

SENATE, No. 2717

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 23, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Pou

SYNOPSIS

Requires DCF to give priority to certain school districts with student mental health counseling centers in awarding grants under School Based Youth Services Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/21/2020)

1 AN ACT prioritizing certain school districts under the School Based
2 Youth Services Program and supplementing chapter 5B of Title
3 30 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. a. In awarding grants under the School Based Youth Services
9 Program, the Office of School-Linked Services within the Division
10 of Family and Community Partnerships of the Department of
11 Children and Families shall give priority to applicant school
12 districts that operate or host, or demonstrate a plan to operate or
13 host, a center or other entity that focuses on providing individual,
14 family, and group clinical mental health counseling services to
15 students. The center or other entity shall be:

16 (1) separate from, but integrated into, a school within the
17 applicant school district;

18 (2) open for students to visit clinical mental health professionals
19 during, before, and after school hours; and

20 (3) staffed by clinical mental health professionals, who are
21 school district employees and provide mental health counseling
22 services to students either in-person or remotely through the use of
23 telehealth or telemedicine services, as applicable.

24 b. Of the applicant school districts that operate or host, or
25 demonstrate a plan to operate or host, a center or other entity in
26 accordance with subsection a. of this section, the Office of School-
27 Linked Services shall consider the following factors in determining
28 further priority in awarding grants under the School Based Youth
29 Services Program:

30 (1) whether the school district is designated as a “high-need”
31 school district, as determined by the Commissioner of Children and
32 Families;

33 (2) the existence of a partnership between the center or other
34 entity and community mental health providers and other community
35 resources;

36 (3) whether the school district has developed a plan for mental
37 health professionals working in its center or other entity to develop
38 curricula to train students and staff on identifying the signs of
39 mental health conditions and addressing risk factors that may
40 impact student mental health; and

41 (4) whether the center or other entity created by the school
42 district has clinical mental health professional staff who specialize
43 in a variety of mental health areas, or demonstrates a plan to retain
44 the services of clinical mental health professionals in a variety of
45 mental health areas.

46
47 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) to give priority to certain school districts in awarding grants under the program. The Department of Children and Families' Office of School-Linked Services within the Division of Family and Community Partnerships currently administers the SBYSP. The program is located within host schools and coordinates with existing resources in the community. SBYSP services include: mental health counseling; employment counseling; substance abuse education/prevention; preventive health awareness including pregnancy prevention; primary medical linkages; learning support; healthy youth development; recreation; and information/referral.

Under the bill, priority for SBYSP grants will first be given to applicant school districts that operate or host a center or other entity that focuses on providing individual, family, and group clinical mental health counseling services to students. The center or other entity will be: separate from, but integrated into, a school within the applicant school district; open for students to visit clinical mental health professionals before, during, and after regular school hours; and staffed by clinical mental health professionals, who are employees of the school district and provide mental health counseling services to students either in-person or remotely through the use of telehealth or telemedicine services.

Of those school districts that operate or host, or plan to operate or host, a mental health counseling center, the Office of School-Linked Services will consider certain factors enumerated in the bill in determining further priority in awarding grants under the School Based Youth Services Program. Those factors include: whether the school district is designated as a "high-need" school district, as determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families; the existence of a partnership between the center and community mental health providers and other community resources; whether the school district has developed a plan for mental health professionals working in its center to develop curricula to train students and staff on identifying the signs of mental health conditions and addressing risk factors that may impact student mental health; and whether the center or other entity created by the school district has, or demonstrates a plan to have, clinical mental health professional staff who specialize in a variety of mental health areas.