# ASSEMBLY, No. 4433 STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 23, 2020

Sponsored by: Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD District 6 (Burlington and Camden) Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI District 33 (Hudson) Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by: Assemblywoman Jasey, Assemblyman Benson, Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttle, Murphy, Assemblyman Verrelli, Assemblywomen Mosquera, Reynolds-Jackson and Assemblyman Johnson

## SYNOPSIS

Creates grant program to encourage school districts to partner with institutions of higher education in training school-based mental health services providers.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/14/2020)

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AN ACT establishing a grant program for the training of school based mental health services providers and supplementing
 chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

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8 1. a. There is established in the Department of Education a 9 grant program to assist school districts in the training of school-10 based mental health services providers, expand the pipeline of highquality, trained providers, and address the shortages of mental 11 12 health professionals in schools. As used in this section, "school-13 based mental health services provider" means a State-licensed or State-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social 14 15 worker, or other State-licensed or State-certified mental health 16 professional qualified under State law to provide mental health 17 services to children and adolescents.

b. Grants under the program shall be awarded on a competitive
basis. School districts that receive a grant under the program shall
use the funds for efforts to create and grow programs and
partnerships that train students who are attending graduate school to
become school-based mental health services providers.

23 c. To be eligible for consideration of a grant award under the 24 program, a school district shall submit an application to the 25 Commissioner of Education, in accordance with application 26 procedures and requirements prescribed by the commissioner. A 27 school district applying for a grant award under the program shall, 28 prior to submitting an application, form a partnership with one or 29 more institutions of higher education that offer graduate programs 30 in school-based mental health fields. The partnership shall allow a 31 student enrolled in an institution of higher education's graduate 32 program to perform applicable fieldwork, credit hours, internships, 33 externships, or other related training as applicable for the academic 34 program of the student.

A grant application submitted by a school district shall includeinformation regarding the following:

(1) the details of the partnership formed between the school
district and an institution of higher education, including plans for
supervising the graduate students in school settings and ensuring
that the students are trained in providing mental health supports and
services to students in the school district;

42 (2) a description of how the lack of school-based mental health43 services providers is affecting students in the school district;

44 (3) the school district's unmet need for student mental health45 supports and services;

46 (4) the number of school-based mental health services providers47 currently employed by the school district and their caseloads;

(5) the existing ratio of school-based mental health services
 providers to students enrolled in the district;

3 (6) the schools and student populations that will benefit from4 the grant funding;

5 (7) the objectives for the number of graduate students the school6 district anticipates training under the grant program;

(8) plans to collaborate with federal, State, regional, and local
entities to expand the pipeline of school-based mental health
services providers and achieve partnership goals and objectives; and
(9) any other information as required by the commissioner.

11 d. (1) The commissioner shall establish selection criteria for 12 the awarding of grants under the program, including consideration 13 of the information listed in subsection c. of this section. Grants 14 shall be awarded based upon review of the applications and subject 15 to the availability of funds. The commissioner shall establish the 16 amount for each grant that is approved.

(2) Priority for grants awarded under the program shall be given
to high-need school districts. The Commissioner of Children and
Families, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, shall
establish criteria for designating high-need school districts based
upon evidence that the school district is located in an area of the
State that has significant mental health needs that are not currently
being met.

24 e. The Department of Education shall annually apply for and 25 use any federal grant funds or other federal assistance which may be 26 available to be used for the grant program established pursuant to 27 this section including, but not limited to, funds under the federal 28 Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant Program 29 and the federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act," Pub.L.116-136. The department may, if applicable, 30 31 apply for federal grant funds or other federal assistance on behalf of 32 one or more school districts approved for participation in the grant 33 program established pursuant to this section. Any federal grant 34 funds or other federal assistance awarded to the department shall 35 first be used to provide grant awards to school districts, prior to 36 using State funds under the grant program established pursuant to 37 this section.

38 f. Within three years after receiving a grant award under the 39 program, a school district shall submit a report to the Commissioner 40 of Education containing information on the district's use of the 41 grant funds. The report shall include, at a minimum, information on 42 the number of graduate students trained under the program, the 43 number of graduate students who were hired as school-based mental 44 health services providers using grant funds, increases or 45 improvements in the provision of student mental health supports 46 and services as a result of the grant, and any notable changes in 47 school climate, attendance rates, student achievement, school 48 discipline, or other measures since receiving the grant.

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1 The Commissioner of Education shall submit a report to the 2. 2 Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, 3 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than four years after the 4 establishment of the grant program established pursuant to section 1 5 of this act. The report shall include, but need not be limited to, information on the number of grant applicants, the number and 6 7 amounts of the grant awards, information provided by school 8 districts in the reports submitted pursuant to subsection f. of section 9 1 of this act, and any recommendations concerning the continuation 10 or expansion of the grant program.

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12 The State Board of Education shall adopt, pursuant to the 3. 13 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et 14 seq.), rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of 15 this act.

17 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year following the date of enactment.

### **STATEMENT**

23 This bill establishes a grant program to assist school districts in 24 the training of school-based mental health services providers to 25 expand the pipeline of high-quality, trained providers and address 26 the shortages of mental health professionals in school districts. 27 School districts that receive a grant under the program will use the 28 funds for efforts to create and grow programs that train students 29 who are attending graduate school to become school-based mental 30 health services providers. School-based mental health services 31 providers are defined under the bill as State-licensed or certified 32 school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, or 33 other mental health professional qualified under State law to 34 provide mental health services to children and adolescents.

35 Prior to applying for the grant program, a school district is required to form a partnership with one or more institutions of 36 37 higher education that offer graduate programs in school-based 38 mental health fields. The partnership would allow a student 39 enrolled in the graduate program to perform applicable fieldwork, 40 credit hours, internships, externships, or other related training as 41 applicable for the academic program of the student.

42 The Commissioner of Education will establish selection criteria 43 for the awarding of grants under the program, including 44 consideration of various information regarding the need for school-45 based mental health professionals and an increased level of student 46 mental health services and supports. In awarding grants, priority 47 will be given to high-need school districts, which will be designated

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according to criteria established by the Commissioner of Children
 and Families, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education.

3 Under the bill, the Department of Education is required to 4 annually apply for and use any federal grant funds or other federal 5 assistance which may be available to be used for the grant program including, but not limited to, funds under the Mental Health Service 6 7 Professional Demonstration Grant Program and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The department 8 9 may, if applicable, apply for federal grant funds or other assistance 10 on behalf of one or more school districts approved for participation 11 in the grant program established under the bill. Any federal grant funds awarded to the department will first be used to provide grant 12 13 awards to school districts, prior to using State funds.