
HOUSE BILL 3157

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Representative Stensen

Read first time . Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to school-based mental health services for children
2 and youth; adding new sections to chapter 28A.300 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and making an appropriation.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that nine to fifteen
6 percent of children attending school have emotional disturbances
7 serious enough to impede their functioning in school, family, and
8 community activities. The mental health challenges of these young
9 students often inhibit their abilities to take full advantage of the
10 educational opportunities offered to them and can result in disruptions
11 in the learning environment, behavior problems, and, if untreated, more
12 serious delinquent behaviors that pose costly implications for schools
13 and communities. The legislature finds that these children would
14 benefit greatly from early intervention by community mental health
15 specialists trained to help when behavior problems begin in order to
16 prevent more serious problems from developing. Studies show that
17 assistance from community mental health specialists through a school-
18 based screening, service, and referral program is an important
19 component of effective early intervention for children at risk in

1 schools. The legislature intends to provide an opportunity for each
2 second class school district to contract with community mental health
3 specialists to perform school-based mental health services and referral
4 activities on a weekly basis in each local school as needed.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The school-based mental health services program is established.
8 The purpose of the program is to provide second class school districts
9 and local schools with funding to contract with community mental health
10 specialists to help children and youth in elementary school through
11 high school who are at risk of emotional disturbances and behavioral
12 problems.

13 (2) The program shall be administered by the office of the
14 superintendent of public instruction. In its administration of the
15 program, the responsibilities of the office of the superintendent of
16 public instruction shall include, but need not be limited to:

17 (a) Adoption and distribution of rules and program guidelines;

18 (b) Use of simple, brief, and clear application processes, forms,
19 and reporting requirements that help make the program accessible to
20 second class school districts with minimal administrative burden;

21 (c) Distribution of funds to second class school districts;

22 (d) Distribution of a report by November 15th of each even-numbered
23 year to the governor, the education and fiscal committees of the
24 legislature, the educational community, the community mental health
25 system, and other interested parties. The report shall focus primarily
26 on the results of the program as a whole, and shall include
27 recommendations for program improvements, including recommendations for
28 the continuing annual program funding level. The reports shall include
29 information on the number of local schools participating in the mental
30 health services program, the nature and amount of mental health
31 services provided through the program, the number of children served,
32 and the overall results of the program for children.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
34 RCW to read as follows:

35 Any second class school district may participate in the program in
36 section 2 of this act subject to the following requirements:

1 (1) Funds shall be used to contract for community mental health
2 specialists to work exclusively with public school children and youth;
3 and

4 (2) Funds shall supplement and not supplant funding provided by the
5 district to support mental health services during a base year
6 determined by the superintendent of public instruction.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The sum of one million eight hundred
8 thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is
9 appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, from the general
10 fund to the office of the superintendent of public instruction for the
11 purposes of this act.

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