

By: Plesa

H.B. No. 3488

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to creating a mental health allotment under the Foundation School Program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 48, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 48.117 to read as follows:

Sec. 48.117. MENTAL HEALTH ALLOTMENT. (a) For each student in average daily attendance, a school district is entitled to an annual allotment equal to the basic allotment multiplied by 0.008.

(b) At least 85 percent of the funds allocated under this section must be used to establish and maintain appropriate mental health supports for students in the district, including to pay costs associated with:

(1) hiring and providing compensation for counselors, social workers, and staff dedicated to student mental health;

(2) implementing screenings for adverse childhood experiences and anxiety disorders for students who are eight years of age, using tools selected by the agency based on guidance from mental health professionals;

(3) selecting and implementing evidence-based programs to provide a positive school climate and promote student skills in dealing with bullying and conflicts, solving problems, developing healthy peer relationships, and engaging in activities to prevent suicide and substance use; and

1 (4) developing:

2 (A) early intervention services for students in
3 need of additional support, such as skill groups to deal with grief,
4 anger, anxiety, or sadness;

5 (B) treatment programs and services that address
6 the various mental health needs of students;

7 (C) student and family support and mental health
8 resources;

9 (D) a school culture in which teachers and other
10 student support staff are trained to recognize the early warning
11 signs of student mental health issues; and

12 (E) a mental health referral process to ensure
13 that all students have equal access to mental health services and
14 supports.

15 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.