

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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**HOUSE BILL 75
Committee Substitute Favorable 2/26/19**

Short Title: School Mental Health Screening Study.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 14, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND
2 THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT
3 OF A MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING PROCESS FOR CHILDREN IN NORTH
4 CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE HOUSE SELECT
5 COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL SAFETY.
6

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of
9 Public Instruction shall conduct a study to recommend a mental health screening process to
10 identify school children in North Carolina at risk of harming themselves or others. In conducting
11 this study, the Departments shall collaborate with the North Carolina Medical Board, the North
12 Carolina Psychology Board, the North Carolina School Psychology Association, the Appalachian
13 State University Assessment, Support, and Counseling (ASC) Center, organizations concerned
14 with school mental health, and any other stakeholders the Departments deem appropriate.

15 **SECTION 2.** The study shall examine at least all of the following issues:

16 (a) Whether the State should require a mental health screen to identify school-aged
17 children at risk of harming themselves or others.

18 (b) Which mental health professionals should conduct any mental health screen of
19 school-aged children in North Carolina, including whether specific training or experience in
20 working with school-aged children who might be at risk of harming themselves or others should
21 be required in addition to licensure as a health care or mental health provider.

22 (c) What behaviors or mental health diagnoses the screen should be targeted to identify.

23 (d) The format the screen is to take, including whether an independent mental health
24 screen must be developed, or whether an existing product may be used. The study shall examine
25 at least the Pearson BASC-2 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System and the FastBridge
26 Learning Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener to determine if either system
27 could be developed into, or used as, a statewide screen.

28 (e) Whether the screen must be uniform throughout the State or whether the Departments
29 should create general guidelines to be followed by each local school administrative unit.

30 (f) Creation of a policy to ensure that any children identified as being at risk of harming
31 themselves or others receive the mental health services they need to ameliorate that risk. The
32 study shall examine what type of mental health providers can provide follow-up services, whether
33 these services may be provided by mental health support staff employed by local school
34 administrative units, and the feasibility of local school administrative units partnering with
35 private organizations to provide these services.



1 (g) Creation of a policy regulating the storage of, and access to, the confidential health
2 information generated by a screen.

3 (h) The optimal age to initiate screening and whether screening should be repeated at
4 different ages.

5 (i) Whether parents will be permitted to opt out of the screen.

6 (j) Whether individuals who perform mental health screening of school-aged children at
7 risk of harming themselves or others should be immune from suit for their actions and omissions
8 in performing those screens.

9 (k) Any other issues the Departments deem necessary.

10 **SECTION 3.** The Departments shall report their findings to the Joint Legislative
11 Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Legislative Education
12 Oversight Committee no later than February 15, 2020.

13 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law.