

By: Clarke, Thomas, Lott

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 768

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE AN ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS UNDER THE MINIMUM
2 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYING SCHOOL COUNSELORS
3 FOR GRADES K-8; TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS IN
4 EACH SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEAR UNTIL EACH PRIMARY SCHOOL HAS EMPLOYED
5 AT LEAST ONE COUNSELOR; TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO ASSIGN
6 SCHOOL COUNSELORS TO PARTICULAR SCHOOLS; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE
7 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO EMPLOY A SUPERVISOR OF COUNSELORS AND
8 TO ISSUE REGULATIONS REGARDING THE SERVICES OF SUCH COUNSELORS;
9 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

11 SECTION 1. (1) Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, in
12 addition to other funds allotted under the minimum education
13 program, each school district shall be allotted sufficient funding
14 to employ one (1) school counselor for students in kindergarten
15 through Grade 8, with funding for an additional school counselor
16 to be allotted per fiscal year until each primary school in the
17 school district has one (1) state-funded counselor. However,
18 until the time that there is a counselor in every primary school
19 at a counselor:student ratio of 1:500 or greater, the annual
20 appropriation for counselors shall not be reduced.

21 (2) The State Department of Education may increase the
22 number of positions funded each year beyond the above requirements
23 as money is made available.

24 (3) The assignment of the school counselors to the
25 particular schools shall be at the discretion of the local school
26 district with the following restrictions:

27 (a) The counselor:student ratio shall be no less than
28 1:500, or one (1) counselor per school building, whichever is
29 greater.

30 (b) No individual shall be employed as a school
31 counselor without appropriate training and certification as a
32 school counselor by the State Department of Education.

33 (4) To qualify for minimum program funding, school
34 counselors shall be full-time professional personnel, shall spend
35 at least seventy-five percent (75%) of work time in a direct
36 counseling relationship with pupils, and shall devote no more than
37 one-fourth (1/4) of the work day to administrative activities
38 which are counselor related.

39 (5) Nothing in this act shall prohibit any school district
40 from employing with local funds more school counselors than are
41 provided for in this act.

42 (6) The State Department of Education shall employ a
43 supervisor of counselors who holds certification as a school
44 counselor. The supervisor's responsibilities shall include the
45 oversight of the new primary school counseling programs as well as
46 existing secondary programs.

47 (7) The State Department of Education may adopt rules and
48 regulations regarding the activities of the school counselor, and
49 the school counselor is authorized to perform such services that
50 are not inconsistent with the rules and regulations.

51 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
52 and after July 1, 2000.