

By: Farris

To: Education;  
Appropriations

## SENATE BILL NO. 2859

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

47 (c) State-funded school guidance counselors, social  
48 workers or public school nurses shall be full-time professional  
49 personnel, shall spend at least eighty-five percent (85%) of the  
50 workday in a direct counseling relationship with pupils, and shall  
51 devote no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the workday to  
52 administrative activities.

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

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

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

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

71 (7) This section shall stand repealed from and after July 1,  
72 2004.

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

76 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
77 and after July 1, 2000.