
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6509 (as amended by House "A" and "B")

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Health (DPH), in consultation with the Connecticut Association of School-based Health Centers and a DCF-licensed children's mental health service provider, to develop a plan by January 1, 2022, to promote access to mental health services for children and youth in regions of the state that do not have access to a school-based health center or an expanded school health site.

Under the bill, mental health services in the plan may include (1) counseling to individual students, groups, or families, to the extent permitted by a sponsoring facility's license or certification; (2) extended school-based mental health clinic hours, including after school, weekend, or summer hours based on community need for services; and (3) mental health programming for students in partnership with a local or regional board of education. Under the bill, mental health programming means age-appropriate education or outreach initiatives aimed at students to prevent mental illness (e.g., poster and flyer campaigns, films, guest speakers, or other school events).

Under the bill, any mental health service provider who staffs a school-based mental health clinic established in partnership with a local or regional board of education (1) must be knowledgeable about social-emotional learning and restorative practices and (2) may participate in social-emotional learning and restorative practices training provided to teachers and administrators of the schools governed by the board.

The bill requires DCF and DPH to jointly report to the Children's Committee by January 1, 2022, on the plan and funding sources available to implement it.

*House Amendment "A" strikes the underlying bill, which would have required DPH to develop a plan to establish school-based mental health clinics and allowed the department to adopt regulations to establish minimum quality standards for them.

*House Amendment "B" (1) adds provider requirements for school-based mental health clinics established in partnership with a local or regional board of education and (2) requires that the report DCF and DPH submit to the Children's Committee include available funding sources to implement the plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021

DEFINITION

School-Based Mental Health Clinic

Under the bill, a "school-based mental health clinic" is a clinic that:

1. is located in or on the grounds of a school facility of a school district or school board or of an Indian tribe or tribal organization;
2. is organized through school, community, and health provider relationships;
3. is administered by a sponsoring facility (e.g., a hospital, community health center, or school system); and
4. provides on-site mental, emotional, or behavioral health services to children and adolescents in accordance with state and local law, including laws relating to licensure and certification.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable

Yea 9 Nay 4 (03/11/2021)

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 32 Nay 1 (04/15/2021)