



**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE**  
**Fiscal Note**

Fiscal Note On: **HB 395** HLS 26RS 1035  
 Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**  
 Opp. Chamb. Action:  
 Proposed Amd.:  
 Sub. Bill For.:

<b>Date:</b> March 19, 2026	5:41 PM	<b>Author:</b> MARCELLE
<b>Dept./Agy.:</b> Education		<b>Analyst:</b> Julie Silva
<b>Subject:</b> Recruitment and retention of mental health professionals in schools		

SCHOOLS OR INCREASE GF EX See Note Page 1 of 1  
 Requires the state Department of Education to create a program to recruit, hire, and retain mental health professionals

Proposed legislation directs the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to create an incentive program to recruit, hire, and retain qualified mental health professionals, including counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and other behavioral health specialists, to work in public elementary and secondary schools. The program is intended to increase the number of mental health professionals in public schools statewide, with a goal of achieving a ratio of at least one mental health professional per 250 students. Implementation of the program is contingent upon a specific appropriation by the legislature for its purpose.

EXPENDITURES	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Local Funds	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	
<b>Annual Total</b>						
REVENUES	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION**

Proposed legislation is anticipated to result in indeterminable but significant expenditures for both the state and local education agencies (LEAs). State costs are primarily associated with implementing and administering the required incentive program, including staffing and the funding of the incentives provided. Local costs would be driven by hiring and compensation of additional mental health professionals.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) reports that implementing and administering a mental health professionals incentive program would require three additional Education Program Consultant 2 positions at a cost of \$120,441 each (\$105,650 for salary and benefits; \$14,791 for operating expenses). LDOE currently has one FTE supporting Behavior and Mental Health Initiatives, School-Based Medicaid, and serving as project director for a school mental health grant. While the LFO acknowledges the potential need for additional staff, it cannot independently verify the requirement for three positions.

In the 2025-26 school year, approximately 665,674 students are enrolled in Louisiana public schools. Achieving a 1:250 student-to-provider ratio would require roughly 2,663 mental health professionals statewide. Currently, an estimated 1,835 mental health professionals are employed in public school systems, leaving a shortfall of 828 to meet the proposed statewide ratio.

Proposed legislation does not define "incentive" for the program. For informational purposes, the state currently administers several educator workforce programs that provide incentives in various forms, including stipends, salary enhancements, tuition assistance, and financial support for recruitment and professional development. Actual costs are indeterminable and will depend on the type and value of incentives offered and the number of hires receiving them.

Local education agencies (LEAs) are assumed to remain responsible for compensation for any additional mental health professionals and behavioral health specialists they hire, which is estimated to range from \$60,000 to over \$90,000 annually per position. Based on this, for every 10 additional hires, LEA expenditures would increase by approximately \$600,000 to more than \$900,000 per year. Depending on program design and existing staffing levels, the fiscal impact to individual LEAs is indeterminable but may be significant, and the statewide impact based on current staffing shortfalls is expected to be substantial.

**REVENUE EXPLANATION**

There is no anticipated direct material effect on governmental revenues as a result of this measure.

Senate      Dual Referral Rules  
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}  
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House  
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}  
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

  
**Patrice Thomas**  
**Deputy Fiscal Officer**