

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

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House Bill 5524 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Sylvia A. Santana
Committee: Health Policy
Complete to 2-13-18

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5524 would amend the Revised School Code to require that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), develop or adopt a professional development course for teachers in mental health first aid within a year after the bill takes effect.

The course would have to include instruction on at least both of the following:

- Identifying potential risk factors and warning signs for mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and self-injury.
- Strategies for helping an individual experiencing a mental health crisis, including assessing risk, listening respectfully, supporting the individual, and identifying professional help and other resources for the individual.

The course may be counted toward the professional development required under Section 1527 of the Code. Section 1527 requires that the board of each school district, intermediate school district (ISD), or public school academy (PSA, or charter school) provide at least five days of teacher professional development each year. It also provides that nonpublic schools may provide professional development that would apply toward certificate issuance or renewal as long as it meets certain requirements.

The bill would take effect 90 days after enactment.

Proposed MCL 380.1526b

BACKGROUND:

Between July and October of 2017, the bipartisan House C.A.R.E.S. Task Force met with stakeholders and the public, toured facilities, and crafted a set of recommendations to address mental health concerns in the state. The task force's report,¹ released on January 17, 2018, included a recommendation that teachers and counselors be provided mental health training. Specifically, the report notes the following:

Teachers and counselors should be equipped to identify and address a mental health crisis that a child might be experiencing. While it is helpful to have social workers

¹ <https://house.mi.gov/PDFs/HouseCARESTaskForceReport.pdf>

and psychological professionals in a school, for areas that cannot afford these professionals, mental health crisis and mental health first aid training for teachers and other school staff will better serve these students. We should explore offering such training to teachers and other school staff throughout the state.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5524 could increase costs for the state and could increase costs for school districts, intermediate school districts (ISDs), and public school academies (PSAs).

The bill could create additional administrative costs for the MDE, in association with DHHS, by requiring them to adopt or develop a professional development course for teachers on mental health first aid. However, it is likely there would be no additional cost since MDE believes that there is at least one course that is aligned with the bill's requirements, Youth Mental Health First Aid.²

The bill could create additional costs for school districts, ISDs, and PSAs that implement the new professional development course, but doing so would be optional.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

²Link to Youth Mental Health First Aid <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/course-types/youth/>