

1 H.89

2 Introduced by Representative Heath of Westford

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; schools; mental health services

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
7 Agency of Education to catalogue the mental health services currently offered
8 in Vermont public schools, identify one or more programs that could serve as
9 models for the rest of the State, and work with the Department of Mental
10 Health to develop a proposal to ensure access in all Vermont public schools.

11 An act relating to ensuring access to mental health services in Vermont
12 public schools

13 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

14 Sec. 1. SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

15 (a) It is estimated that 10 percent of children need mental health services
16 nationally, but that only 20 percent of this 10 percent receive treatment.

17 (b) Children who need mental health services are at a higher risk of
18 dropping out of school than those who do not have mental health needs.

19 (c) Untreated mental conditions have been linked to higher rates of juvenile
20 incarceration, drug abuse, and unemployment.

1 (d) Early intervention decreases subsequent expenditures for special
2 education and increases the likelihood of academic success.

3 (e) School-based mental health services increase access to and utilization of
4 mental health services and improve coordination of services.

5 (f) School-based mental health services increase student and parental
6 awareness of available services.

7 Sec. 2. STUDY

8 (a) The Secretary of Education and the Commissioner of Mental Health
9 shall:

10 (1) catalogue the type and scope of mental health services provided in
11 Vermont public schools;

12 (2) determine the number of students currently served through Vermont
13 public schools and estimate the number of students enrolled in Vermont public
14 schools who are not receiving the services they need;

15 (3) identify successful programs and practices related to providing
16 mental health services in Vermont public schools and determine which, if any,
17 could be replicated in other areas of the State; and

18 (4) develop a proposal based on the information collected pursuant to
19 subdivisions (1) through (3) of this subsection to ensure that
20 clinically-appropriate and sufficient school-based mental health services are
21 available in every Vermont public school.

1 (b) On or before January 15, 2014, the Secretary and Commissioner shall
2 present their research, findings, and proposals to the House Committees on
3 Education and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Education
4 and on Health and Welfare.

5 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on passage.