

By: Senator(s) Simmons (13th), Jackson

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2620

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-9-79, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT TO EMPLOY A LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH
3 COUNSELOR, TOGETHER WITH SUPPORT STAFF PROPORTIONATE TO THE SIZE
4 OF THE DISTRICT, TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL
5 HEALTH PROGRAM FOR TRAINING ALL TEACHERS IN IDENTIFYING AND
6 SUPPORTING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES,
7 PREVENTING HARMFUL OR DANGEROUS BEHAVIORS, AND FOSTERING A SAFE
8 AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-9-79, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
11 amended as follows:

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

16 (a) No individual shall be employed as a professional
17 school counselor without a minimum of a Master's Degree in
18 Guidance and Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an
19 appropriate certification as determined by the Commission on
20 Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure
21 and Development; and

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

(i) Academic and personal/social counseling;

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

(iii) Career and educational counseling;

(iv) Individual and group counseling

(large/small);

(v) Crisis intervention and preventive counseling;

(vi) Referrals to community agencies;

(vii) Educational consultations and collaboration

with teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders;

(viii) Educational and career placement services;

(ix) Follow-up counseling services;

(x) Conflict resolution; and

(xi) Professional school counselors must spend a

minimum of eighty percent (80%) of their contractual time to the

delivery of services to students as outlined by the American

40 School Counselor Association. Delivery of services is the direct

service provided to students, parents, school staff and the

community which are interaction between professional school

counselors and students. These direct services may include the

delivery of the following:

1. School counseling core curriculum:



47 competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge,
48 attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level.
49 The school counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the
50 school's overall curriculum and may be presented by professional
51 school counselors in collaboration with other professional
52 educators and other resources. Collaborative efforts may be
53 implemented to enhance the services provided.

69 (2) Professional school counselors shall abide by the
70 American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics.

74 (4) Each school district shall employ a licensed mental
75 health counselor, together with support staff proportionate to the
76 size of the district to develop and implement a comprehensive
77 mental health program for training all teachers in identifying and
78 supporting students experiencing mental health challenges,
79 preventing harmful or dangerous behaviors, and fostering a safe
80 and supportive school environment.

81 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
82 and after July 1, 2025.

