

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4468

To address behavioral health and well-being among education professionals
and other school staff.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 30, 2026

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KING, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To address behavioral health and well-being among education
professionals and other school staff.

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.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting the Mental
5 Health of Educators and Staff Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. DISSEMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES.**

7 Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment
8 of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services
9 (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”), in consulta-
10 tion with the Secretary of Education, shall identify and

1 disseminate evidence-based or evidence-informed best
2 practices for—

3 (1) preventing suicide and improving mental
4 health and resiliency among education professionals
5 and other school staff; and

6 (2) training education professionals and other
7 school staff in appropriate strategies to support,
8 maintain, and promote their mental health.

9 **SEC. 3. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS INITIATIVE ENCOUR-**
10 **AGING USE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUB-**
11 **STANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES BY EDU-**
12 **CATION PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER**
13 **SCHOOL STAFF.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation
15 with relevant stakeholders, including medical professional
16 associations, shall establish a national evidence-based or
17 evidence-informed education and awareness initiative—

18 (1) to encourage education professionals and
19 other school staff to seek support and care for their
20 mental health or substance use concerns, to help
21 such professionals and staff identify factors associ-
22 ated with risks for suicide and mental health condi-
23 tions, and to help such professionals and staff learn
24 how best to respond to such risks, with the goal of

1 preventing suicide, mental health conditions, and
 2 substance use disorders; and

3 (2) to address stigma associated with seeking
 4 mental health and substance use disorder services.

5 (b) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the
 6 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide
 7 to Congress an update on the activities and outcomes of
 8 the initiative under subsection (a), including a description
 9 of quantitative and qualitative metrics used to evaluate
 10 such activities and outcomes.

11 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
 12 out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated
 13 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2028.

14 **SEC. 4. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AMONG**
 15 **THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE.**

16 Subpart 1 of part E of title VII of the Public Health
 17 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294n et seq.) is amended by insert-
 18 ing after section 764A (42 U.S.C. 294t) the following:

19 **“SEC. 764B. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH**
 20 **AMONG THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE.**

21 **“(a) PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH**
 22 **AMONG EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER**
 23 **SCHOOL STAFF.—**

24 **“(1) IN GENERAL.—**The Secretary shall award
 25 grants or contracts to eligible entities to establish or

1 enhance evidence-based or evidence-informed pro-
2 grams dedicated to improving mental health and re-
3 siliency for education professionals and other school
4 staff.

5 “(2) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a
6 grant or contract under this subsection, an entity
7 shall be a State educational agency, a local edu-
8 cational agency, an institution of higher education,
9 or a consortia thereof.

10 “(3) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant or
11 contract under this subsection shall use funds re-
12 ceived through the grant or contract to implement a
13 new program or enhance an existing program to pro-
14 mote mental health among education professionals
15 and other school staff, which may include—

16 “(A) improving awareness among edu-
17 cation professionals and other school staff
18 about risk factors for, and signs of, suicide and
19 mental health or substance use disorders, in ac-
20 cordance with evidence-based or evidence-in-
21 formed practices;

22 “(B) establishing new, or enhancing exist-
23 ing, evidence-based or evidence-informed pro-
24 grams for preventing suicide and improving

1 mental health and resiliency among education
2 professionals and other school staff;

3 “(C) establishing new, or enhancing exist-
4 ing, peer-support programs among education
5 professionals and other school staff; or

6 “(D) providing mental health care, follow-
7 up services and care by a licensed or certified
8 mental health professional (including by means
9 of telehealth), or a referral for such care or
10 services by a licensed or certified mental health
11 professional, as appropriate.

12 “(4) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants and con-
13 tracts under this subsection, the Secretary shall give
14 priority to eligible entities in areas with a high per-
15 centage of schools receiving financial assistance
16 under part A of title I of the Elementary and Sec-
17 ondary Education Act of 1965.

18 “(b) TRAINING GRANTS.—The Secretary may estab-
19 lish a program to award grants to institutions of higher
20 education, State educational agencies, local educational
21 agencies, State or local governments, Indian Tribes or
22 Tribal organizations, or other appropriate public or pri-
23 vate nonprofit entities (or consortia of entities, including
24 entities promoting multidisciplinary approaches) to sup-
25 port the inclusion in educator preparation programs (in-

cluding administrator preparation programs), and in training, continuing education, or professional development programs for education professionals and other school staff, of evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies—

“(1) to address mental and substance use disorders; and

“(2) to improve mental health and resiliency among education professionals and other school staff.

“(c) GRANT TERMS.—A grant or contract awarded under subsection (a) or (b) shall be for a period of 3 years.

“(d) APPLICATION SUBMISSION.—An entity seeking a grant or contract under subsection (a) or (b) shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

“(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—An entity awarded a grant or contract under subsection (a) or (b) shall submit to the Secretary an annual report evaluating the activities supported by the grant or contract.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given to such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

1 “(2) The terms ‘local educational agency’ and
 2 ‘State educational agency’ have the meanings given
 3 to such terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and
 4 Secondary Education Act of 1965.

5 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
 6 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
 7 priated \$35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through
 8 2028.”.

9 **SEC. 5. REVIEW WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION WORK-**
 10 **FORCE MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCY.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the
 12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consulta-
 13 tion with relevant stakeholders, shall—

14 (1) conduct a review on improving—

15 (A) the mental health of education profes-
 16 sionals and other school staff; and

17 (B) the outcomes of programs authorized
 18 under this Act; and

19 (2) submit a report to Congress on the results
 20 of such review.

21 (b) CONSIDERATIONS.—The review under subsection

22 (a) may include—

23 (1) assessing the prevalence and severity of
 24 mental health conditions among education profes-
 25 sionals and other school staff, and determining the

1 factors that contribute to those mental health condi-
2 tions;

3 (2) assessing barriers to seeking and accessing
4 mental health care for education professionals and
5 other school staff, and actions taken by State edu-
6 cational agencies and local educational agencies, or
7 other organizations, as appropriate, to address such
8 barriers;

9 (3) determining the effects of the COVID-19
10 public health emergency on the mental health of
11 education professionals and other school staff and
12 lessons learned for future public health emergencies;

13 (4) assessing programs and policies that pro-
14 mote mental health and resiliency among education
15 professionals and other school staff, including pro-
16 grams and policies to strengthen mental health and
17 resiliency among education professionals and other
18 school staff; and

19 (5) assessing the efficacy of training programs
20 for education professionals and other school staff
21 that promote resiliency and improve mental health.

22 (c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The review under sub-
23 section (a), as appropriate, shall identify best practices re-
24 lated to, and make recommendations to address—

1 (1) improving mental health and resiliency
2 among education professionals and other school
3 staff;

4 (2) removing barriers to mental health care for
5 education professionals and other school staff; and

6 (3) strategies to promote resiliency among edu-
7 cation professionals and other school staff in health
8 care settings.

9 **SEC. 6. GAO REPORT.**

10 Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment
11 of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States
12 shall submit to Congress a report on the extent to which
13 Federal substance use disorder and mental health grant
14 programs address the prevalence and severity of mental
15 health conditions and substance use disorders among edu-
16 cation professionals and other school staff. Such report
17 shall—

18 (1) include an analysis of available evidence and
19 data related to such conditions and programs; and

20 (2) assess whether there are duplicative goals
21 and objectives among such grant programs.

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