
SENATE BILL 6480

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Senator Mullet

1 AN ACT Relating to developing comprehensive school counseling
2 programs; adding new sections to chapter 28A.320 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that
6 certificated school counselors are uniquely qualified to address the
7 developmental needs of all students through a comprehensive school
8 counseling program. School counselors play a critical role in
9 maximizing K-12 student outcomes, including those related to
10 attendance, academic achievement, high school graduation,
11 postsecondary readiness, and social-emotional development. The
12 legislature finds that school counselors play an especially unique
13 role in the lives of students from underserved backgrounds,
14 particularly students of color, students with disabilities, English
15 language learners, and students living in poverty, who, according to
16 research, are more likely to seek out their school counselor for
17 academic, mental health, or postsecondary planning needs.

18 (2) The legislature also recognizes research indicating that
19 lower counselor to student ratios enable counselors to work more
20 closely with students and address their unique needs, and that school
21 counselors should be able to use their time to provide direct and

1 indirect services to students as described in a comprehensive school
2 counseling program grounded in research.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
6 specific purpose, by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year each
7 school district shall develop and implement a written plan for a
8 comprehensive school counseling program that is based on regularly
9 updated standards developed by a national organization representing
10 school counselors. The written plan must:

11 (a) Define school counselor competencies, student mindset and
12 behavior standards for learning, and school counselor ethics
13 standards;

14 (b) Establish a comprehensive school counseling program that uses
15 state and nationally recognized counselor frameworks and is
16 systemically aligned to state learning standards;

17 (c) Provide a process for identifying student needs through a
18 multilevel school data review and analysis that includes, at a
19 minimum, use-of-time data, program results data, and data regarding
20 communication with administrators, parents, students, and
21 stakeholders;

22 (d) Explain how direct and indirect services will be delivered
23 through the comprehensive school counseling program; and

24 (e) Establish an annual review and assessment process for the
25 comprehensive school counseling program that includes building
26 administrators and stakeholders.

27 (2) Funding provided for the purposes of this section is not part
28 of the state's program of basic education deemed by the legislature
29 to comply with the requirements of Article IX, section 1 of the state
30 Constitution.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 (1) The comprehensive school counseling program plan required
34 under section 2 of this act must be implemented by school counselors
35 to guide students in academic pursuits, career planning, and social
36 and emotional learning.

37 (2) When implementing the plan, school counselors shall spend at
38 least eighty percent of their work time providing direct and indirect

1 services to benefit students, as aligned with standards developed by
2 a national organization representing school counselors. The remainder
3 of work time shall be spent on school counseling program support
4 activities that consist of professional development, lesson plan
5 development, and data analysis.

6 (3) For purposes of this section:

7 (a) "Direct services" are in-person interactions between school
8 counselors and students that help students improve achievement,
9 attendance, and discipline. Examples include, but are not limited to,
10 instruction, appraisal, advisement, and counseling.

11 (b) "Indirect services" are provided on behalf of students as a
12 result of the school counselor's interactions with others, which
13 allow school counselors to enhance student achievement and promote
14 equity and access for all students. Examples include, but are not
15 limited to, collaboration, consultation, and referrals.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) By December 1, 2020, the office of the superintendent of
19 public instruction must develop and distribute to school districts
20 policy guidance regarding implementation of sections 2 and 3 of this
21 act, developed in collaboration with a nonprofit organization that
22 represents school directors.

23 (2) Prior to the 2021-22 school year, each school district board
24 of directors must, within existing funds, develop a transition plan
25 for developing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling
26 program plan.

27 (3) This section expires June 30, 2022.

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