Your Question:
You requested information regarding state legislation on mental health services for teachers.

Our Response:
Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the stress and pressure that comes with the teaching profession may impact the health and well-being of educators. While resources are available for educators to recognize mental health in their students and other individuals, we were not able to find recent state legislation that provided mental health supports or services for educators, specifically. However, mental health services in schools and state resources can benefit school staff in addition to students. Below is information on state resources related to teacher mental health, as well as recent state policies related to mental health services.

State Resources and Considerations
The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the well-being and retention of public-school teachers. The additional stresses related to managing student health, personal health and new learning platforms in the current environment may make teaching more difficult. While we were unable to find recent state legislation specifically related to educator mental health, we have included information from state departments of education that provide resources to teachers, parents and staff on mental and emotional support.

Iowa provides resources to support learning, including mental health and emotional support.

Kentucky’s reopening considerations, published in May, include policies to support student and staff wellness, including mental health. The considerations include recognizing the stresses for teachers to transition their work and support students. In addition, the considerations recognize the increased risks in individuals with existing emotional challenges.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), a consortium of 16 states, provides guidance on student and staff mental health support in four core policy areas:

- Balance a focus on academic and social-emotional supports.
- Enlist community partners to provide mental health support.
- Address the mental health and wellness of adults.
- Prepare for the long haul in recovery efforts.

Additional Resources
Education Commission of the States tracks legislation and other state actions related to education and mental health services. Recent Education Commission of the States’ publications include: a policy snapshot on student mental health, approaches to trauma-informed practices and a blog series on student mental health.
Recent Legislation

State legislation focuses on mental health services and training to aid students. We have not found any legislation that specifically focuses on the mental well-being of educators.

An Education Week special report focused on social and emotional learning programs in school districts, the impacts on students, and educator roles. Although the teacher professional development focuses on students, the entire school system, including teachers and other staff, benefit from greater social and emotional awareness and accessibility to resources. Below are some examples of recent state legislation on mental health services in school environments.

In Illinois, S.B. 1731 (2019) allows a school district to utilize the Illinois Mental Health First Aid training program to provide required in-service training on the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in youth. The Illinois Mental Health First Aid Training Act established the program with certified instructors trained by a national association recognized as an authority in behavioral health.

In Indiana, H.B. 1283 (2020) requires teacher preparation programs to include content regarding trauma-informed classroom practice, including:

- Training on recognizing possible signs of social, emotional and behavioral reactions to trauma.
- Training on the potential impacts of trauma.
- Strategies for recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma.
- Practical recommendations for running a trauma-informed classroom.
- Approaches for avoiding revictimization in schools.

In Maryland, H.B. 277 (2020) requires the state department of education, in consultation with the state departments of health and human services, to develop and distribute guidelines to assist schools with understanding and responding to an individual with symptoms of chronic interpersonal trauma or traumatic stress. A study is required to examine the academic and nonacademic benefits that students, teachers and staff at participating schools may experience.

In Texas, H.B. 906 (2019) to establish the Collaborative Task Force on Public School Mental Health Services to study state-funded mental health services provided at school districts, open-enrollment charter schools or educator training. The task force, set to sunset in 2025, will study, evaluate and make recommendations regarding mental health services, teacher training and the impact of those mental health services.

In Virginia, S.B. 619/H.B. 74 (2020) requires each school board to adopt and implement policies that require teachers and other relevant personnel to complete a mental health awareness training or similar program at least once. To provide the training program, school boards can contract with the department of behavioral health and developmental services, a community services board, a behavioral health authority, a nonprofit organization, other certified trainer or online module.