

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019**

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**SENATE BILL 844\***

Short Title: Student Mental Health Well-Being/COVID-19. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Chaudhuri and Smith (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 27, 2020

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO FUND ADDITIONAL SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PERSONNEL  
2 IN RESPONSE TO ANTICIPATED GREATER NEED DUE TO IMPACTS FROM THE  
3 CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019.  
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5 Whereas, social-emotional support provided by school psychologists, school social  
6 workers, and school counselors can enhance students' ability to succeed in school and in the  
7 community; and

8 Whereas, beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, school psychologists, school social  
9 workers, and school counselors will be tasked with providing social-emotional support to  
10 students, faculty, and staff due to public safety measures that have been put in place as a result  
11 of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic; and

12 Whereas, in prior years, there have been insufficient funds to meet the needs of  
13 students by (i) supporting school mental health support personnel in North Carolina public  
14 schools and (ii) employing school mental health support personnel at nationally recommended  
15 ratios; and

16 Whereas, it is a top priority of the General Assembly to respond to the increased need  
17 for social-emotional support of North Carolina public school students in these challenging times;

18 Now, therefore,

19 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

20 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
21 Public Instruction the sum of four hundred eighty million dollars (\$480,000,000) in recurring  
22 funds for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to increase the Instructional Support Allotment. These funds  
23 shall be used to establish a tiered system of support for students by increasing positions for the  
24 following school mental health support personnel in order to meet the following statewide ratios:

25 (1) At least one school psychologist for every 700 students.

26 (2) At least one school counselor for every 250 students.

27 (3) At least one school social worker for every 400 students.

28 **SECTION 1.(b)** It is the intent of the General Assembly that the funds provided  
29 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section will supplement and not supplant any funds already  
30 provided for school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers.

31 **SECTION 2.(a)** The provisions of the State Budget Act, Chapter 143C of the  
32 General Statutes, are reenacted and shall remain in full force and effect and are incorporated in  
33 this act by reference.

34 **SECTION 2.(b)** Except where expressly repealed or amended by this act, the  
35 provisions of any other legislation enacted during the 2019 Regular Session of the General



1 Assembly expressly appropriating funds to an agency, a department, or an institution covered  
2 under this act, shall remain in effect.

3           **SECTION 2.(c)** If House Bill 966, 2019 Regular Session, becomes law, and any  
4 provision of that act or a provision of the Committee Report described in Section 42.2 of that act  
5 conflicts with this act, this act shall control.

6           **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2020.