

Chapter 430

(House Bill 776)

AN ACT concerning

**State Department of Education – Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Consultation Project – Study and Report**

FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to perform a thorough study, analysis, and evaluation of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project; requiring that, in completing its study, the Department evaluate Project services, capacity, and integration with existing programs; requiring the Department to report on progress toward completing certain recommendations; requiring the Department to consult with certain stakeholders in carrying out its duties; requiring the Department to report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; defining a certain term; and generally relating to the State Department of Education's study of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) In this section, "Project" means the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project.

(b) (1) The State Department of Education shall perform a thorough study, analysis, and evaluation of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project.

(2) In performing its obligations under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Department shall:

(i) review the goals of the Project and how effectively those goals have been met;

(ii) evaluate the need, throughout the State, for infant and early childhood mental health care and the capacity of existing Project services to meet that need;

(iii) identify any areas in the State where Project services are insufficient, including the areas where additional services are needed and the areas where prospective cases cannot be served at all;

(iv) evaluate the capacity of the Project to meet the service gaps identified under item (iii) of this paragraph;

(v) examine the feasibility of expanding the Project to cover service gaps identified under item (iii) of this paragraph that cannot be met using existing resources;

(vi) assess the costs and benefits associated with current Project staffing qualifications and potential alternative qualification models, including the capacity for the Project to continue to provide needed services under alternative models;

(vii) consider how the Project could be integrated with existing school psychological services;

~~(viii)~~ (viii) consider how the Project could be integrated with publicly funded prekindergarten programs and how Project services might be integrated with programs designed to prevent the suspension and expulsion of students under § 7–305.1 of the Education Article; and

~~(viii)~~ (ix) calculate the costs required to expand Project services to accomplish the actions under items ~~(vi) and (vii)~~ (vii) and (viii) of this paragraph.

(3) In carrying out its duties under this subsection, the Department shall report on any progress made toward completing the recommendations to improve the Project set forth in the Policy Equity Group, LLC’s July 2019 plan, “Developing an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Professional Development System in Maryland: A Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan”.

(4) In carrying out its duties under this section, the Department shall consult with and seek input from relevant stakeholders.

(c) On or before January 1, 2022, the Department shall report its findings to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 30, 2021.