

Student Mental Health Services Inventory

PROPOSED SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

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STATE OF WASHINGTON



JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND
REVIEW COMMITTEE

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Why a JLARC Inventory of Mental Health Services for Students?

The 2016 Legislature passed E2SHB 2439 with a stated intent to improve access to adequate, appropriate, and culturally responsive mental health services for children and youth. The legislation:

- Directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to inventory mental health services available to students through schools, school districts, and educational service districts (ESDs) by October 2016.
- Created the Children's Mental Health work group, which must identify barriers to accessing youth mental health services, recommend ways to improve access, and report to the Legislature by December 2016.
- Required the Department of Social and Health Services and the Health Care Authority to study access to community-based mental health services for children and report to the Legislature each December starting in 2017.

Mental Health Services for Students

In the bill, the Legislature stated that early identification of behavioral health issues, combined with timely intervention, could enhance health outcomes and minimize costs.

State law requires that each school district adopt a plan to recognize, screen, and respond to emotional or behavioral distress in students. Statute includes roles for schools, school districts, and Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in addressing the emotional and behavioral needs of more than one million children and youth enrolled in public education in Washington.

However, there is limited information on mental health services available to students and the degree to which districts have implemented the required plans.

Study Scope

As directed in statute, JLARC staff will compile an inventory of mental health services available to students through schools, school districts, and educational service districts. Per statute, JLARC staff will not collect, review, or report any student-level data for this study. Staff will use only aggregate information as provided by school districts and ESDs.

Study Objectives

JLARC staff will request information from school districts and ESDs to compile an inventory of mental health services available to students. The inventory and study will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What mental health services do schools, school districts, and educational service districts provide?
2. Who provides the services and where are they located?
3. How many students receive mental health services through Washington's schools, school districts, or educational service districts?
4. What federal, state, local, and private funding pays for the services?
5. How many of the students receiving services participate in federal Medicaid programs?
6. What information is available about student access and outcomes?

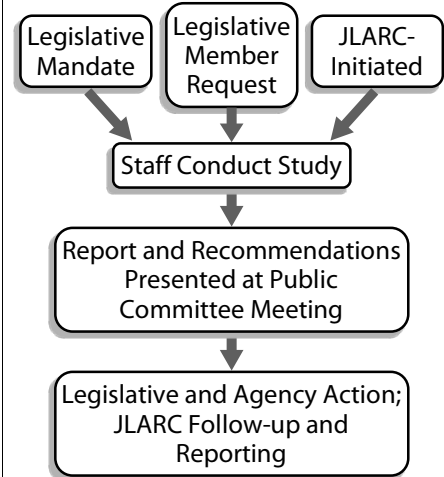
Timeframe for the Study

JLARC staff must report to the Legislature by October 31, 2016. JLARC staff will present the report to JLARC at the December 2016 meeting.

JLARC Staff Contact for the Study

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JLARC Study Process



Criteria for Establishing JLARC Work Program Priorities

- Is study consistent with JLARC mission? Is it mandated?
- Is this an area of significant fiscal or program impact, a major policy issue facing the state, or otherwise of compelling public interest?
- Will there likely be substantive findings and recommendations?
- Is this the best use of JLARC resources? For example:
 - Is JLARC the most appropriate agency to perform the work?
 - Would the study be nonduplicating?
 - Would this study be cost-effective compared to other projects (e.g., larger, more substantive studies take longer and cost more, but might also yield more useful results)?
- Is funding available to carry out the project?