



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

3/15/2022

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S. 197 – An act relating to the provision of mental health supports

As recommended by the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, Draft. 7.2

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/Senate%20Health%20and%20Welfare/Bills/S.197/Drafts,%20Amendments,%20and%20Legal%20Documents/S.197~Katie%20McLinn~As%20Recommended%20by%20the%20Senate%20Committee%20on%20Health%20and%20Welfare~3-11-2022.pdf>

Bill Summary

Act 74 of 2021 – Sec. B501.3(A) – appropriated \$3,000,000 from the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund) to the Agency of Education (AOE) for regional capacity grants to address students’ social, emotional, and mental health needs.¹ In addition to other provisions related to mental health supports, the bill proposes more specific guidance on how to spend this appropriation including:

- \$500,000 for statewide COVID-19 recovery supports for educators and school staff, and
- \$2.5 million for grants to expand mental health and well-being services for children and youth.

Sec. 2 – Provisions of Mental Health and Well-Being Supports for Educators

- Sec. 2 would require the Agency of Education (AOE), in consultation with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to contract with one or more organization(s) to provide statewide COVID-19 recovery supports for educators and school staff.

Sec. 3 – Grants to Expand Mental Health and Well-Being Services to Youth

- Sec. 3 would require AOE to work collaboratively with DMH to establish and administer a two-year program that ensures continuous support to children and youth in a variety of settings by providing grants to:
 - expand existing school-based counseling services in underserved districts of the State, or
 - develop either school-based or community-based afterschool programs, operating in a

¹ Act 74 of 2021 (page 173) – An act relating to making appropriations for the support of government.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT074/ACT074%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

variety of settings outside the school day and over the summer, that support the mental health and wellness needs of students, families, and staff.

Sec. 4 – Allocation of ESSER III Funds

Sec. 4 provides further direction to the ESSER III funds appropriated in Act 74 of 2021, Sec. E.501.3.

Following details described in Sec. 2 and Sec. 3, ESSER III funds would be allocated as follows:

- \$500,000 for statewide COVID-19 recovery supports for educators and staff pursuant to Sec. 2 of the bill.
- \$2.5 million for grants to expand mental health and well-being services for child and youth pursuant to Sec. 3 of the bill.

Fiscal Summary

JFO estimates no fiscal impact in this bill as it only pertains to previously appropriated funds. It provides further direction on how to spend funds already appropriated in Act 74 of 2021.