

THE STATE SCHOOL AID ACT OF 1979 (EXCERPT)
Act 94 of 1979

***** 388.1631o.added THIS ADDED SECTION IS EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2021 *****

388.1631o.added Payments to eligible districts for school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, and school nurses; application; payment schedule and calculations.

Sec. 31o. (1) From the state school aid fund money appropriated in section 11, there is allocated for 2021-2022 an amount not to exceed \$240,000,000.00 for payments to eligible districts for the purpose of increasing the number of school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, and school nurses serving students in this state.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, to receive funding under this section, a district must apply for the funding in a form and manner prescribed by the department. In its application for funding under this section, a district must pledge and provide assurances to the department that it will fully annually fund all staff that are supported with funding under this section in an ongoing manner after the third year it receives funding under this section.

(3) The department shall award funding to districts with the greatest need for additional school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, or school nurses. To determine the districts with the greatest needs under this subsection, the department shall consider the physical and mental health services available at the district and how close an applicant district is to meeting the following recommended staff-to-student ratios:

- (a) 1 school psychologist for every 500 full-time equated pupils counted in the district.
- (b) 1 school social worker for every 250 full-time equated pupils counted in the district.
- (c) 1 school counselor for every 250 full-time equated pupils counted in the district.
- (d) 1 school nurse for every 750 full-time equated pupils counted in the district.

(4) To be eligible for funding under this section, a district must hire additional school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, or school nurses by March 1, 2022 and must maintain support for the new staff in an ongoing manner. As determined by the department, staff hired and supported by funding under this section must meet all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and license requirements to be considered a school psychologist, school social worker, school counselor, or school nurse.

(5) Subject to subsection (6), payments to eligible districts must be made as follows:

(a) In the first year funds are distributed from this section, the department shall provide payments to eligible districts equal to 100% of the annual cost of newly hired school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, or school nurses. The amount paid to the eligible district must be the lesser of the actual cost of the employee, as determined by the department, or the median wage for an equivalent employee working in a school setting, as determined by the department, using wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that is specific to this state.

(b) In the second year funds are distributed under this section, the department shall pay eligible districts 66% of the amount paid to the eligible district under subdivision (a).

(c) In the third year funds are distributed under this section, the department shall pay eligible districts 33% of the amount paid to the eligible district under subdivision (a).

(6) If, after awarding funding under subsection (3) and calculating payment amounts under subsection (5), the department determines that the amount allocated in subsection (1) is insufficient to fully fund payments under this section, the department shall prorate payments to eligible districts on an equal percentage basis.

(7) The funds allocated under this section for 2021-2022 are a work project appropriation, and any unexpended funds for 2021-2022 are carried forward into 2022-2023. The purpose of the work project is to increase the number of school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, and school nurses in school buildings. The estimated completion date of the work project is September 30, 2024.

(8) Notwithstanding section 17b, the department shall make payments under this section on a schedule determined by the department.

History: Add. 2021, Act 48, Eff. Oct. 1, 2021.