



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 829

LR 1143(02)

An Act to Improve Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "

Committee: Education and Cultural Affairs

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Current biennium cost increase - local school administrative units

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Projections FY 2025-26	Projections FY 2026-27
Net Cost (Savings)				
General Fund	\$81,400,000	\$81,400,000	\$81,400,000	\$81,400,000
Appropriations/Allocations				
General Fund	\$81,400,000	\$81,400,000	\$81,400,000	\$81,400,000

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill makes changes to the calculation of salary and benefit costs in the essential programs and services funding model beginning in fiscal year 2023-24. The changes include lowering the student-to-guidance staff ratio for the elementary and middle school levels from 350:1 to 250:1, establishing a student-to-clinical mental health provider ratio for the elementary, middle and high school levels at 250:1 and establishing a student-to-school psychologist ratio for the elementary, middle and high school levels at 500:1. The Department of Education estimates that these provisions will increase the total cost of public education from kindergarten to grade 12 by \$148.0 million per year beginning in fiscal year 2023-24. The bill includes General Fund appropriations totaling \$81.4 million per year to the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program for the State's share (55%) of that cost. The table below provides a breakdown of the cost of each provision.

	State share (55%)	Local share (45%)	Total
Student-to-guidance staff ratio lowered from 350:1 to 250:1	\$ 5,500,000	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 10,000,000
Establishes student-to-clinical mental health provider ratio of 250:1	\$ 36,300,000	\$ 29,700,000	\$ 66,000,000
Establishes student-to-school psychologist ratio of 500:1	\$ 39,600,000	\$ 32,400,000	\$ 72,000,000
Total annual cost	\$ 81,400,000	\$ 66,600,000	\$ 148,000,000

This fiscal note assumes that, if the Department of Education establishes a behavior analyst training program in conjunction with the University of Southern Maine, it will do so within existing budgeted resources and no General Fund appropriations will be required.