

ASSEMBLY, No. 5307

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2023

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT

District 29 (Essex)

Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblyman Atkins,
Assemblywoman Park, Assemblyman Wimberly, Assemblywomen Lopez,
Jasey and Assemblyman Freiman**

SYNOPSIS

Directs DOE to develop guidelines for school districts concerning student mental health services.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/21/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning student mental health services and
2 supplementing chapter 40 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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

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8 1. a. The Department of Education, in partnership with the
9 Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and
10 Families, shall develop and distribute to school districts guidelines
11 for providing mental health services to students. The purpose of the
12 guidelines shall be to assist school districts in enhancing and
13 improving mental health services for students and shall reflect the
14 findings of the “New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental
15 Health Resource Guide” published by the Department of Education
16 in February 2022. The department shall review and update the
17 guidelines annually. In developing and updating the guidelines, the
18 department shall seek the input and recommendations of school
19 district administrators, educators, mental health professionals, and
20 other appropriate stakeholders.

21 b. The guidelines, developed pursuant to this section, at
22 minimum, shall include recommendations on:

23 (1) implementing a quality-based multi-tiered student mental
24 health system of care that prevents mental health concerns and
25 mitigates trauma;

26 (2) establishing sustainable school partnerships with community
27 mental health service providers;

28 (3) providing mental health services to English language
29 learners;

30 (4) providing culturally sensitive mental health services;

31 (5) incorporating new technology and innovations into existing
32 mental health services, including, but not limited to, providing
33 mental health services to students through virtual or remote means;

34 (6) evaluating the effectiveness of available student mental
35 health services;

36 (7) identifying and maximizing the use of available State,
37 federal, nonprofit, and private funding to support a multi-tiered
38 student mental health system of care; and

39 (8) the ratios of student mental health providers to students.

40 c. The Department of Education shall post the guidelines
41 developed pursuant to this section on its Internet website. The
42 department shall also include on its Internet website links to
43 professional development resources related to student mental health
44 for school administrators, educators, and staff.

45 d. The Department of Education, in partnership with the
46 Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and
47 Families, shall create and maintain a database consisting of
48 available mental health resource providers throughout the State.

1 The database shall be available to school districts and students and
2 their families.

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

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STATEMENT

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10 This bill directs the Department of Education, in partnership with
11 the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children
12 and Families, to develop and distribute to school districts guidelines
13 for providing mental health services to students. The purpose of the
14 guidelines will be to assist school districts in enhancing and
15 improving mental health services for students. Under the bill, the
16 guidelines will be reviewed and updated annually by the
17 Department of Education. In developing and updating the
18 guidelines, the department will seek the input and recommendations
19 of school district administrators, educators, mental health
20 professionals, and other appropriate stakeholders.

21 The guidelines established under the bill, at minimum, will
22 include recommendations on:

23 (1) implementing a quality-based multi-tiered student mental
24 health system of care that prevents mental health concerns and
25 mitigates trauma;

26 (2) establishing sustainable school partnerships with community
27 mental health service providers;

28 (3) providing mental health services to English language
29 learners;

30 (4) providing culturally sensitive mental health services;

31 (5) incorporating new technology and innovations into existing
32 mental health services, including, but not limited to, providing
33 mental health services to students through virtual or remote means;

34 (6) evaluating the effectiveness of available student mental
35 health services;

36 (7) identifying and maximizing the use of available State,
37 federal, nonprofit, and private funding to support a multi-tiered
38 student mental health system of care; and

39 (8) the ratios of student mental health providers to students.

40 Under the bill, the Department of Education will post the
41 guidelines on its Internet website. Also under the bill, the
42 Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of
43 Human Services and the Department of Children and Families, will
44 create and maintain a database consisting of available mental health
45 resource providers throughout the State. The database will be
46 available to school districts, as well as students and their families.