

By: Representatives McCarty, Felsher, Yates

To: Education;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1125

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-3-89, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
 2 REQUIRE TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES IN EDUCATOR PREPARATION  
 3 PROGRAMS; TO DEFINE TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES; TO AMEND SECTION  
 4 37-9-79, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL  
 5 DISTRICTS AND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS SHALL HAVE AT LEAST ONE  
 6 SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDER PER 250  
 7 STUDENTS; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL COUNSELORS TO CREATE A TRAUMA-INFORMED  
 8 TEAM FOR EACH SCHOOL; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND PUBLIC  
 9 CHARTER SCHOOLS REPORT THE NUMBER AND PLACEMENT OF SCHOOL  
 10 COUNSELORS IN THE DISTRICT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; TO  
 11 CREATE NEW SECTION 37-9-80, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH  
 12 REQUIRES THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE  
 13 DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, TO CREATE A TOOLKIT TO ASSIST SCHOOLS  
 14 IN IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES; AND FOR RELATED  
 15 PURPOSES.

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

17 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-3-89, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
 18 amended as follows:

19 37-3-89. (1) The State Board of Education, acting through  
 20 the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education,  
 21 Certification and Licensure and Development, shall require each  
 22 educator preparation program in the state, as a condition for  
 23 approval, to include a course or courses on school discipline or  
 24 classroom management, including trauma-informed approaches as



25 defined in subsection (2) of this section, as a required part of  
26 the teacher education program. All school discipline or classroom  
27 management courses offered by a teacher education program shall be  
28 approved by the Educator License Commission.

29 (2) "Trauma-informed approaches" means incorporating  
30 principles of trauma awareness and trauma-informed practices, as  
31 recommended by the United States Department of Health and Human  
32 Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
33 Administration, in a school in order to foster a safe learning  
34 environment for all students and staff, and to ensure that each  
35 student is well-known by at least one (1) adult in the school  
36 setting.

37 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-9-79, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
38 amended as follows:

39 37-9-79. (1) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the  
40 assignment of K-12 Professional School Counselors to the  
41 particular schools within the district shall be at the discretion  
42 of the local school board with the following restrictions:

43 (a) Every high school in every public school district  
44 and public charter school shall employ at least one (1) school  
45 counselor;

46 (b) As funds and qualified personnel become available,  
47 it shall be the goal that each public school district and public  
48 charter school shall provide at least one (1) school counselor for  
49 every two hundred fifty (250) students, including, but not



50 limited, to the school counselor required in paragraph (a) of this  
51 subsection;

52 ( \* \* \* c) No individual shall be employed as a  
53 professional school counselor without a minimum of a Master's  
54 Degree in \* \* \* Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an  
55 appropriate certification as determined by the Commission on  
56 Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure  
57 and Development; and

58 ( \* \* \* d) Professional school counselors shall provide  
59 the following comprehensive counseling services:

- 60 (i) Academic and personal/ social counseling;  
61 (ii) Use multiple student data sources to help  
62 students make informed academic and career choices;  
63 (iii) Career and educational counseling;  
64 (iv) Individual and group counseling  
65 (large/small);  
66 (v) Crisis intervention and preventive counseling;  
67 (vi) Referrals to community agencies;  
68 (vii) Educational consultations and collaboration  
69 with teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders;  
70 (viii) Educational and career placement services;  
71 (ix) Follow-up counseling services;  
72 (x) Conflict resolution; and  
73 (xi) Professional school counselors must spend a  
74 minimum of eighty percent (80%) of their \* \* \* time to the



75 delivery of services to students \* \* \*. Delivery of services is  
76 the direct service provided to students, parents, school staff and  
77 the community which are interaction between professional school  
78 counselors and students. These direct services may include the  
79 delivery of the following:

80                   1. School counseling core curriculum: This  
81 curriculum is designed to help students attain the desired  
82 competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge,  
83 attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level.  
84 The school counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the  
85 school's overall curriculum and may be presented by professional  
86 school counselors in collaboration with other professional  
87 educators and other resources. Collaborative efforts may be  
88 implemented to enhance the services provided.

89                   2. Individual student planning: Professional  
90 school counselors coordinate ongoing systemic activities or  
91 individual/group sessions designed to assist students in  
92 establishing personal/social goals and developing future career  
93 plans.

94                   3. Responsive services: Responsive services  
95 are designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns in  
96 regard to social/personal issues. Responsive services may include  
97 counseling in individual, small-group settings, \* \* \* crisis  
98 responses, or trauma-informed approaches as defined in Section  
99 37-3-89(2).



100                   4. Indirect Student Services: Indirect  
101 services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the  
102 school counselors' interactions with others including referrals  
103 for additional assistance, consultation and collaboration with  
104 parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations.

105           (2) Professional school counselors shall abide by \* \* \* a  
106 relevant national counseling code of ethics.

107           (3) A professional school counselor or administrator shall  
108 facilitate the creation of a trauma-informed team to identify  
109 students whose learning, behavior and relationships have been  
110 impacted by trauma. The trauma-informed team may consist of  
111 school administrators, school counselors, teachers, mental health  
112 services providers, family resource and youth service  
113 coordinators, school nurses and any other school or district  
114 personnel.

115           (4) Each school counselor providing services pursuant to  
116 this section, in collaboration with the trauma-informed team  
117 members described in this section, shall provide at least one (1)  
118 hour of in-person or virtual annual training, guidance and  
119 assistance to administrators, teachers and staff on:

120                   (a) Recognizing symptoms of trauma in students; and

121                   (b) Utilizing responses, interventions and strategies  
122 to support the learning needs of those students.

123           (5) School districts may employ, contract or otherwise work  
124 collaboratively with mental health service providers, including



125 community mental health centers, other organizations providing  
126 relevant training for educators and school personnel, or other  
127 school districts to assist with the development and implementation  
128 of trauma-informed approaches and a trauma-informed team.

129 (6) no later than November 1, 2021, and each year thereafter  
130 local school districts and each public charter school shall report  
131 the number and placement of school counselors in the district to  
132 the State Department of Education.

133 (\* \* \*7) The State Department of Education may adopt  
134 regulations regarding the activities of the professional school  
135 counselor as are not inconsistent with this section.

136 **SECTION 3.** The following shall be codified as Section  
137 37-9-80, Mississippi Code of 1972:

138 37-9-80. (1) On or before July 1, 2021, the State  
139 Department of Education, in collaboration with the State  
140 Department of Mental Health, shall make available a toolkit to  
141 assist school districts and public charter schools in  
142 implementing trauma-informed teams as described in Section  
143 37-9-79(3). The toolkit shall include a template for local boards  
144 of education and public charter schools to develop a plan to  
145 incorporate trauma-informed approaches in schools.

146 (2) On or before July 1, 2022, each local board of education  
147 and public charter school shall develop a plan for implementing  
148 trauma-informed teams and trauma-informed approaches in its  
149 schools. These plans shall be submitted to the State Department



150 of Education and the State Department of Mental Health, which  
151 shall collaborate to provide feedback to school districts on the  
152 plans. Plans shall include, but not be limited to, strategies  
153 for:

154 (a) Enhancing trauma awareness throughout the school  
155 community and provide services designed to foster a safe school  
156 environment for students;

157 (b) Developing trauma-informed discipline policies and  
158 practices, which may include consultation with the school  
159 counselor when a student is recommended for suspension for ten  
160 (10) or more days, expulsion or attendance at an alternative  
161 school; and

162 (c) Collaborating with appropriate and relevant school,  
163 public safety, and community organizations to create procedures  
164 for notification of trauma-exposed students.

165 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
166 and after its passage.

