P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 323, ***approved December 21, 2021***
Assembly, No. 4435 ***(Third Reprint)***

AN ACT prioritizing certain [3]**[**school districts**]** applicants[3] under the [3]**[**School Based Youth**]** School-Linked[3] Services Program and supplementing chapter 5B of Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. In awarding [3]**[**grants under the School Based Youth Services Program, the Office of School-Linked Services within the Division of Family and Community Partnerships of**]** contracts to provide School-Linked Services,[3] the Department of Children and Families shall give priority to [2]new[2] [3]**[**applicant school districts [2]and districts**]** applicants and applicants[3] seeking to expand current programs[2] that [3], at minimum,[3] [2]**[**operate or host, or demonstrate a plan to operate or host,**]** include in their application[2] a center or other entity that focuses on providing individual, family, and group clinical mental health counseling services to students. The center or other entity shall [1]**[**be**]**[1] [2]offer to students services that include, but are not limited to, the following[2]:

(1) [2]**[**[1]be[1] separate from, but integrated into, a school within the applicant school district;

(2) [1]be[1] open for students to visit clinical mental health professionals during, before, and after school hours**]** access to mental health counseling services during, before, or after school hours[2]; and

[2]**[**(3) [1]**[**staffed by**]** include[1]**]** (2) access to[2] clinical mental health [1]**[**professionals**]** professional staff[1], who [1]**[**are**]** may be[1] school district employees [1]**[**and**]** , that[1] provide mental health counseling services to students [3]**[**either**]** including[3] in-person or [3]**[**remotely through the use of**]**[3] telehealth or telemedicine services, as applicable [3]and as permitted by law[3].

[2]The [3]**[**Office of School-Linked Services**]** Department of Children and Families[3] shall give priority consideration to new [3]**[**applicant school districts and districts**]** applicants and applicants[3] seeking to expand current programs that offer the services included in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection immediately upon the effective date of this act.[2]

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
[1]Assembly AED committee amendments adopted December 14, 2020.
[2]Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 13, 2021.
[3]Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's recommendations November 8, 2021.

b. Of the [2]new[2] [3]⟦applicant school districts [2]and districts⟧ applicants and applicants[3] seeking to expand current programs[2] that [2]⟦operate or host, or demonstrate a plan to operate or host,⟧ include in their application[2] a center or other entity in accordance with subsection a. of this section, the [3]⟦Office of School-Linked Services⟧ Department of Children and Families[3] shall consider [3]⟦the following⟧[3] factors [3]including but not limited to the following[3] in [2]⟦determining further priority in⟧ making a determination when[2] awarding [3]⟦grants under the School Based Youth Services Program⟧ contracts to provide School-Linked Services[3]:

(1) whether the [3]applicant is, currently operates in, or proposes to operate in a[3] school district [3]that[3] is designated as a "high-need" school district, as determined by [2]⟦the⟧ metrics set by the[2] Commissioner of Children and Families;

(2) the existence of a partnership between the center or other entity and community mental health providers and [3]⟦other⟧ existing[3] community resources;

(3) whether the [3]⟦school district⟧ applicant[3] has developed a plan for mental health professionals working in its center or other entity to develop curricula to train students and staff on identifying the signs of mental health conditions and addressing risk factors that may impact student mental health; and

(4) whether the center or other entity created by the [3]⟦school district has⟧ applicant can ensure access to[3] clinical mental health professional staff who specialize in a variety of mental health areas, or demonstrates a plan to retain the services of clinical mental health professionals in a variety of mental health areas.

[3]c. For purposes of this section, "applicant" means a school district, school, or other eligible entity seeking to be awarded a contract to provide School-Linked Services. The term shall include new applicants as well as a school district, school, or other eligible entity that is seeking to expand current programs under an existing contract to provide School-Linked Services.[3]

2. This act shall take effect immediately [3]and shall expire on the first day of the 25th month next following enactment[3].

Requires DCF to give priority to certain school districts with student mental health counseling centers in awarding grants under School Based Youth Services Program.