

ASSEMBLY, No. 4860

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 22, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Simonsen

SYNOPSIS

Establishes certain program requirements for school counselor certification; requires periodic certificate renewal and professional development for school counselors; mandates number of school counselors per public school; establishes position of School Counselor Liaison in DOE.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/24/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning school counselors and supplementing Title 18A
2 of the New Jersey Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that the Department of
8 Education's guidance document on the reopening of schools during
9 the COVID-19 pandemic, "The Road Back: Restart and Recovery
10 Plan," directs school districts to consider the impact of social
11 isolation on both educators and students, and recommends that
12 school district reopening plans include the use of social and
13 emotional learning and multi-tiered systems of support to address
14 the social and emotional needs of students. The Legislature further
15 finds that school counselors are vital to the effort to ensure that
16 school districts are able to adequately address these student needs
17 and to implement appropriate programming.

18
19 2. In addition to any other requirements adopted by the State
20 Board of Education for school counseling programs, the State board
21 shall require that a school counseling program at a regionally
22 accredited college or university leading to a standard educational
23 services certificate with a school counselor endorsement incorporate
24 the following:

25 a. the American School Counselor Association's national
26 model for comprehensive school counseling programs; and

27 b. training in the delivery of social and emotional learning
28 programming as well as postsecondary and career planning.

29
30 3. a. The State Board of Education shall require the holder of a
31 standard educational services certificate with a school counselor
32 endorsement to renew the school counselor endorsement five years
33 following initial certification and every five years thereafter. The
34 State board shall establish a renewal schedule for persons holding a
35 school counselor endorsement on the effective date of
36 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

37 b. In addition to any other requirements adopted by the State
38 Board of Education for the issuance of a standard educational
39 services certificate with a director of school counseling services
40 endorsement, the State board shall require that an applicant possess
41 knowledge related to the varying duties of a school counselor across
42 all grade levels as well as knowledge related to postsecondary and
43 career planning.

44 c. The State Board of Education shall establish professional
45 development requirements for school counselors. The State board
46 shall require, as part of the professional development requirements,
47 that each school counselor complete training in areas related to the
48 duties of a school counselor including, but not limited to, the

1 promotion of mental health awareness, suicide prevention, crisis-
2 intervention, trauma-informed counseling practices, cultural
3 competency and responsiveness, the New Jersey Tiered System of
4 Supports, delivery of social and emotional learning programming,
5 and college and career readiness.

6
7 4. a. The board of education of a school district shall, at a
8 minimum, employ and assign on a full-time basis to each school
9 within the district at least one school counselor. The maximum
10 student to school counselor ratio per school in a school district shall
11 be 250:1.

12 b. A school district may apply for any federal funds which may
13 be available to implement the provisions of this section.

14
15 5. a. The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a State
16 School Counselor Liaison. The State School Counselor Liaison
17 shall hold a New Jersey standard educational services certificate
18 with a director of school counseling services endorsement and have
19 experience in the delivery of social and emotional learning
20 programming as well as postsecondary and career advisement. The
21 State School Counselor Liaison shall work with school districts and
22 school counselors to facilitate best practices by advancing
23 comprehensive school counseling services that address the mental
24 and behavioral health and wellness of all students. The State
25 School Counselor Liaison, in performing the duties of the position,
26 shall collaborate with other State agencies and associated
27 stakeholders.

28 b. It shall be the duty of the State School Counselor Liaison to:

29 (1) Serve as a liaison and resource expert in school counseling
30 and comprehensive school counseling services for New Jersey
31 certificated school counselors and the Department of Education;

32 (2) Facilitate the certificate renewal process for school
33 counselors established pursuant to subsection a. of section 3 of
34 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill);

35 (3) Foster and promote professional development for school
36 counselors, which may include planning, coordinating, or providing
37 educational guidance, and networking with universities, the New
38 Jersey School Counselor Association, and other providers of
39 continuing education to meet identified needs;

40 (4) Monitor, interpret, synthesize, and disseminate relevant
41 information associated with changes in school counseling practices,
42 legislation, and legal issues that impact school counselors; and

43 (5) Initiate, participate in, and utilize research studies related to
44 school counseling practices, the mental health needs of children and
45 youth, and related issues.

46 c. The State School Counselor Liaison shall report annually to
47 the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
48 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature. The report shall include a summary

1 of the activities of the State School Counselor Liaison during the
2 year and any specific recommendations deemed appropriate and
3 necessary concerning school counseling services and
4 comprehensive school mental health services.

5
6 6. The State Board of Education shall adopt, in accordance
7 with the “Administrative Procedures Act,” P.L.1968, c.410
8 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to
9 implement the provisions of this act.

10
11 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

12
13
14 STATEMENT

15
16 This bill establishes certain requirements specific to school
17 counselors and school counseling programs at institutions of higher
18 education and establishes the position of State School Counselor
19 Liaison in the Department of Education (DOE).

20 Under this bill, the State Board of Education will require school
21 counseling programs at regionally accredited colleges and
22 universities that lead to a school counseling certificate to
23 incorporate the following: (a) the American School Counselor
24 Association’s national model for school counseling programs, and
25 (b) training in the delivery of social and emotional learning
26 programming as well as postsecondary and career planning.

27 Under this bill, a school counselor must renew his school
28 counselor endorsement every five years following initial
29 certification. For current certificated school counselors, the State
30 board will establish a schedule for renewal. Under this bill, the
31 State board will require an applicant for a standard educational
32 services certificate with a director of school counseling services
33 endorsement to possess knowledge related to the varying duties of a
34 school counselor across all grade levels as well as knowledge
35 related to postsecondary and career planning. This bill directs the
36 State board to establish professional development requirements for
37 school counselors in areas related to the duties of a school
38 counselor including, but not limited to, the promotion of mental
39 health awareness, suicide prevention, crisis-intervention, trauma-
40 informed counseling practices, cultural competency and
41 responsiveness, the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports, delivery
42 of social and emotional learning programming, and college and
43 career readiness.

44 This bill mandates a board of education to employ and assign on
45 a full-time basis to each school within the district at least one
46 school counselor. In addition, the student to school counselor ratio
47 per school in the district cannot exceed 250:1.

1 Finally, this bill directs the Commissioner of Education to
2 appoint a State School Counselor Liaison to work with school
3 districts and school counselors to facilitate best practices by
4 advancing comprehensive school counseling services that address
5 the mental and behavioral health and wellness of all students. The
6 person appointed to the position is required to hold a standard
7 educational services certificate with a director of school counseling
8 services endorsement and possess experience in the delivery of
9 social and emotional learning programming as well as
10 postsecondary and career advisement. The State School Counselor
11 Liaison will collaborate with other State agencies and associated
12 stakeholders and perform the following duties:

- 13 • Serve as a liaison and resource expert in school
14 counseling and comprehensive school counseling
15 services;
- 16 • Facilitate the newly-established certificate renewal
17 process for school counselors;
- 18 • Foster and promote professional development for school
19 counselors;
- 20 • Monitor, interpret, synthesize, and disseminate relevant
21 information associated with changes in school counseling
22 practices, legislation, and legal issues that impact school
23 counselors; and
- 24 • Initiate, participate in, and utilize research studies related
25 to school counseling practices, the mental health needs of
26 children and youth, and related issues.