By: Delegate Reznik  
Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2022  
Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 Higher Education – Programs for Behavioral Health Professionals in Primary
3 and Secondary Schools – Requirements and Grant Program

4 FOR the purpose of requiring public institutions of higher education with certain
5 behavioral health programs to offer courses in a certain manner and coordinate with
6 other public institutions of higher education; establishing the Behavioral Health
7 Professionals in Schools Quality and Diversity Grant Program; and generally
8 relating to higher education programs for behavioral health professionals in schools.

9 BY adding to
10 Article – Education
11 Section 15–134; and 17–501 through 17–504 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle
12 5. Behavioral Health Professionals in Schools Quality and Diversity Grant
13 Program”
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 Article – Education

19 15–134.

20 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES” MEANS
21 TRAUMA–INFORMED PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND TREATMENT SERVICES FOR
22 THE SOCIAL–EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OF
23 STUDENTS, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS.

24 (B) A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT OFFERS A
PROGRAM TO PREPARE PROFESSIONALS TO PROVIDE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES IN PRIMARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, SHALL:

(1) OFFER COURSES IN THE PROGRAM IN A MANNER THAT MAXIMIZES THE NUMBER AND TYPES OF STUDENTS WHO MAY PARTICIPATE, INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO ARE TRANSITIONING FROM ONE CAREER TO A CAREER IN PROVIDING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES IN PRIMARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS; AND

(2) TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, COORDINATE WITH OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT OFFER SIMILAR PROGRAMS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MORE EFFICIENTLY EXPANDING COURSEWORK AND TRAINING FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROFESSIONALS TO PROVIDE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

SUBTITLE 5. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS QUALITY AND DIVERSITY GRANT PROGRAM.

17–501.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO PROVIDES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING A:

(1) A THERAPIST;

(2) A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST;

(3) A SOCIAL WORKER; AND

(4) A COUNSELOR.

(C) "BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES" MEANS TRAUMA–INFORMED PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND TREATMENT SERVICES FOR THE SOCIAL–EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS.

(D) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS QUALITY AND DIVERSITY GRANT PROGRAM.
17–502.

(A) There is a Behavioral Health Professionals in Schools Quality and Diversity Grant Program.

(B) The purpose of the Program is to assist institutions of higher education in:

(1) Developing education programs that prepare students to provide behavioral health services in a primary or secondary school setting that are accessible to nontraditional students; and

(2) Aiding students from historically underrepresented populations to prepare for and achieve the relevant certification to become professionals who provide behavioral health services in primary or secondary schools.

17–503.

(A) The Commission shall administer the Program by awarding grants:

(1) To institutions of higher education in the State that provide education to individuals to provide behavioral health services in a primary or secondary school;

(2) On a competitive basis; and

(3) In a manner that serves the purpose of the Program, as specified under § 17–502 of this subtitle, and meets the requirements of this subtitle.

(B) The Commission shall establish and adopt guidelines for awarding grants under this section, including:

(1) Prioritizing the awarding of grants to historically black colleges and universities and institutions of higher education that educate high proportions of Hispanic students and that have a record of preparing diverse and high-quality behavioral health professionals in the State; and

(2) Encouraging institutions of higher education to expand existing educational and training programs to provide behavioral
HEALTH SERVICES IN A PRIMARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOL SETTING BY:

(I) Recruiting and enrolling nontraditional students, including students with training or backgrounds that are not in the subject of behavioral health;

(II) Offering courses through a variety of methods of instruction, including online courses and summer courses; and

(III) Partnering with other entities to offer education and training opportunities, including with local schools, applicable licensing boards, and programs related to behavioral health services in schools.

FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM SHALL BE AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2022.