# School-Based Mental Health State Legislation in the Southeast: A Tiered Approach

In the Southeast region, state leaders and legislatures are proposing and implementing key policies concerning the financing and provision of school-based mental health services, including prevention, screening, and treatment. Updated November 2019.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State and Name of Legislation</th>
<th>Tier 1 Services (Mental Health Promotion)</th>
<th>Tier 2/3 Services (Early Intervention/Treatment)</th>
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| **Kentucky**                 | • By January 1, 2020, require the Department of Education to make a tool kit available to assist school districts in developing a trauma-informed approach  
• By July 1, 2020, require each local board of education to develop a plan for implementing a trauma-informed approach  
• Require school district superintendents to appoint a school safety coordinator  

**Kentucky School Safety and Resiliency Act: KY SB1 (2019)**  
• Amend KRS 156.095 to require suicide prevention awareness information be provided to all students; require suicide training provided to staff to include the recognition of signs and symptoms of mental illness  
• By July 1, 2021, as funds become available, require each school district to provide a mental health professional for every 1,500 students, with the goal of having 1 counselor for every 250 students, spending 60% or more of his/her time on direct services  

**Florida**  
• Require student disclosure of mental health referrals at registration  

**Florida**  
• Require the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to contract for community action treatment teams to provide behavioral health and support services  
• Requires the DOE to establish evidence-based youth mental health awareness and assistance training program to prepare school personnel to identify, understand the signs of, and help a person who is experiencing or developing an emotional disturbance, mental illness, or substance use disorder  
• Requires students expelled for firearms or certain threats be referred for mental health services  

**Florida**  
• Creates the Mental Health Assistance Allocation within the Florida Education Finance Program to provide funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care. Over $69 million allocated to the DOE to fund this program with each school district receiving a minimum of $100,000. Appropriated $500,000 in recurring funds and $6,200,000 in nonrecurring funds to DOE to implement youth mental health awareness training  
• At least 90% of a district's allocation must be spent to: 1) provide mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis and high-risk students; 2) coordinate such services with a student's primary care provider and the student's other mental health providers  

• Require development of a school security risk assessment tool

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Additional Florida legislation, **FL SB 1418**, implements 2 recommendations of a DCF task force on **Baker Act** cases involving minors including encouraging school districts to adopt a standardized suicide assessment tool for school-based mental health professionals.
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<td><strong>Mississippi</strong></td>
<td>• The School Safety Grant Program administered by the state department of education shall include a pilot program to implement a developmentally appropriate social and emotional curriculum for students in grades K-5 • Requires school employees to complete a training or professional development course in mental health every 2 years</td>
<td>• Community mental health centers and facilities shall develop a state-standardized memorandum of understanding (MOU) with school districts in order to expand student access to local mental health resources under the regional behavioral management program</td>
<td>• Establish a School Safety Grant Program within the State Department of Education, using only existing staff and resources, to assist eligible public-school districts in financing programs to provide school safety</td>
<td>• Train school personnel to conduct initial behavioral health screenings of students who experience stress or are at risk of harm</td>
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<td><strong>Mississippi School Safety Act of 2019: MS HB 1283</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tennessee</strong></td>
<td>• Requires the Department of Education (DOE) to develop a training program on ACEs • Authorizes Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to include information on administering an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) assessment in their ACEs training</td>
<td>• DOE will require one full-time person to expand the Training of Trainers (TOT) model to be adopted by LEAs with a mid-range salary of $97,501 • To train new district personnel, it is estimated to result in a one-time increase to state expenditure in the amount of $100,000 in FY19-20 and a recurring increase to state expenditures of $10,000 in FY20-20 and subsequent years. The mandatory recurring increase in local expenditures is estimated to exceed $6,862,000 (146 districts x $47,000 salary and benefits for one additional full-time employee)</td>
<td>• Requires a local board of education to adopt a policy that requires schools within the LEA to conduct an ACEs assessment before assigning disciplinary action</td>
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<td><strong>TN HB 405 (2019)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Georgia</strong></td>
<td>• Schools engage in school-wide mental health prevention initiatives that promote student well-being, as well as parent and staff education</td>
<td>• Places mental health providers in schools to provide services like screening, assessment, counseling and therapy, and referrals to community support services</td>
<td>• Governor allocated $8.4 million from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disorders to bolster APEX programs which support partnerships between mental health clinics and schools for school-based mental health services • Providers are able to bill for 75-90% of the students served each month</td>
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<td><strong>GA APEX Executive Action (launched in 2015)</strong></td>
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Sources used for policy updates include: individual state legislature websites (i.e. the Florida Senate website), databases (i.e. Mental Health America and National Conference of State Legislatures), and state news outlets (i.e. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution).