
18 Program.

19 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2022, and applies beginning with
20 the 2022-2023 school year.