

# SENATE, No. 3543

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2023

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator VIN GOPAL**

**District 11 (Monmouth)**

**Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**SYNOPSIS**

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

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/13/2023)

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

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

7  
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.

3

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.