ASSEMBLY, No. 5307

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2023

Sponsored by:

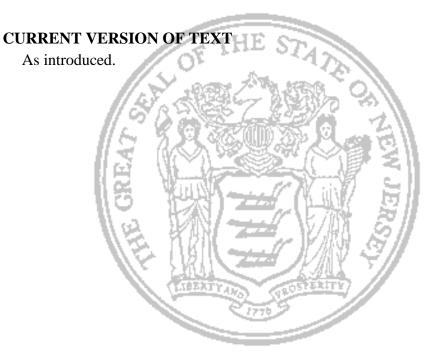
Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT District 29 (Essex) Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY District 18 (Middlesex) Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

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.



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

AN ACT concerning student mental health services and supplementing chapter 40 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. 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 findings of the "New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental 14 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 district administrators, educators, mental health professionals, and 19 20 other appropriate stakeholders.
 - b. The guidelines, developed pursuant to this section, at minimum, shall include recommendations on:
 - (1) implementing a quality-based multi-tiered student mental health system of care that prevents mental health concerns and mitigates trauma;
 - (2) establishing sustainable school partnerships with community mental health service providers;
 - (3) providing mental health services to English language learners;
 - (4) providing culturally sensitive mental health services;
 - (5) incorporating new technology and innovations into existing mental health services, including, but not limited to, providing mental health services to students through virtual or remote means;
 - (6) evaluating the effectiveness of available student mental health services;
 - (7) identifying and maximizing the use of available State, federal, nonprofit, and private funding to support a multi-tiered student mental health system of care; and
 - (8) the ratios of student mental health providers to students.
 - c. The Department of Education shall post the guidelines developed pursuant to this section on its Internet website. The department shall also include on its Internet website links to professional development resources related to student mental health for school administrators, educators, and staff.
 - d. The Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and Families, shall create and maintain a database consisting of available mental health resource providers throughout the State.

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

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

STATEMENT

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

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

- (1) implementing a quality-based multi-tiered student mental health system of care that prevents mental health concerns and mitigates trauma;
- (2) establishing sustainable school partnerships with community mental health service providers;
- (3) providing mental health services to English language learners;
 - (4) providing culturally sensitive mental health services;
- (5) incorporating new technology and innovations into existing mental health services, including, but not limited to, providing mental health services to students through virtual or remote means;
- (6) evaluating the effectiveness of available student mental health services;
- (7) identifying and maximizing the use of available State, federal, nonprofit, and private funding to support a multi-tiered student mental health system of care; and
 - (8) the ratios of student mental health providers to students.

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