

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 75
Committee Substitute Favorable 2/26/19
Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 3/4/19
Fourth Edition Engrossed 3/6/19

Short Title: School Mental Health Screening Study.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 14, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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

- (a) Whether the State should require a mental health screen to identify school-aged children at risk of harming themselves or others.
- (b) Which mental health professionals should conduct any mental health screen of school-aged children in North Carolina, including whether specific training or experience in working with school-aged children who might be at risk of harming themselves or others should be required in addition to licensure as a health care or mental health provider.
- (c) What behaviors or mental health diagnoses the screen should be targeted to identify.
- (d) The format the screen is to take, including whether an independent mental health screen must be developed, or whether an existing product may be used. The study shall examine at least the Pearson BASC-2 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System and the FastBridge Learning Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener to determine if either system could be developed into, or used as, a statewide screen.
- (e) Whether the screen must be uniform throughout the State or whether the Departments should create general guidelines to be followed by each local school administrative unit.



- 1 (f) Creation of a policy to ensure that any children identified as being at risk of
- 2 harming themselves or others receive the mental health services they need to
- 3 ameliorate that risk. The study shall examine what type of mental health
- 4 providers can provide follow-up services, whether these services may be
- 5 provided by mental health support staff employed by local school
- 6 administrative units, and the feasibility of local school administrative units
- 7 partnering with private organizations to provide these services.
- 8 (g) Creation of a policy regulating the storage of, and access to, the confidential
- 9 health information generated by a screen.
- 10 (h) The optimal age to initiate screening and whether screening should be
- 11 repeated at different ages.
- 12 (i) The procedure for parents to opt in to the mental health screening.
- 13 (j) Whether individuals who perform mental health screening of school-aged
- 14 children at risk of harming themselves or others should be immune from suit
- 15 for their actions and omissions in performing those screens.
- 16 (k) A review of the best practices of other states that perform mental health
- 17 screening of school-aged children.
- 18 (l) Any other issues the Departments deem necessary.

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

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