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## Education Committee

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### HB 1444

**Brief Description:** Providing trauma-informed counseling and supports to students who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rule, Wicks, Simmons, Berry, Johnson, J., Taylor, Orwall, Ryu, Fitzgibbon, Ramel, Wylie, Pollet, Thai and Harris-Talley.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates, temporarily, a limited school mental health staff certificate for Department of Health licensed or certified mental and behavioral health professionals, for the purpose of providing trauma-informed counseling and supports to students who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Requires school districts to employ one person with either a school counselor certificate or a temporary mental health staff certificate for every 150 students, beginning with the 2021-22 school year and through July 1, 2025.

**Hearing Date:** 2/9/21

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

#### Background:

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) certifies school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists. To become a school counselor or school psychologist, a person must meet specific education and exam requirements, which include completing a PESB-approved school counselor or school psychologist program, respectively. To become a school social worker, a person must meet specific education requirements and complete a 15 hour

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professional transitions to public schools course.

Legislation enacted in 2007, stated that the role of a school counselor is to plan, organize, and deliver a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program that personalizes education and supports, promotes, and enhances the academic, personal, social, and career development of all students. Legislation enacted in 2018, defined the role of a school psychologist as delivering services across 10 domains of practice, for example: student-level services, interventions, and instructional supports to develop academic skills; student-level interventions and mental health services to develop social and life skills; systems-level preventive and responsive services; and systems-level family school collaboration services. This legislation defined the role of a school social worker as providing an integral link between school, home, and community in helping students achieve academic and social success, for example by providing mental health and academic counseling, support for students and parents, crisis prevention and intervention, and professional case management.

The Department of Health (Department) licenses or certifies mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, social workers, substance use disorder professionals, and psychologists. The specific education, examination, and experience requirements for each of these professions varies. The Department also licenses association level mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers, and certifies substance use disorder professional trainees.

**Summary of Bill:**

The PESB must adopt rules to implement a limited mental health staff certificate. The role of a person with a limited mental health staff certificate is to provide trauma-informed counseling and supports to students who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of a person with a limited mental health staff certificate is not to provide academic counseling.

Except for a person with a discipline-related restriction on their license or certificate, a limited mental health staff certificate may be issued to an applicant who is licensed or certified in any of the following professions: (1) mental health counselor, marriage and family therapist, social worker, or associate level provider in these professions; (2) substance use disorder professional or substance use disorder professional trainee; or (3) psychologist. All limited mental health staff certificates expire July 1, 2025.

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year and through July 1, 2025, school districts must employ one person with either a school counselor certificate or a limited mental health staff certificate for every 150 full-time equivalent students.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 3, 2021.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is

passed.