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:

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

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

2. The teacher mental health support fund shall consist of all revenues received from any source, public or private, for the purposes provided in this section and all other moneys credited or transferred thereto from any other fund or source pursuant to law. No monies from the state general fund shall be transferred to, or otherwise made available for deposit into this fund.

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

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

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

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

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(ii) in-house or external programming focused on personal and professional resilience, stress management, burnout prevention, and overall wellness; and

(iii) professional development and training to promote mental health, self-care practices, and healthy work environment practices for educators.

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

5. A public school district shall be eligible to apply for a planning grant on a one-year competitive basis for the purpose of planning for the implementation of programs for promoting the mental health and wellness of teachers and support staff. Applications shall be evaluated on a competitive basis and such grants shall be awarded accordingly. Applications shall include the planning budget and program description for promoting the mental health and wellness of teachers and support staff. A school district which receives a competitive planning grant and implements a successful planning program shall be eligible to apply for a two-year operational grant. Reports may be required for the purposes of program evaluation.

6. A public school district shall be eligible to receive an operational grant over a two-year period as provided in this section for programs for promoting the mental health and wellness of teachers and support staff. First-year applications shall be evaluated on a competitive basis and grants shall be awarded accordingly. Both first-year applications and continuing applications shall include the operating budget and program description for promoting the mental health and wellness of teachers and support staff for approval of the proposed program and the estimated expenditures for the current year. Reports may be required as necessary for the purposes of program evaluation.

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

a. the school district's financial needs;

b. the school district's employee satisfaction and turnover rates; and

c. the school district's student success rates, including absenteeism, truancy, graduation rates, test scores, and other relevant factors to be determined by the commissioner.

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

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

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

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.