STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

HOUSE BILL 2827      By: Blancett

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; creating a grant program subject to the availability of funds to employ school nurses, school counselors, and mental health professionals; providing for annual grant awards to school districts; establishing criteria for grants; defining terms; authorizing rule promulgation; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1.   NEW LAW   A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1210.198 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The State Board of Education shall award grants subject to the availability of funds, to public school districts for the purpose of employing school nurses, school counselors, and mental health professionals to provide services and support to students.

B. The grants shall be awarded to public school districts annually based upon the following conditions:
1. The districts shall provide half of the funding for the grants and the State Board of Education shall provide the other half of the grant funding;

  2. School nurses, school counselors, and mental health professionals employed through the grant program shall complete a training program prescribed by the State Department of Education;

  3. School nurses, school counselors, and mental health professionals may be employed by a district on a full-time or part-time basis, or may be employed on a contract basis with a private, third-party provider; and

  4. School nurses, school counselors, and mental health professionals employed through the grant program shall spend a minimum amount of time on their respective nursing and counseling duties as required by the State Department of Education.

C. As used in this section:

1. "Mental health professionals" means:

   a. licensed professional counselors (LPCs),
   b. licensed alcohol and drug counselors (LADCs),
   c. school psychologists,
   d. licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs),
   e. licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), or
   f. licensed recreational therapists (CTRS/L);
2. "School counselor" means a person certified as a school counselor by the State Board of Education who provides student support counseling, academic counseling, or both; and

3. "School nurse" shall have the same meaning as defined in paragraph 7 of Section 1-116 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

D. The State Board of Education may promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2023.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.