

March 6, 2023

The Honorable Kristey Williams, Chairperson
House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
300 SW 10th Avenue, Room 546-S
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Representative Williams:

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note for HB 2444 by House Committee on Appropriations

In accordance with KSA 75-3715a, the following fiscal note concerning HB 2444 is respectfully submitted to your committee.

HB 2444 would codify the existing Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) Pilot Program that has been authorized through an appropriations bill proviso each year since FY 2018. The Program's statutory purpose would be to:

1. Provide access to behavioral health resources for students grades one through 12 and to continue collaboration between school districts and community mental health centers (CMHCs) to optimize resources and workforce;
2. Identify students and families to link them with resources in the network;
3. Alleviate the shortage of staff such as school counselors, psychologists and social workers and reduce competition for staff between school districts and other service providers to provide collaborative services to students, especially in rural districts; and
4. Provide services throughout the calendar year, not only during school hours; and reduce barriers to access services for children to attend sessions between the classroom schedule.

The Program would focus on students who have been adjudicated as a child in need of care and who are in the custody of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) or have been referred for a "families first" program or "family preservation" program, or any students who are in need of mental health support services.

The Department of Education would oversee and implement the MHIT Program. Each school year, a school district may apply to establish or maintain a program. The application process would be outlined by the bill and would include a requirement for a memorandum of understanding between the school district and a partnering CMHC submitted with the application to receive funds. Subject to appropriations, a school district approved by the Department to establish or maintain a program would receive a MHIT grant and a CMHC pass-through grant. The amount of the grant would be

determined by calculating the salary and fringe benefits paid by a district to each school liaison, not to exceed \$50,000 for each liaison. Under the current program, the grant requires a 25.0 percent match by the local district for the salaries and wages of the school liaisons. The amount of the district's MCHC pass-through grant would be equal to 33.0 percent of the district's MHIT grant. If appropriations would be insufficient to pay in full all school district grants, the Department would prorate the grants among the districts.

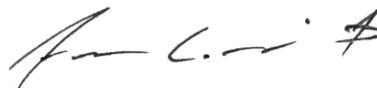
The Department may waive the requirement that a school district employ a school liaison and instead authorize a CMHC partner to employ a school liaison, and the grant funds would be paid to the CMHC that employs the school liaison. The bill would specify that behavioral health liaisons would be employed by the school district, and case managers and clinical therapist would be employed by the CMHC. These staff members working together would be known as the Behavioral Health Intervention Team of the school district.

For school districts, the bill would establish a budget fund called the MHIT Fund. Participating school districts would credit all funds received for the MHIT Program grant or CMHC pass-through grant to this fund. Participating school districts would be required to keep separate accounting records for the school liaison expenditures and pass-through grants to the CMHC.

According to the Department of Education, the codification of the MHIT Program would be accomplished within existing resources. The codification of the Program would allow all school districts that currently participate to continue participating. The fiscal effect of change from the current requirement of a 25.0 percent local match for the salaries and wages of the school liaisons to a grant cap of \$50,000 for the salaries would be negligible. The Department notes that additional costs for school districts would be dependent on those districts choosing to participate in the Program.

The Division of the Budget notes that in *The FY 2024 Governor's Budget Report*, expenditures totaling \$10.6 million from the State General Fund in FY 2023 are recommended for 66 school districts participating in the MHIT Program. For FY 2024, the Governor includes base MHIT funding totaling \$10.5 million for 66 participating school districts, plus an additional \$3.0 million to allow for the expansion of between 15 to 25 additional school districts, depending on the size of the districts and programs, for a total of \$13.5 million, all from the State General Fund. The Program would be authorized as a budget proviso in both FY 2023 and FY 2024, as included in *The FY 2024 Governor's Budget Report*.

Sincerely,



Adam Proffitt
Director of the Budget

cc: Craig Neuenswander, Education