

By: Representatives Calvert, Creekmore IV,
McCarty, Smith

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1251

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 TO 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) No individual shall be employed as a professional
44 school counselor without a minimum of a Master's Degree in * * *
45 Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an appropriate
46 certification as determined by the Commission on Teacher and
47 Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and
48 Development; and



49 (b) Professional school counselors shall provide the
50 following comprehensive counseling services:

51 (i) Academic and personal/social counseling;

52 (ii) Use multiple student data sources to help
53 students make informed academic and career choices;

54 (iii) Career and educational counseling;

55 (iv) Individual and group counseling
56 (large/small);

57 (v) Crisis intervention and preventive counseling;

58 (vi) Referrals to community agencies;

59 (vii) Educational consultations and collaboration
60 with teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders;

61 (viii) Educational and career placement services;

62 (ix) Follow-up counseling services;

63 (x) Conflict resolution; and

64 (xi) Professional school counselors must spend a
65 minimum of eighty percent (80%) of their * * * time to the
66 delivery of services to students * * *. Delivery of services is
67 the direct service provided to students, parents, school staff and
68 the community which are interaction between professional school
69 counselors and students. These direct services may include the
70 delivery of the following:

71 1. School counseling core curriculum: This
72 curriculum is designed to help students attain the desired
73 competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge,



74 attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level.
75 The school counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the
76 school's overall curriculum and may be presented by professional
77 school counselors in collaboration with other professional
78 educators and other resources. Collaborative efforts may be
79 implemented to enhance the services provided.

80 2. Individual student planning: Professional
81 school counselors coordinate ongoing systemic activities or
82 individual/group sessions designed to assist students in
83 establishing personal/social goals and developing future career
84 plans.

85 3. Responsive services: Responsive services
86 are designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns in
87 regard to social/personal issues. Responsive services may include
88 counseling in individual, small-group settings, * * * crisis
89 responses, or trauma-informed approaches as defined in Section
90 37-3-89(2).

91 4. Indirect Student Services: Indirect
92 services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the
93 school counselors' interactions with others including referrals
94 for additional assistance, consultation and collaboration with
95 parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations.

96 (2) Professional school counselors shall abide by * * * a
97 relevant national counseling code of ethics.



98 (3) A professional school counselor or administrator shall
99 facilitate the creation of a trauma-informed team to identify
100 students whose learning, behavior and relationships have been
101 impacted by trauma. The trauma-informed team may consist of
102 school administrators, school counselors, teachers, mental health
103 services providers, family resource and youth service
104 coordinators, school nurses and any other school or district
105 personnel.

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

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

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

114 (5) School districts may employ, contract or otherwise work
115 collaboratively with mental health service providers, including
116 community mental health centers, other organizations providing
117 relevant training for educators and school personnel, or other
118 school districts to assist with the development and implementation
119 of trauma-informed approaches and a trauma-informed team.

120 (6) No later than November 1, 2022, and each year thereafter
121 local school districts and each public charter school shall report



122 the number and placement of school counselors in the district to
123 the State Department of Education.

124 (* * *7) The State Department of Education may adopt
125 regulations regarding the activities of the professional school
126 counselor as are not inconsistent with this section.

127 **SECTION 3.** The following shall be codified as Section
128 37-9-80, Mississippi Code of 1972:

129 37-9-80. (1) On or before July 1, 2022, the State
130 Department of Education, in collaboration with the State
131 Department of Mental Health, shall make available a toolkit to
132 assist school districts and public charter schools in
133 implementing trauma-informed teams as described in Section
134 37-9-79(3). The toolkit shall include a template for local boards
135 of education and public charter schools to develop a plan to
136 incorporate trauma-informed approaches in schools.

137 (2) On or before July 1, 2023, each local board of education
138 and public charter school shall develop a plan for implementing
139 trauma-informed teams and trauma-informed approaches in its
140 schools. These plans shall be submitted to the State Department
141 of Education and the State Department of Mental Health, which
142 shall collaborate to provide feedback to school districts on the
143 plans. Plans shall include, but not be limited to, strategies
144 for:



145 (a) Enhancing trauma awareness throughout the school
146 community and provide services designed to foster a safe school
147 environment for students;

148 (b) Developing trauma-informed discipline policies and
149 practices, which may include consultation with the school
150 counselor when a student is recommended for suspension for ten
151 (10) or more days, expulsion or attendance at an alternative
152 school; and

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

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

