

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R887 GCB-D

S.B. 325
By: West
Education
4/26/2021
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under current law, school-based health centers are authorized to provide "conventional health services," including physical exams, dental care, and health education, but it does not include mental health services. Health care advisory councils do not currently hold a position for mental health professionals. Current reports sent by school-based health centers do not include mental health statistics and reporting.

S.B. 325 would add mental health services to the continuum of services delivered by school-based health centers, allow a position for a licensed mental health service provider to the current list of members on health care advisory councils, enable school districts to be eligible for future federal and state grants designated for the provision of mental health services at school-based health centers, and include reporting on the efficacy of mental health services delivered by school-based health centers within the already existing biannual report to the legislature.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for mental health services. In the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic, schools have confronted unprecedented challenges as they moved to quickly shift classes to hybrid offerings moving back to in-person instruction, provide equitable access for all students, support teachers' and students' educational needs, and make plans amidst changing circumstances. The pandemic itself has caused much worry, stress, and grief. These stressors can and are causing mental health challenges for anyone and can cause acute symptoms to appear for people who may experience preexisting mental health challenges.

Providing mental health services in schools during and after COVID-19 will connect students with resources and services that they may not otherwise have access.

As proposed, S.B. 325 amends current law relating to providing mental health services and mental health education to public school students at school-based health centers.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 38.051(a), Education Code, to authorize a school district to design a model for the delivery of cooperative healthcare programs for students and their families that provides for the delivery of certain health services, including mental health services. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 38.058, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 38.058. HEALTH EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL.
(a) Authorizes the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school to establish and appoint members to a local health education and health care advisory council (council) to make recommendations to the district or school on the establishment of school-based health centers to provide health care services, including mental health services, and to assist the district or school in ensuring

that local community values are reflected in the operation of each center and in the provision of health education and mental health education.

(b) Requires the board of trustees or governing body to appoint to the council at least one person from certain groups, including mental health care professionals licensed to practice in Texas. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 38.063(c), Education Code, to provide that all health care programs designed under a grant program to assist with the cost of school-based health centers should be designed to meet certain goals, including stabilizing the mental well-being of a student.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 38.064(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), based on statistics obtained from every school-based health center (center) in Texas that receives funding through DSHS, to issue a biennial report to the legislature about the relative efficacy of services delivered by the centers during the preceding two years and any increased academic success of students at campuses served by those centers, with special emphasis on certain student health factors, including improved mental health.

SECTION 5. Requires the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school that has established a local health education and health care advisory council under Section 38.058, Education Code, to appoint to the council a mental health professional licensed in Texas, as required by the change in law made by this Act, as soon as practicable and not later than January 1, 2022.

SECTION 6. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.