

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8444

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish grant programs to promote mental health in schools, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (for herself, Ms. BALINT, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. ALLRED, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SOTO, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. TORRES of New York, Ms. CHU, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. PORTER, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. STANSBURY, and Ms. BARRAGÁN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish grant programs to promote mental health in schools, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Mental Health in
5 Schools Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SAMHSA MENTAL HEALTH SCHOOL GRANT PRO-**
2 **GRAMS.**

3 Subpart 3 of part B of title V of the Public Health
4 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb–31 et seq.) is amended by
5 adding at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 5200. MENTAL HEALTH SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAMS.**

7 **“(a) SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS GRANT**
8 **PROGRAM.—**

9 **“(1) IN GENERAL.—**The Secretary, acting
10 through the Assistant Secretary, shall establish a
11 program, to be known as the School Mental Health
12 Awareness Grant Program, to award grants to eligi-
13 ble entities to establish or expand eligible mental
14 health education programs in schools served by local
15 educational agencies.

16 **“(2) ELIGIBLE MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION**
17 **PROGRAMS.—**To be eligible for a grant under this
18 subsection, a mental health education program
19 shall—

20 **“(A) serve students by—**

21 **“(i) promoting the mental health and**
22 **well-being of students and destigmatizing**
23 **mental health conditions;**

24 **“(ii) helping students identify and rec-**
25 **ognize the key signs and symptoms of var-**
26 **ious mental health conditions;**

1 “(iii) informing students about mental
2 health services that are available to such
3 students;

4 “(iv) providing students with the skills
5 needed to manage their emotions and es-
6 tablish and maintain positive relationships;

7 “(v) using an evidence-based model ef-
8 fective in changing students’ knowledge of
9 and attitudes toward mental health condi-
10 tions and help-seeking behavior; and

11 “(vi) incorporating family engage-
12 ment;

13 “(B) provide educational professionals with
14 the necessary certification, recertification, and
15 professional development to teach mental
16 health-related content; and

17 “(C) for any courses developed using a
18 grant under this subsection, develop such
19 courses with input from mental health profes-
20 sionals.

21 “(3) ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS.—A grant
22 awarded under this subsection may only be used for
23 activities that—

24 “(A) are developmentally, linguistically,
25 and culturally appropriate;

1 “(B) are trauma-informed; and

2 “(C) promote healthy coping mechanisms
3 for managing stress and other mental health
4 challenges.

5 “(b) MENTAL HEALTH CAREER PROMOTION GRANT
6 PROGRAM.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting
8 through the Assistant Secretary, shall establish a
9 program, to be known as the Mental Health Career
10 Promotion Grant Program, to award grants to eligi-
11 ble entities to establish or expand eligible mental
12 health career promotion programs in schools served
13 by local educational agencies.

14 “(2) ELIGIBLE MENTAL HEALTH CAREER PRO-
15 MOTION PROGRAMS.—To be eligible for a grant
16 under this subsection, a mental health career pro-
17 motion program shall promote careers in mental
18 health to students in grades 9 through 12, such as
19 by—

20 “(A) providing educational presentations to
21 students that increase exposure to and knowl-
22 edge of careers in the mental health field;

23 “(B) coordinating internships and
24 externships for students who demonstrate an
25 interest in mental health;

1 “(C) providing opportunities for students
2 to interact with and shadow mental health care
3 professionals;

4 “(D) providing students with mentorships
5 and experiential learning opportunities; or

6 “(E) partnering with local institutions of
7 higher education and community behavioral
8 health organizations to promote careers in men-
9 tal health.

10 “(3) ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT.—A grant award-
11 ed under this subsection may only be used for activi-
12 ties that are developmentally, linguistically, and cul-
13 turally appropriate.

14 “(4) CAREERS IN MENTAL HEALTH DEFINED.—
15 In this subsection, the term ‘careers in mental
16 health’ means occupations whose primary intent and
17 function is the direct treatment or recovery support
18 of patients with, or in recovery from, a mental
19 health disorder, which may include—

20 “(A) physicians (including physicians with
21 a degree of doctor of medicine or doctor of os-
22 teopathic medicine);

23 “(B) psychiatric nurses;

24 “(C) social workers;

25 “(D) marriage and family therapists;

1 “(E) mental health counselors;

2 “(F) occupational therapists;

3 “(G) psychologists;

4 “(H) psychiatrists (including child and ad-
5 olescent psychiatrists); and

6 “(I) neurologists.

7 “(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive
8 a grant under this section, an entity shall be a partnership
9 that includes—

10 “(1) a State educational agency;

11 “(2) 1 or more local educational agencies, or a
12 consortium of such local educational agencies; and

13 “(3) at least 1—

14 “(A) community-based mental health pro-
15 vider (such as a health care entity, a trauma
16 network, or a nonprofit mental health profes-
17 sional association); or

18 “(B) other community-based entity, as de-
19 termined appropriate by the Secretary, acting
20 through the Assistant Secretary (such as a
21 human services agency, a child welfare agency,
22 or an institution of higher education).

23 “(d) AWARD DURATION; RENEWAL.—A grant award-
24 ed under this section shall be for a period of 5 years, and
25 may be renewed.

1 “(e) GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY.—The Secretary,
2 acting through the Assistant Secretary, shall ensure that
3 grants awarded under this section cover a diverse range
4 of geographical areas.

5 “(f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, act-
6 ing through the Assistant Secretary, may provide technical
7 assistance to high-need local educational agencies in seek-
8 ing grants under this section.

9 “(g) EVALUATION AND MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting
11 through the Assistant Secretary, shall develop a fis-
12 cally appropriate process for evaluating activities
13 carried out through grants awarded under this sec-
14 tion. Under such process, the Secretary, acting
15 through the Assistant Secretary, shall—

16 “(A) provide to recipients of such grants—

17 “(i) guidelines for the submission to
18 the Assistant Secretary of data concerning
19 such activities; and

20 “(ii) measures of outcomes to be used
21 by such recipients in evaluating the effec-
22 tiveness of such activities (including out-
23 comes related to the student, family, and
24 local educational systems supported by
25 such activities);

1 “(B) require each such recipient to submit
2 to the Assistant Secretary annual reports—

3 “(i) containing data on such activities
4 carried out by the recipient; and

5 “(ii) that use the measures of out-
6 comes described in subparagraph (A)(ii) to
7 evaluate the effectiveness of such activities;
8 and

9 “(C) not later than 1 year after the date
10 of enactment of the Mental Health in Schools
11 Act, and annually thereafter, submit to Con-
12 gress a report describing the results and effec-
13 tiveness of the programs under this section.

14 “(2) LIMITATION.—A recipient of a grant
15 under this section may not use more than 10 per-
16 cent of the amounts received to prepare and submit
17 the annual reports required under paragraph (1)(B).

18 “(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 “(1) ESEA TERMS.—The terms ‘local edu-
20 cational agency’ and ‘State educational agency’ have
21 the meanings given such terms in section 8101 of
22 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
23 1965.

24 “(2) HEA TERMS.—The terms ‘high-need local
25 educational agency’ and ‘institution of higher edu-

1 cation’ have the meanings given such terms, respec-
2 tively, in sections 200 and 101(a) of the Higher
3 Education Act of 1965.

4 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
5 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section for
6 each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029—

7 “(1) \$50,000,000 with respect to grants award-
8 ed under subsection (a); and

9 “(2) \$50,000,000 with respect to grants award-
10 ed under subsection (b).”.

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