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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
School District Finance Officers

FROM: Hershel Lyons, Chancellor
Division of Public Schools

Linda Champion, Deputy Commissioner
Division of Finance and Operations

DATE: June 1, 2018

SUBJECT: Mental Health Assistance Allocation – Senate Bill 7026

Senate Bill 7026 (Chapter 2018-3, Laws of Florida) comprehensively addresses school safety, in part, through a Mental Health Assistance Allocation and district implementation plans. In Governor Scott’s letter, dated March 23, 2018, he stated that it was his expectation that each student in Florida has access to a mental health professional at school by the 2018-19 school year. Following is a summary of the pertinent sections of the new law, including changes that will impact Florida school districts.

Section 29.

Revises section (s.) 1011.62, Florida Statutes (F.S.), Funds for operation of schools, to:

- Create a Mental Health Assistance Allocation to provide funding to school districts to help establish or expand school-based mental health care.
 - Funds for this allocation are to be allocated each year in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) or other law, with each school district receiving a minimum of \$100,000 and the remaining balance to be distributed to school districts proportionately based on their total unweighted full-time equivalent student enrollment.
 - Before receiving funds, school districts are required to annually develop and submit a plan outlining the local program and planned expenditures to their district school boards for approval.
 - Plans approved by district school boards are due to the Commissioner of Education by August 1 of each fiscal year. The district must include the plans approved by the governing body of each charter school in the district with its submission.
 - Attached to this memo are a certification and checklist for your plans, which are also to be submitted to Mark Eggers via email by August 1, 2018.
 - Eligible charter schools are entitled to a proportionate share of the district’s Mental Health Assistance Allocation funding.
 - To be eligible, a charter school must develop and submit a detailed plan outlining the local program and planned expenditures to its governing body for approval. After the plan is approved by the governing body, it must be provided to the

Contact Information:

Mark Eggers
850-245-0405
Mark.Eggers@fldoe.org
DPS: 2018-77

- charter school's sponsor (district). This includes charter schools that will begin operations in the 2018-19 school year.
- The district should work with its charter schools to establish a process and reasonable deadline for charter schools to submit their governing body-approved plans to the district before the district's August 1 deadline to submit them and its own plan to the department.
 - At least 90 percent of a district's allocation must be spent to:
 - Provide mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses; and
 - Coordinate such services with a student's primary care provider and the student's other mental health providers.
 - Funds from this allocation may not supplant operating funds currently provided for this purpose, nor may the funds be used to increase salaries or provide bonuses.
 - School districts are encouraged to maximize third-party health insurance benefits and Medicaid claims for services, where appropriate.
 - The department will distribute the district's allocation upon the district's submission of the school board-approved plan outlining a local program and planned expenditures. Before the distribution of the allocation can occur the charter school must develop and submit a detailed plan outlining the local program and planned expenditures to its governing body for approval.
 - Plans must be focused on delivering evidence-based mental health care treatment to children and include:
 - Provision of mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses.
 - Coordination of services with a student's primary care provider and other mental health providers caring for the student.
 - Direct employment of service providers or a contract-based collaborative effort or partnership with one or more local community mental health program, agencies or providers.
 - Beginning September 30, 2019, and annually thereafter by September 30, each school district shall submit to the department a report on its program outcomes and expenditures for the previous fiscal year that, at a minimum, must include the number of each of the following:
 - Students who received screenings or assessments.
 - Students who were referred for services or assistance.
 - Students who received services or assistance.
 - Direct employment service providers employed by each school district.
 - Contract-based collaborative efforts or partnerships with community mental health programs, agencies or providers.

A draft checklist for the report is attached to this memo for your planning purposes.

Section 36.

Appropriates \$69,237,286 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund for the 2018-19 fiscal year to fund the Mental Health Assistance Allocation, created pursuant to s. 1011.62(16), F.S., within the Florida Education Finance Program.

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For further information on best practices and to view your district's Mental Health Assistance Allocation from the GAA, visit the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools webpage at <http://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/>. Information on voluntary regional meetings for district student services teams to share best practices for plan development is available at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-8262/dps-2018-75.pdf>.

If you have questions about the allocation or expenditures, please contact Mark Eggers at Mark.Eggers@fldoe.org or 850-245-0405. If you have questions about the mental health contents of the plan, please contact Dr. Monica Verra-Tirado at Monica.Verra-Tirado@fldoe.org or 850-245-0475.

HL/LC

Attachments

cc: School District Student Services Directors
School District School Safety Specialists
School District Charter School Contacts