

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 1522

(Delegate Hill)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Needs Assessment for Student School-Based Behavioral Health Services

This bill requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to conduct a needs assessment for student school-based behavioral health services that includes data concerning all public school jurisdictions in the State. In conducting the needs assessment, DHMH and MSDE must consult with local education agencies and other interested stakeholders.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DHMH and MSDE can complete the required needs assessment within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local education agencies can consult with DHMH and MSDE within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The needs assessment must include (1) an assessment of the need for behavioral health services for each school district; (2) a description of the types of school-based behavioral health services offered to children with behavioral health needs in each school district through specified programs and centers; (3) documentation of the number of children with behavioral health needs who are being provided services, including the type of services; (4) a description of the extent to which school-based behavioral health services are offered in the summer and during school breaks, in addition

to the school year; (5) the obstacles to providing services to all children who need them; and (6) recommendations for removing obstacles to the provision of services to students with behavioral health needs.

Current Law: Regulations require a planned, systematic program of counseling, consulting, appraisal, information, and placement services for students in prekindergarten through grade 12. The program must be designed to address three goal areas: (1) personal and academic growth; (2) educational and career decision-making; and (3) social/emotional growth and interpersonal relations. With the assistance of local health departments, each local board of education must provide adequate school health services, instruction in health education, and a healthful school environment.

Background: According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, up to one in five children experience a diagnosable mental health disorder in a given year. Behavioral and emotional issues can act as a barrier to academic success and high school graduation, as well as create disciplinary and attendance problems in school. Research indicates that school mental health programs can improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, decreasing discipline referrals, and improving test scores.

A recent white paper by the National Association of School Psychologists stated that 75% to 80% of children and youth in need of mental health services do not receive them because existing services are inadequate. Of those who do receive services, 70% to 80% receive mental health services in schools. Students are 21 times more likely to visit school-based health centers for mental health concerns than community-based centers.

Additional Comments: House Bill 1100 of 2016 would have required each local board of education to require the School Counseling Program to provide counseling services to students during the entire calendar year. The bill also would have required the local board of education to determine the student needs for counseling services during the period of time when schools are not in session for summer break, prioritizing the needs of at-risk students, and develop a plan for meeting those student needs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Association of School Psychologists; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2017
kb/ljm Third Reader - March 27, 2017
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 27, 2017
Enrolled - May 9, 2017
Revised - Amendment(s) - May 9, 2017

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