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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
152nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 6

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend Chapter 17, Title 14 of the Delaware Code, by making deletions as shown by strike through and
2 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

3 § 1727. District Mental Health Supports

4 (a) Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, each school district and charter school shall be awarded 1 unit for the
5 employment of a Mental Health Professional and a Mental Health Coordinator. The duties of the Mental Health
6 Professional and Mental Health Coordinator shall include:

7 (1) Developing partnerships with community-based organizations to expand access to behavioral health
8 services.

9 (2) Consulting with mental health professionals employed by the school district to develop an implementation
10 plan that is culturally competent, grief and trauma informed, developmentally appropriate, evidence based or evidence-
11 informed, and follows the federal National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health
12 and Health Care. The implementation plan shall include and consider:

13 a. A comprehensive mental health awareness program targeting youth, their families, and school staff that
14 creates a de-stigmatized school climate that is conducive to addressing the mental health needs of students.

15 b. A workforce capacity-building plan to increase awareness and literacy of school staff, administrators,
16 parents, and others who interact with school aged youth to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health
17 concerns.

18 c. The development of a process to screen and identify school-aged youth in need of mental health
19 services and supports.

20 d. The incorporation of brief intervention services to support school-aged youth experiencing distress,
21 trauma, bereavement, or are at-risk for development of mental health and substance abuse disorders.

22 e. A plan of immediate response for school-aged youth that exhibit behaviors warranting the need for
23 emergent or urgent clinical attention.

24 (3) Establishing collaborative relationships with families, community groups, family and peer support
25 services, behavioral health providers, and local businesses to broaden and link available community resources to
26 school-aged youth and their families.

27 (b) The Department shall determine the qualifications required for an individual serving as a Mental Health
28 Professional and Mental Health Service Coordinator. The Department shall include an applicant's knowledge of the school
29 district and its surrounding community as a part of the eligibility criteria.

30 (c) No later than six months after the initial hiring of the Mental Health Professional and Mental Health
31 Coordinator, each school district and charter school shall complete and submit to the Department a needs assessment and
32 resource map. Each assessment should provide the status of mental health services for the entire school district and relevant
33 data capturing the district's disparities in behavioral health.

SYNOPSIS

This Act requires the State to fund a Mental Health Professional and Mental Health Coordinator position for each district and charter school by the 2024-25 school year. The Mental Health Professional and Mental Health Coordinator must develop partnerships with community-based organizations, work to establish collaborative relationships with the school, families, and local community, create an implementation plan, and undertake an assessment of the district's mental health needs.