

HB 2223 -- SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

SPONSOR: Peters

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health to establish a comprehensive school-based mental health program to assist children in dealing with trauma and violence.

The department must:

- (1) Provide financial support for culturally and linguistically appropriate, and age-appropriate, school mental health programs with positive behavioral interventions and treatment;
- (2) Provide technical assistance to local communities on program development;
- (3) Provide assistance in the development of policies to address child and adolescent trauma and mental health issues and violence;
- (4) Facilitate community partnerships among families, students, law enforcement agencies, education systems, mental health agencies, substance abuse agencies, family-based mental health service systems, welfare agencies, health care service systems, faith-based programs, trauma networks, and other community-based systems; and
- (5) Establish mechanisms for children and adolescents to report incidents of violence or plans by other children, adolescents, or adults to commit violence.

Objectives for individual school programs established in local communities under this section include the following:

- (1) Promotion of the social, emotional, and behavioral health of all students in an environment that is conducive to learning;
- (2) Reduction in the development of social, emotional, behavioral health problems, or substance abuse disorders in at-risk students;
- (3) Early identification of social, emotional, behavioral problems, or substance use disorders and the provision of early intervention services;
- (4) Treatment or referral for students with social, emotional, behavioral health problems, or substance use disorders; and
- (5) Development and implementation of programs to assist children

in dealing with trauma and violence.

The department must provide for in-service training of all school personnel, including ancillary staff and volunteers in:

- (1) Identification of children with trauma histories and children with, or at risk of, mental illness;
- (2) Effectively linking the children to appropriate treatment and intervention services in the school and community and following up when services are not available; and
- (3) Strategies that promote a school-wide positive environment; the social, emotional, mental, and behavioral health of all students; and increased knowledge and skills of school and community leaders about the impact of trauma and violence and on the application of a public health approach to comprehensive school-based mental health programs.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must ensure that comprehensive training is available for parents, siblings, and other family members of children with mental health disorders, that provides instruction in techniques and supports to identify children with trauma histories and children with, or at risk of, mental illness; linking the children to appropriate treatment and intervention services in the school and community and following up when services are not available; and strategies that promote a school-wide positive environment.

The bill creates in the state treasury the "School-based Mental Health Program Fund," which must consist of money appropriated to it by the General Assembly and any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from federal, private, or other sources to support the activities required by the bill. The State Treasurer will be custodian of the fund and approve disbursements from the fund in accordance with Sections 30.170 and 30.180.

The bill expires six years from the effective date.