

McGuire's legislation to help recruit 10,000 mental health clinicians for our schools passes Senate Education Committee

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Senate Majority Leader Mike McGuire and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond are fighting to dramatically increase the number of school counselors throughout California.

California is experiencing a behavioral health crisis among our youth, while at the same time, the shortage of trained mental health professionals is making matters even worse.

The pandemic has only made matters more challenging for young people who were experiencing mental health challenges before COVID-19. There has never been a more important time to increase the number of mental health professionals in our schools than now.

McGuire and Thurmond's bill, SB 1229, would provide grants of \$25,000 to aspiring counselors and therapists who commit to serving two years in schools and communities of high need. Seeking solutions to

lower student-to-counselor ratios in schools is not a new effort or one unique to California. However, it is believed that with SB 1229, California would be the only state to pursue a plan as ambitious as filling 10,000 new counseling positions.

SB 1229 was approved on Wednesday in the Senate Education Committee by a vote of 7-0.

“Students in all corners of this state are struggling with pandemic-related mental health impacts. Young people have been through incredibly traumatic times the past two years and there is no doubt that we are seeing an increase in need related to students and their social-emotional well-being,” said Senate Majority Leader Mike McGuire. “There has never been a more critical time to increase the number of mental health counselors and social-emotional support in our schools than now, so kids are getting the help they need to thrive. I’m grateful to Superintendent Thurmond for his work on this critical issue, along with educational leaders all throughout California.”

State Superintendent of Schools Tony Thurmond spoke at Wednesday’s Education Committee. “Given the struggles students have faced during the pandemic, I believe that this could be one of the most important bills that we act on this year. At this time, addressing the social-emotional needs of our students is job number one,” State Superintendent Tony Thurmond stated.

SB 1229 will next be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee.