

STATE OF NEW YORK

9101

IN SENATE

February 3, 2026

Introduced by Sen. SEPULVEDA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a grant program to promote the mental health and wellness of teachers and staff in public schools

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 3615
2 to read as follows:

3 § 3615. Teacher mental health support grant program. 1. There is
4 hereby established in the joint custody of the state comptroller and the
5 commissioner of taxation and finance a fund to be known as the teacher
6 mental health support fund.

7 2. The teacher mental health support fund shall consist of all reven-
8 ues received from any source, public or private, for the purposes
9 provided in this section and all other moneys credited or transferred
10 thereto from any other fund or source pursuant to law. No monies from
11 the state general fund shall be transferred to, or otherwise made avail-
12 able for deposit into this fund.

13 3. Moneys of the fund, following appropriation by the legislature, may
14 be expended for operational and planning grants to local school
15 districts to promote the mental health and wellness of teachers and
16 support staff. Moneys shall be paid out of the fund on the audit and
17 warrant of the state comptroller on vouchers certified or approved by
18 the commissioner.

19 4. a. A public school district, or two or more public school districts
20 acting jointly, shall be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to the
21 provisions of this section for the purposes of providing resources for
22 teachers, teachers' aides, paraprofessionals, principals, assistant
23 principals, secretaries, and other administrative staff of such school
24 district. Such resources shall include, but not be limited to:

25 (i) counseling by licensed mental health professionals in one-on-one,
26 group, in-person, or virtual settings;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD13440-01-5

1 (ii) in-house or external programming focused on personal and profes-
2 sional resilience, stress management, burnout prevention, and overall
3 wellness; and

4 (iii) professional development and training to promote mental health,
5 self-care practices, and healthy work environment practices for educa-
6 tors.

7 b. A public school district which applies for a planning grant pursu-
8 ant to subdivision five of this section for such new programs shall not
9 be eligible for an operational grant pursuant to subdivision six of this
10 section until the school year following the year in which the planning
11 grant was received. For purposes of this section as applied within the
12 city of New York, such city public school district shall be eligible for
13 multiple awards on behalf of each community school district or high
14 school district as though each was a separate school district.

15 5. A public school district shall be eligible to apply for a planning
16 grant on a one-year competitive basis for the purpose of planning for
17 the implementation of programs for promoting the mental health and well-
18 ness of teachers and support staff. Applications shall be evaluated on a
19 competitive basis and such grants shall be awarded accordingly. Appli-
20 cations shall include the planning budget and program description for
21 promoting the mental health and wellness of teachers and support staff.
22 A school district which receives a competitive planning grant and imple-
23 ments a successful planning program shall be eligible to apply for a
24 two-year operational grant. Reports may be required for the purposes of
25 program evaluation.

26 6. A public school district shall be eligible to receive an opera-
27 tional grant over a two-year period as provided in this section for
28 programs for promoting the mental health and wellness of teachers and
29 support staff. First-year applications shall be evaluated on a compet-
30 itive basis and grants shall be awarded accordingly. Both first-year
31 applications and continuing applications shall include the operating
32 budget and program description for promoting the mental health and well-
33 ness of teachers and support staff for approval of the proposed program
34 and the estimated expenditures for the current year. Reports may be
35 required as necessary for the purposes of program evaluation.

36 7. Applications for funding pursuant to this section shall only be
37 submitted by public school districts by such public school district or a
38 representative thereof for the purpose of serving such school district
39 at large. The commissioner shall develop a standardized application
40 which, in addition to the requirements of subdivisions five and six of
41 this section, shall include:

42 a. the school district's financial needs;
43 b. the school district's employee satisfaction and turnover rates; and
44 c. the school district's student success rates, including absenteeism,
45 truancy, graduation rates, test scores, and other relevant factors to be
46 determined by the commissioner.

47 8. An advisory committee shall be established and assigned to the
48 department to consult, review and make recommendations concerning poli-
49 cy, procedure, program content and community needs. Such advisory
50 committee shall consist of ten members appointed by the commissioner.
51 Such appointees shall include representatives from non-profit mental
52 health awareness or support organizations, educators, and mental health
53 professionals.

54 9. The commissioner may adopt rules and regulations as are necessary
55 and appropriate to carry out the provisions of this section.

1 10. The commissioner shall issue an annual report to the legislature
2 concerning the overall and individual programs, detailing their impact;
3 and shall include any report or materials produced by the advisory
4 committee.

5 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.