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**REVISOR *of* STATUTES**

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**MEMORANDUM**

To: House Committee on K-12 Education Budget  
From: Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Date: March 8, 2023  
Subject: Bill Brief – House Bill 2444

House Bill 2444 would codify into state law the mental health intervention team program. The program was first established in 2018 through an appropriation and accompanying proviso. The legislature has since continued the program on a year-to-year basis through subsequent appropriation acts.

The purpose of the program is to provide greater access to behavioral and mental health services to K-12 students, establish a cohesive structure for the provision of such services, reduce barriers that exist for families to consistently access such services, and optimize the behavioral and mental health resources and workforce that is available in Kansas. The program focuses on students who are in the custody of the department for children and families, students who are referred for services under a families first or family preservation program, and students who are in need of mental health support services.

The program pairs school districts with community mental health centers to provide behavioral and mental health services to students. The school district and partnering community mental health center work together to identify the needs of the students in the school district and to implement a school-based program that is tailored to such needs.

The state department of education would oversee the program in accordance with the requirements of HB 2444 and the policies and procedures established by the department. In each school year, a school district could apply to the department to establish or maintain a mental health intervention team program within the school district. If approved by the department, the school district must enter into a memorandum of understanding with a partnering community mental health center for the coordination and provision of services.

Subject to appropriations therefor, the department would disburse the following grants to participating school districts from the amount appropriated for the program:

1. A *mental health intervention team program grant* which is determined each year based on the amount of the salary and fringe benefits paid by the school district for the employment one or more school liaisons. HB 2444 would cap the maximum grant amount at \$50,000 for each respective school liaison position.
2. A *community mental health center pass-through grant* which would equal 33% of the amount of the school district's mental health intervention team program grant. The school district would be required to pay such grant amount to the community mental health center that partner's with the school district.

The staff required for the establishment and maintenance of a mental health intervention team program includes a combination of one or more school liaisons employed by the school district and one or more case managers and clinical therapists employed by the partnering community mental health center. Such staff would comprise the behavioral health intervention team of the school district.

Section 4(c) establishes the employment requirements for school liaisons. To be hired as a school liaison, a person must have a bachelor's degree. A school liaison's roles and responsibilities generally include the identification of students who may need services, coordinating student services between the school district and the community mental health center, working with the student's family for the provision of such services, planning services during the school year and during the summer months, and facilitating communications between the school district, community mental health center, student and the student's family.

HB 2444 would authorize the state department of education to waive the requirement that a school district employ a school liaison and authorize the community mental health center to employ the school liaison. If such a waiver is granted, the school district would continue to receive the program grants as through the school liaison was employed by the school district. Upon receipt of such grant amounts, any such school district would be required to pay the amount of the mental health intervention team program grant received by the school district to the community mental health center for the employment of the liaison.

Section 4(d) establishes the requirements for the employment of master's level clinical therapists by community mental health centers. A clinical therapist's roles and responsibilities generally include assisting the school liaison with identification of students who are in need of services, triaging student services based on needs, conducting clinical assessments and making treatment recommendations, providing individual student and family therapy services, and making referrals to other treatment modalities as appropriate.

Section 4(e) establishes the requirements for the employment of case managers by community mental health centers. A case manager's roles and responsibilities generally include working with the school liaison and clinical therapist to identify students and prioritize treatment, providing outreach to students and families regarding treatment, maintaining communication between all involved persons and entities, making referrals to appropriate community resources, helping to reconnect students and families if the treatment process is not being followed, and helping families negotiate barriers to treatment.

HB 2444 would establish, within each school district, a fund called the mental health intervention team program fund. All moneys received by a school district pursuant to the program must be deposited into such fund. School districts may only expend moneys from such fund to pay for program expenditures including the salaries of school liaisons and payments to community mental health centers.