

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 19

BY SENATORS LINDSAY, CAPUTO, JEFFRIES, TAKUBO,
ROMANO, MARONEY, GRADY, UNGER, AND STOLLINGS

[Introduced February 10, 2021; referred
to the Committee on Education; and then to the
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §49-8-101, relating to designating social workers in the Department of Health
 3 and Human Resources to promote better student school attendance and performance,
 4 and the health and well-being of students at home; describing duties; and limiting use of
 5 information obtained.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 8. SERVICES TO PROMOTE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND STUDENT
 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING; STUDENT SERVICES WORKERS.**

**§49-8-101. Student services workers to be designated for elementary and middle schools
 for preventive services to identified students.**

1 (a) The Department of Health and Human Resources, no later than August 1, 2021, shall
 2 identify from the department’s established staff licensed social workers who will be available to
 3 teachers, principals and school staff, at elementary, middle, junior high and high schools in the
 4 state, to assist with preventive or early intervention social services, or to make referrals for those
 5 services.

6 (b) Student social workers shall advise teachers, principals, and school staff regarding
 7 needs of at-risk students and may provide services or make referrals to needed services for
 8 students and their families and guardians. They may refer students for special school, therapy, or
 9 home placements. Student social workers may not be child protective service workers or truancy
 10 diversion specialists, and they may not be required to make referrals to those specialists unless
 11 the specific needs of at-risk students require referrals to those specialists for their attendance or
 12 performance at school or for their health and well-being at home.

13 (c) Student social workers shall comply with all directives in this code requiring the
 14 reporting of abuse or neglect of a child or adult. Any evidence of illegal possession of controlled
 15 substances or other drug or alcohol abuse in the home of an identified at risk student, which is

- 16 discovered by a student social worker working pursuant to this article, is not admissible in a court
17 with criminal case jurisdiction in regard to possession of such substances, but may be used as
18 evidence in other proceedings where at issue is the need for services or out-of-home placements
19 for children or juveniles.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to have social workers identified for each elementary, middle school, junior high school and high school in the state who are to be available to teachers, principals, and other school staff upon request, to help improve or maintain school attendance and performance and to improve the health and well-being of students at home. Limitations on services are set forth.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.