

1 SB51  
2 216256-1  
3 By Senator Smitherman  
4 RFD: Finance and Taxation Education  
5 First Read: 11-JAN-22

SYNOPSIS: This bill would establish and provide for the qualifications and duties of a mental health service coordinator and would require each local board of education in the state, subject to appropriations by the Legislature, to employ a mental health service coordinator to serve those schools under the jurisdiction of the board.

This bill would also provide for the responsibilities of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the State Department of Education in providing continuing evaluation and support of mental health services provided to students through local boards of education.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to public K-12 education; to require each local board of education in the state, subject to

1 appropriations by the Legislature, to employ a mental health  
2 service coordinator; to provide for the qualifications and  
3 duties of the mental health service coordinator; to require  
4 each local board of education to complete and submit a needs  
5 assessment relating to the provision of mental health  
6 resources to students; and to provide for the responsibilities  
7 of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the State  
8 Department of Education.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

10 Section 1. (a) Subject to appropriations by the  
11 Legislature, commencing with the 2022-2023 school year, each  
12 local board of education in the state shall employ a mental  
13 health service coordinator. The coordinator shall be  
14 responsible for coordinating student mental health services  
15 throughout the local school system.

16 (b) An individual hired as a coordinator shall  
17 possess at least one of the following qualifications:

18 (1) Have a bachelor's degree in social work.

19 (2) Satisfy State Department of Education  
20 qualifications for a school counselor.

21 (3) Satisfy State Department of Education  
22 qualifications for a school nurse.

23 (4) Have professional mental health experience, or  
24 have been licensed in a mental health occupation including,  
25 but not limited to, licensure as a licensed professional  
26 counselor or marriage and family therapist.

1                   (5) Other qualifications as determined by the  
2 Alabama Department of Mental Health and the State Department  
3 of Education.

4                   (c) Within one year after being hired as a mental  
5 health service coordinator, an individual shall earn a  
6 school-based mental health certificate by successfully  
7 completing a certification program developed by the Alabama  
8 Department of Mental Health.

9                   (d) On or before the last day of the 2022 fiscal  
10 year, and as requested thereafter, each local board of  
11 education shall complete, and submit to the Alabama Department  
12 of Mental Health, a needs assessment and resource map for the  
13 schools under the jurisdiction of the board. The assessment  
14 shall document the status of mental health for the entire  
15 school system and allow the local board of education to engage  
16 in a quality improvement process to improve the provision of  
17 mental health resources to students within the school system.

18                   (e) The Alabama Department of Mental Health and the  
19 State Department of Education may adopt rules and policies as  
20 necessary for implementation of this section.

21                   (f) The administration of this act shall be subject  
22 to appropriations made by the Legislature.

23                   Section 2. This act shall become effective on the  
24 first day of the third month following its passage and  
25 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.