



AGENDA ITEM 15

Information

Behavioral Health Student Services Act: Grant and Administrative Planning

Item Goals

- A discussion to help prioritize areas for funding and further exploration as part of the Behavioral Health Student Services Act (BHSSA) planning process, including the ongoing \$7.6 million in grant funds which next round begins in 2027; and additional one-time administrative and evaluation funds that must be encumbered by June 30, 2026.

Behavioral Health Landscape

- The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) fee schedule standardizes reimbursement rates for school-linked behavioral health services across providers and local education agencies, supporting financial sustainability, billing consistency, and equitable access statewide.
- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) will roll out population-based prevention programs under the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) that include schools as a key component, providing classroom or schoolwide supports to reduce stigma, build protective factors, and promote student wellbeing.
- BHSA Early Intervention funds support county programs that include outreach, early identification, and linkage to care in education settings to prevent severe mental health and substance use disorders and reduce disparities, with the goal of decreasing school suspension, expulsion, referral to alternative or community schools, and dropout.

Relevant Commission Work

- The BHSSA, authorized by Senate Bill 75 (Chapter 51, Statutes of 2019) as part of the State's 2019 Budget Act, provides grants for partnerships between county behavioral health departments and local education agencies (LEAs) to deliver school-based behavioral health services.

- The Commission awarded BHSSA grant funding in three phases (as funding became available) to 57 county behavioral health departments, including two city municipalities, and their LEA partners.
- Grant partners were allowed the flexibility to tailor their grant programs (if they meet BHSSA goals) to the needs of students, families, and identified gaps in service delivery.
- In 2023, the Commission made available additional BHSSA funding to existing BHSSA grant partners through a request for applications (RFA). Forty-one BHSSA grantees were awarded additional BHSSA funds to expand their capacity, activities, and services.
- In 2024, the Commission learned of specific needs and gaps that informed the targeted use of \$25 million BHSSA funds in four categories: (1) services for at-risk youth; (2) universal screening learning community; (3) quality improvement and sustainability; and (4) other areas to be identified by the grant applicant.
- Fifty-one grants across the four categories were awarded to 29 counties. To date, the Commission has awarded a total of \$280 million in BHSSA grant funding.
- The Commission contracted with WestEd for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of an evaluation of the BHSSA.