

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4253

To support States and high-need local educational agencies in increasing the number of mental health services providers in schools.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 30, 2025

Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. AMO, Ms. BALINT, Mr. CARSON, Ms. CHU, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. HARDER of California, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. HOYER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TRAN, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

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## A BILL

To support States and high-need local educational agencies in increasing the number of mental health services providers in schools.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### 3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Expanding Access to Mental Health Services in Schools  
6 Act of 2025”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of  
 2 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.  
 Sec. 2. Purposes.  
 Sec. 3. Definitions.  
 Sec. 4. School-based mental health services grant program.  
 Sec. 5. Rule.

3 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

4 The purpose of this Act is to increase the number  
 5 of school-based mental health services providers.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) ELIGIBLE AGENCY.—The term “eligible  
 9 agency” means—

10 (A) a high-need local educational agency;

11 (B) an educational service agency acting  
 12 on behalf of 1 or more high-need local edu-  
 13 cational agencies; or

14 (C) a State educational agency.

15 (2) ESEA DEFINITIONS.—The terms “child  
 16 with a disability”, “educational service agency”, “el-  
 17 elementary school”, “English learner”, “evidence-  
 18 based”, “institution of higher education”, “local  
 19 educational agency”, “other staff”, “outlying area”,  
 20 “paraprofessional”, “professional development”,  
 21 “school leader”, “secondary school”, “specialized in-  
 22 structional support personnel”, “Secretary”,  
 23 “State”, and “State educational agency” have the

meanings given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(3) HIGH-NEED LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term “high-need local educational agency” means a local education agency that, as the date of application for this Act—

(A) is among the highest 15 percent of all local educational agencies in the State, as determined by the Secretary, based on either—

(i) the number of children in each such agency counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6333(c)); or

(ii) the percentage of children in each such agency counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6333(c)); and

(B) does not meet at least two of the following:

(i) A ratio of 1 full-time equivalent school counselor for every 250 students.

(ii) A ratio of 1 full-time equivalent school psychologist for every 500 students.

1 (iii) A ratio of 1 full-time equivalent  
2 school social worker for every 250 stu-  
3 dents.

4 (4) ISDA DEFINITIONS.—The term “Indian  
5 Tribe” means any indian tribe identified as such by  
6 the Secretary of the Interior under section 104 of  
7 the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of  
8 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a–1).

9 (5) SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
10 PROVIDER.—The term “school-based mental health  
11 services provider” has the meaning given the term in  
12 section 4102 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-  
13 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7112).

14 **SEC. 4. SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES GRANT**  
15 **PROGRAM.**

16 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to in-  
17 crease the number of school-based mental health profes-  
18 sionals by supporting high-need local educational agencies  
19 in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and diversifying school-  
20 based mental health services providers to expand access  
21 to school-based mental health services for students en-  
22 rolled in elementary schools and secondary schools served  
23 by such agencies.

24 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF GRANTS.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made avail-  
2           able under subsection (g) and after making the res-  
3           ervations described in paragraph (2), the Secretary  
4           shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible  
5           agencies, in accordance with this section.

6           (2) RESERVATIONS.—From the total amount  
7           made available under subsection (g) for a fiscal year,  
8           the Secretary shall—

9                   (A) reserve not more than 2 percent of  
10                  such amount for program administration, tech-  
11                  nical assistance, and data collection;

12                  (B) reserve 1 percent for the Secretary of  
13                  the Interior for schools operated or funded by  
14                  the Bureau of Indian Education, in accordance  
15                  with the purpose of this section; and

16                  (C) reserve 1 percent for allotments for  
17                  payments to the outlying areas, to be distrib-  
18                  uted among those outlying areas on the basis of  
19                  their relative need, as determined by the Sec-  
20                  retary, in accordance with the purpose of this  
21                  section.

22           (3) DURATION AND RENEWALS.—

23                   (A) DURATION.—A grant awarded under  
24                  this section shall be for a period of not more  
25                  than 5 years.

1 (B) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew  
2 a grant awarded under this section for a period  
3 of not more than 2 years.

4 (4) DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—In awarding grants  
6 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure  
7 that, to the extent practicable, grants are dis-  
8 tributed among eligible agencies that will serve  
9 geographically diverse areas, including urban,  
10 suburban, and rural areas.

11 (B) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.—In  
12 awarding grants under paragraph (1), the Sec-  
13 retary shall ensure that not less than 50 per-  
14 cent of the amounts made available under sub-  
15 section (g) that remain after making reserva-  
16 tions under paragraph (2) are awarded to high-  
17 quality applications submitted by high-need  
18 local educational agencies identified in clauses  
19 (i) and (ii) of section 3(3)(A).

20 (5) SUFFICIENT SIZE AND SCOPE.—Each grant  
21 awarded under paragraph (1) shall be of sufficient  
22 size and scope to allow the eligible agency receiving  
23 the grant to carry out the purpose of this section.

24 (c) APPLICATION.—An eligible agency applying for a  
25 grant under subsection (b)(1) shall submit an application

1 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accom-  
2 panied by such information as the Secretary may require,  
3 which may include—

4 (1) a description of the prevalent mental health  
5 or substance use and misuse concerns facing stu-  
6 dents enrolled in schools served by participating  
7 high-need local educational agencies;

8 (2) a description of current shortage of school-  
9 based mental health services providers, including  
10 lack of diversity, if applicable, in high-need local  
11 educational agencies that will be served under the  
12 grant;

13 (3) a description of the applicant’s plan to sup-  
14 port recruiting, hiring, retaining, or diversifying  
15 school-based mental health services providers in  
16 high-need local educational agencies to be served  
17 under the grant; and

18 (4) an assurance that any school-based mental  
19 health services provider, including any provider of-  
20 fering telehealth services, provides services in a man-  
21 ner consistent with section 444 of the General Edu-  
22 cation Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g; commonly  
23 known as the “Family Educational Rights and Pri-  
24 vacy Act of 1974”) and the Individuals with Disabil-

ities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), as well  
as all applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

(d) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible agency that receives  
a grant under subsection (b)(1) shall use such funds to  
carry out one or more of the following:

(1) Hiring school-based mental health services  
providers to—

(A) provide school-based mental health  
services to students enrolled in schools served  
by high-need local educational agencies; and

(B) implement evidence-based practices to  
improve school climate to support positive stu-  
dent mental health.

(2) Implementing strategies to recruit school-  
based mental health services providers in high-need  
local educational agencies to help mitigate shortages  
of such providers, such as—

(A) salary stipends;

(B) relocation benefits;

(C) student loan repayment; or

(D) other financial incentives.

(3) Implementing strategies to retain school-  
based mental health services providers in high-need  
local educational agencies, which may include—



1 (A) providing incentives described in para-  
2 graph (2); or

3 (B) providing ongoing professional develop-  
4 ment, induction, mentorship, or peer support  
5 for school-based mental health services pro-  
6 viders.

7 (e) RULES.—

8 (1) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—Eligible agen-  
9 cies who receive a grant under this Act must con-  
10 tribute non-Federal matching funds to the amount  
11 of not less than 25 percent of the project budget.

12 (2) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds  
13 made available under this Act shall be used to sup-  
14 plement, and not supplant, non-Federal funds that  
15 would otherwise be used for activities described  
16 under this Act.

17 (3) DISAGGREGATION OF DATA.—  
18 Disaggregation of data required under this section  
19 shall not be required when the number is insufficient  
20 to yield statistically reliable information or the re-  
21 sults would reveal personally identifiable information  
22 about an individual.

23 (f) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each eligible  
24 agency that receives a grant under subsection (b)(1) shall  
25 submit a report to the Secretary on an annual basis and

1 publish such report in a clear and easily accessible format  
2 on the website of the eligible agency. Such report shall  
3 contain any information required by the Secretary and,  
4 at a minimum, the following:

5 (1) The number of school-based mental health  
6 services providers employed by high-need local edu-  
7 cational agencies served under the grant and any in-  
8 creases from the prior year, disaggregated by—

9 (A) the number of each type of such pro-  
10 viders who was recruited, hired, or retained,  
11 with support under this grant; and

12 (B) the demographics of such providers.

13 (2) The ratio of students to school-based men-  
14 tal health services providers in high-need local edu-  
15 cational agencies served under the grant and the ex-  
16 tent to which such ratio has decreased since the  
17 start of the grant period.

18 (3) The reduction in the annual attrition rate  
19 of school-based mental health services providers em-  
20 ployed by high-need local educational agencies served  
21 under the grant, and the extent to which such attri-  
22 tion rate has decreased since the start of the grant  
23 period.

24 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
25 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section

1 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years  
2 2026 through 2030.

3 **SEC. 5. RULE.**

4       The requirements of section 4001 of the Elementary  
5 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7101)  
6 shall apply to a State educational agency, local educational  
7 agency, or other entity receiving a grant or subgrant  
8 under this Act in the same manner as those requirements  
9 apply to an entity receiving an award under title IV of  
10 such Act.

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