



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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Bill Number:	H. 3258	Introduced on January 8, 2019
Author:	Moore	
Subject:	SC School Safe-Space	
Requestor:	House Education and Public Works	
RFA Analyst(s):	Wren	
Impact Date:	February 11, 2019	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill will increase General Fund expenses of the State Department of Education (SDE) by \$55,000 in FY 2019-20. Of this amount, \$25,000 is recurring for part-time staff to monitor compliance with the provisions of this bill. Non-recurring funds are expected to total \$30,000 to employ mental health and safety experts to develop training materials.

The local expenditure impact on school districts is undetermined since the number of additional FTEs, amount of salary supplements, and expenses for cell phone service are unknown and will vary across districts.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 8, 2019

State Expenditure

This bill requires each public school, beginning with the 2020-21 school year, to have at least one safe-space sentinel from among its current staff for every 200 students enrolled in the school. The role of safe-space sentinels is to facilitate the improvement of safety and mental health of the student population. Safe-space sentinels must serve as front line informal counselors and a means for connecting students and school personnel with certified guidance counselors, school resource officers, school safety coordinators, and other appropriate sources of assistance based on the particular needs of a given situation. Before December 1, 2019, SDE must develop a process that school personnel must complete to apply for certification as safe-school sentinels. Also, before January 1, 2020, SDE must develop an online training program that public school employees who have applied to serve as safe-space sentinels must complete. SDE must also develop an online test that school personnel who are not certified guidance counselors must successfully complete to serve as safe-space sentinels. The test must be offered at no cost and must be administered by school guidance counselors. Those who pass the test are registered as safe-space sentinels with SDE for two years.

SDE indicates that this bill will increase General Fund expenses of the agency by \$55,000 in FY 2019-20. Of this amount, \$25,000 is recurring for part-time staff to monitor compliance with the provisions of this bill. Non-recurring funds are expected to total \$30,000 to employ mental health and safety experts to develop training materials.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill requires each public school, beginning with the 2020-21 school year, to have at least one safe-space sentinel from among its current staff for every 200 students enrolled in the school. A school must demonstrate its compliance with the requirements of this bill by providing a report of its total student population and the number of safe-space sentinels with SDE each semester. Before January 1, 2020, SDE must develop an online training program that public school employees who have applied to serve as safe-space sentinels must complete. SDE must also develop an online test that school personnel who are not certified guidance counselors must successfully complete to serve as safe-space sentinels. The test must be offered at no cost and must be administered by school guidance counselors. Those who pass the test are registered as safe-space sentinels with SDE for two years. A public school must notify SDE if the registered safe-space sentinels are serving at the school each year prior to the safe-space sentinel serving at the school. All teachers will receive a five-minute overview of the safe-school sentinel program during their annual in-service training. The names and cell phone contact information of each safe-school sentinel in a school must be given to all school personnel, students, and families and must be posted at various appropriate locations around the school.

SDE indicates that although the bill directs districts to use current staff for safe-space sentinels, teachers in some districts are operating at full capacity. These districts will need to hire additional FTEs to comply with the provisions of the bill. Expenses related to additional FTEs are unknown and will vary across districts. Also, the need to pay supplements to staff who are operating as sentinels will create additional expenses. These expenses will also vary across districts, and will depend upon the amount of the supplement. In addition, the bill will increase expenses related to cell phone service for sentinels. Therefore, the local expenditure impact of this bill on school districts is undetermined in FY 2019-20 and each year thereafter.

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director