

ASSEMBLY, No. 1516

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Assemblywoman SADAF F. JAFFER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Simonsen, Assemblywoman Matsikoudis and Assemblyman Umba

SYNOPSIS

Establishes certain program requirements for school counselor certification; outlines role and duties of school counselor; requires professional development for school counselors; establishes position of School Counselor Liaison in DOE.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/12/2022)

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. As used in sections 3 and 4 of this act, “school counselor”
20 means an individual who holds a New Jersey standard educational
21 services certificate with a school counselor endorsement.

22

23 3. a. It shall be the role of a school counselor to:

24 (1) recognize and respond to the need for mental health services
25 that promote social and emotional wellness and development for all
26 students; and

27 (2) design and deliver a comprehensive program for school
28 counseling that promotes the achievement of students.

29 b. Each school counselor employed by a board of education in
30 a public elementary, middle, or high school shall spend at least 80
31 percent of their staff time during normal school hours providing
32 appropriate school counseling services that shall include, but not be
33 limited to:

34 (1) addressing needs relating to the academic, career, social, and
35 emotional development of all students;

36 (2) individual student academic planning and goal setting;

37 (3) school counseling classroom lessons based on student
38 success standards;

39 (4) short-term counseling of students;

40 (5) referrals for long-term services and supports;

41 (6) collaboration with families, teachers, administrators, and
42 community members that fosters student success;

43 (7) advocacy for students at individual education plan (IEP)
44 meetings and other student-focused meetings; and

45 (8) data analysis to identify student issues, needs, and
46 challenges.

1 4. The State Board of Education shall establish professional
2 development requirements for school counselors. The State board
3 shall require, as part of the professional development requirements,
4 that each school counselor complete 100 hours of professional
5 development training every five years in areas related to the duties
6 of a school counselor including, but not limited to, the promotion of
7 mental health awareness, suicide prevention, crisis-intervention,
8 trauma-informed counseling practices, cultural competency and
9 responsiveness, the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports, delivery
10 of social and emotional learning programming, and college and
11 career readiness.

12
13 5. In addition to any other requirements adopted by the State
14 Board of Education for school counseling programs, the State board
15 shall require that a school counseling program at a regionally
16 accredited college or university leading to a standard educational
17 services certificate with a school counselor endorsement incorporate
18 the following:

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

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

23
24 6. a. The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a State
25 School Counselor Liaison. The State School Counselor Liaison
26 shall hold a New Jersey standard educational services certificate
27 with a director of school counseling services endorsement and have
28 experience in the delivery of social and emotional learning
29 programming as well as postsecondary and career advisement. The
30 State School Counselor Liaison shall work with school districts and
31 school counselors to facilitate best practices by advancing
32 comprehensive school counseling services that address the mental
33 and behavioral health and wellness of all students. The State
34 School Counselor Liaison, in performing the duties of the position,
35 shall collaborate with other State agencies and associated
36 stakeholders.

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

38 (1) serve as a liaison and resource expert in school counseling
39 and comprehensive school counseling services for New Jersey
40 certificated school counselors and the Department of Education;

41 (2) foster and promote professional development for school
42 counselors, which may include planning, coordinating, or providing
43 educational guidance, and networking with universities, the New
44 Jersey School Counselor Association, and other providers of
45 continuing education to meet identified needs;

46 (3) monitor, interpret, synthesize, and disseminate relevant
47 information associated with changes in school counseling practices,
48 legislation, and legal issues that impact school counselors; and

1 (4) initiate, participate in, and utilize research studies related to
2 school counseling practices, the mental health needs of children and
3 youth, and related issues.

4 c. The State School Counselor Liaison shall report annually to
5 the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
6 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature. The report shall include a summary
7 of the activities of the State School Counselor Liaison during the
8 year and any specific recommendations deemed appropriate and
9 necessary concerning school counseling services and
10 comprehensive school mental health services.

11 d. As used in this section, "school counselor" means an
12 individual who holds a New Jersey standard educational services
13 certificate with a school counselor endorsement.
14

15 7. The State Board of Education shall adopt, in accordance
16 with the "Administrative Procedures Act," P.L.1968, c.410
17 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to
18 implement the provisions of this act.
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20 8. This act shall take effect immediately.
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23 STATEMENT 24

25 This bill establishes certain requirements specific to school
26 counselors and school counseling programs at institutions of higher
27 education and establishes the position of State School Counselor
28 Liaison in the Department of Education (DOE).

29 Under this bill, the State Board of Education will require school
30 counseling programs at regionally accredited colleges and
31 universities that lead to a school counseling certificate to
32 incorporate the following: (a) the American School Counselor
33 Association's national model for school counseling programs, and
34 (b) training in the delivery of social and emotional learning
35 programming as well as postsecondary and career planning.

36 The bill outlines the role of a school counselor, which is defined
37 as an individual who holds a New Jersey standard educational
38 services certificate with a school counselor endorsement.

39 The bill directs the State board to establish professional
40 development requirements for school counselors and, as part of the
41 professional development requirements, require that each school
42 counselor complete 100 hours of professional development training
43 every five years in areas related to the duties of a school counselor
44 including, but not limited to, the promotion of mental health
45 awareness, suicide prevention, crisis-intervention, trauma-informed
46 counseling practices, cultural competency and responsiveness, the
47 New Jersey Tiered System of Supports, delivery of social and
48 emotional learning programming, and college and career readiness.

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 • Foster and promote professional development for school
17 counselors;
- 18 • Monitor, interpret, synthesize, and disseminate relevant
19 information associated with changes in school counseling
20 practices, legislation, and legal issues that impact school
21 counselors; and
- 22 • Initiate, participate in, and utilize research studies related
23 to school counseling practices, the mental health needs of
24 children and youth, and related issues.