

By: Senator(s) Farris, Ferris

To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2778

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE AN ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS UNDER THE MINIMUM
2 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
3 GUIDANCE COUNSELORS BASED UPON STUDENT ENROLLMENT; TO PROVIDE AN
4 ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS IN EACH SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEAR UNTIL
5 EACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAS EMPLOYED AT LEAST ONE COUNSELOR; TO
6 AUTHORIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO USE SUCH ALLOTMENTS TO EMPLOY SCHOOL
7 SOCIAL WORKERS OR PUBLIC SCHOOL NURSES WITH APPROPRIATE
8 CERTIFICATION; TO PROVIDE CERTAIN CONDITIONS ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF
9 STATE-FUNDED SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELORS AND TO PRESCRIBE THE
10 COMPREHENSIVE COUNSELING SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED; AND FOR RELATED
11 PURPOSES. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF
12 MISSISSIPPI:

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14 SECTION 1. (1) Beginning with the 1999-2000 school year, in
15 addition to other funds allotted under the minimum education
16 program, each school district shall be allotted sufficient funding
17 to employ one (1) elementary school guidance counselor, with
18 funding for an additional elementary school guidance counselor to
19 be allotted per fiscal year until each elementary school in the
20 school district has one (1) state-funded school guidance
21 counselor. However, until the time that there is a counselor in
22 every elementary school at a counselor/student ratio of 1:500 or
23 greater, the annual appropriation for elementary school guidance
24 counselors shall not be reduced.

25 (2) The State Department of Education may, however, increase
26 the number of positions funded each year beyond the above
27 requirements as money is made available.

28 (3) Local school boards shall be authorized, in their
29 discretion, to utilize such minimum program allotments to employ
30 licensed social workers who possess a master's degree in social
31 work and have had specific classes in individual and group

32 counseling as determined by the State Department of Education.
33 Local school boards shall also be authorized, in their discretion,
34 to utilize such minimum program allotments to employ public school
35 nurses who possess a bachelor's degree in nursing as a minimum
36 qualification.

37 (4) The assignment of state-funded school guidance
38 counselors, social workers or public school nurses to the
39 particular schools within the district shall be at the discretion
40 of the local school board with the following restrictions:

41 (a) The counselor/student ratio shall be no greater
42 than 1:500, or one (1) counselor per school building, whichever is
43 greater;

44 (b) No individual shall be employed as a school
45 guidance counselor, social worker or public school nurse without
46 appropriate training and certification as determined by the State
47 Department of Education; and

48 (c) State-funded school guidance counselors, social
49 workers or public school nurses shall be full-time professional
50 personnel, shall spend at least seventy-five percent (75%) of work
51 time in a direct counseling relationship with pupils, and shall
52 devote no more than one-fourth (1/4) of the workday to
53 administrative activities.

54 (4) State-funded school guidance counselors shall provide
55 the following comprehensive counseling services: (a) academic and
56 personal advisement; (b) student assessment and assessment
57 consultation; (c) career and educational planning; (d) individual
58 and group counseling; (e) preventive classroom counseling
59 activities and crisis intervention; (f) referrals to community
60 agencies; (g) educational consultation with teachers,
61 administrators, parents, and community leaders; (h) educational
62 and career placement services; and (i) follow-up counseling
63 services.

64 (5) Nothing in this section shall prohibit any school
65 district from employing with local funds more school guidance
66 counselors, social workers or public school nurses than are
67 provided for in this section.

68 (6) The State Department of Education may adopt regulations

69 regarding the activities of the school guidance counselor, school
70 social worker or public school nurse as are not inconsistent with
71 this section.

72 (7) This section shall stand repealed from and after July 1,
73 2003.

74 SECTION 2. All new programs authorized in this act are
75 subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated
76 therefor by the Legislature.

77 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
78 and after July 1, 1999.