



DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

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January 13, 2020

The Honorable Sandra Scott
State Representative
611-D Coverdell Legislative Office Building
Atlanta, GA 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill (LC 49 0017)

Dear Representative Scott:

This bill would amend state law to create the K-5 Social and Emotional Health Pilot Program during the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 school years in up to ten public schools. The program would employ on-site mental health professionals to provide services for students in grades kindergarten through five. The program would also require the Department of Education (GaDOE) to conduct preliminary studies to designate pilot schools, employ the necessary personnel, and contract for a final evaluation. The bill is undated but is assumed to be effective July 1, 2020 for the purposes of this fiscal note.

Impact on State Expenditures

Establishing the pilot program would result in a total estimated cost of \$15.7 million across fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024. The annual cost of approximately \$5.23 million is driven by personnel costs for the school mental health professionals, program coordinator, and the contract with an evaluator.

Exhibit 1: Estimated Costs for First Two Years of the Program

Fiscal Year	School Mental Health Professionals ¹	Program Coordinator ¹	Evaluator Contract	Total
FY22	\$5,000,000	\$136,000	\$100,000	\$5,236,000
FY23	\$5,000,000	\$136,000	\$100,000	\$5,236,000
FY24	\$5,000,000	\$136,000	\$100,000	\$5,236,000
Total	\$15,000,000	\$408,000	\$300,000	\$15,708,000

¹ Estimate includes salary estimate plus benefit cost (includes 60% benefit rate)

The estimate assumes the employment of six mental health professionals per school, or one per K-5 grade, at a maximum cost of \$500,000 per school. The bill requires one certified school mental health

professional per grade or per 250 students. If the grade has more than 250 students, a mental health professional must be added to maintain an approximate ratio of 1:250; likewise, if a pilot school has fewer than 250 students in a single grade, grades may be combined so long as the ratio is maintained. This analysis assumes the ratio requirement is met within each grade and does not account for additional costs if more students are present or lower costs for smaller schools. Costs related to the evaluator contract are included each year because the bill requires the development of data collection methods and establishment of control groups in 2021-22, followed by evaluations in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Sincerely,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Kelly Farr, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/KF/ajs