

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

290-4-5-.08 Mental Health Service Coordinator Program

- (1) Subject to appropriations by the Legislature, commencing with the 2023-2024 school year, each local board of education in the state shall employ a mental health service coordinator. The coordinator shall be responsible for coordinating student mental health services throughout the local school system, subject to the provisions of Act 2022-422.
- (2) An individual hired as a coordinator shall possess at least one of the following qualifications:
 - (a) Have a bachelor's degree in social work.
 - (b) Satisfy State Department of Education qualifications for a school counselor.
 - (c) Satisfy State Department of Education qualifications for a school nurse.
 - (c) Have professional mental health experience or have been licensed in a mental health occupation including, but not limited to, licensure as a licensed professional counselor or marriage and family therapist.
 - (d) Other qualifications as determined by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the State Department of Education.
- (3) Within one year after being hired as a mental health service coordinator, an individual shall earn a school-based mental health certificate by successfully completing a certification program developed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health.
- (4) On or before the last day of each fiscal year, and as requested thereafter, each local board of education shall complete, and submit to the Alabama Department of Mental Health and State Department of Education, a needs assessment and resource map for the schools under the authority of the board. The assessment shall document the status of mental health for the entire school system and allow the local board of education to engage in a quality improvement process to improve the provision of mental health resources to students within the school system.
- (5)
 - (a) No student of a public K-12 school under the age of 14 may be allowed to participate in ongoing school counseling services including, but not limited to, mental health services, unless specific written instruction has been granted by the student's parent, unless there is an imminent threat to the health of the student or others. For the purposes of this section, this written permission is referred to as an opt-in.
 - (b) For the purposes of this section, "mental health services" includes services, treatment, surveys, or assessments relating to mental health, and "ongoing school counseling services" shall not include those school counseling services which are split into domains not requiring a mental health therapist or other mental health therapeutic license.
 - (c) All local boards of education in this state shall adopt a policy concerning parent opt-in for mental health services in accordance with the provisions of subsection (h)(3) of Act 2022-442.

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Statutory Authority: Act 2022-442

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