

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021**

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HOUSE BILL 837

Short Title: Increase Student Access to School Counselors. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Insko, Roberson, and A. Baker (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 5, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO REQUIRE SCHOOL COUNSELORS TO BE EMPLOYED IN OR AVAILABLE
TO ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL UNITS, REQUIRE ADDITIONAL TRAINING FOR
SCHOOL COUNSELORS, AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR SCHOOL
COUNSELORS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.1.(a) Effective July 1, 2021, G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(65) School Counselors. – Local boards of education shall comply with the requirements for school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement to employ at least one full-time, permanent school counselor for every 300 high school students in the local school administrative unit."

SECTION 1.1.(b) Effective July 1, 2022, G.S. 115C-47(65), as enacted by this section, reads as rewritten:

"(65) School Counselors. – Local boards of education shall comply with the requirements for school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement to employ at least one full-time, permanent school counselor for every ~~300-250~~ high school students in the local school administrative unit."

SECTION 1.2.(a) Effective July 1, 2021, G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(47) School Counselors. – The State Board of Education shall ensure that each public school unit operated under the control of the State Board of Education complies with the requirements for school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement that each public school unit with at least 300 high school students employs at least one school counselor for every 300 high school students in the unit."

SECTION 1.2.(b) Effective July 1, 2022, G.S. 115C-12(47), as enacted by this section, reads as rewritten:

"(47) School Counselors. – The State Board of Education shall ensure that each public school unit operated under the control of the State Board of Education complies with the requirements for school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement that each public school unit with at least ~~300-250~~ high school students employs at least one school counselor for every ~~300-250~~ high school students in the unit."



1 **SECTION 1.3.(a)** Effective July 1, 2021, G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding
2 a new subsection to read:

3 "**(i) School Counselors.** – Each charter school shall comply with the requirements for
4 school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement that each charter
5 school with at least 300 high school students employs at least one school counselor for every 300
6 high school students enrolled in the charter school."

7 **SECTION 1.3.(b)** Effective July 1, 2022, G.S. 115C-218.75(i), as enacted by this
8 section, reads as rewritten:

9 "**(i) School Counselors.** – Each charter school shall comply with the requirements for
10 school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement that each charter
11 school with at least ~~300~~250 high school students employs at least one school counselor for every
12 ~~300-250~~ high school students enrolled in the charter school."

13 **SECTION 1.4.(a)** Effective July 1, 2021, G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding
14 a new subdivision to read:

15 "**(17) School counselors.** – Each regional school shall comply with the requirements
16 for school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement
17 that each regional school with at least 300 high school students employs at
18 least one school counselor for every 300 high school students enrolled in the
19 regional school."

20 **SECTION 1.4.(b)** Effective July 1, 2022, G.S. 115C-238.66(17), as enacted by this
21 section, reads as rewritten:

22 "**(17) School counselors.** – Each regional school shall comply with the requirements
23 for school counselors provided in G.S. 115C-316.1, including the requirement
24 that each regional school with at least ~~300~~250 high school students employs
25 at least one school counselor for every ~~300-250~~ high school students enrolled
26 in the regional school."

27 **SECTION 1.5.** Effective July 1, 2021, Section 6(d)(2) of S.L. 2018-32 is amended
28 by adding a new sub-subdivision to read:

29 "**p. G.S. 115C-47(65) [School Counselors].**"

30 **SECTION 2.(a)** Effective July 1, 2021, G.S. 115C-316.1 reads as rewritten:

31 "**§ 115C-316.1. ~~Duties of school~~ School counselors.**

32 (a) School counselors shall implement a comprehensive developmental school
33 counseling program in their schools. Counselors shall spend at least eighty percent (80%) of their
34 work time providing direct services to students. Direct services do not include the coordination
35 of standardized testing. Direct services shall consist of:

- 36 (1) Delivering the school guidance curriculum through large group guidance,
37 interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent
38 workshops.
- 39 (2) Guiding individual student planning through individual or small group
40 assistance and individual or small group advisement.
- 41 (3) Providing responsive services through consultation with students, families,
42 and staff; individual and small group counseling; crisis counseling; referrals;
43 and peer facilitation.
- 44 (4) Performing other student services listed in the Department of Public
45 Instruction school counselor job description that has been approved by the
46 State Board of Education.

47 (b) School counseling program support activities do not include the coordination of
48 standardized testing. During the remainder of their work time, school counselors may assist other
49 staff with the coordination of standardized testing.

50 (c) Each public school unit with at least 300 high school students shall employ at least
51 one full-time, permanent school counselor for every 300 high school students in the unit.

(d) The superintendent of a public school unit or, if there is no superintendent, the highest decision-making authority in a public school unit shall ensure that every school in the unit with fewer than 300 students has access to a school counselor for at least two instructional days of each week of the school year.

(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt requirements for professional development for school counselors that include annual training in at least the following areas:

(1) Issues related to student access to colleges and universities.

(2) Policies, processes, and strategies to navigate the admissions process for colleges and universities."

SECTION 2.(b) Effective July 1, 2022, G.S. 115C-316.1, as amended by this section, reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-316.1. School counselors.

...

(c) Each public school unit with at least ~~300~~250 high school students shall employ at least one full-time, permanent school counselor for every ~~300~~250 high school students in the unit.

(d) The superintendent of a public school unit or, if there is no superintendent, the highest decision-making authority in a public school unit shall ensure that every school in the unit with fewer than ~~300~~250 students has access to a school counselor for at least two instructional days of each week of the school year.

...."

SECTION 3.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of six million one hundred thousand dollars (\$6,100,000) in recurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and the sum of nineteen million five hundred thousand dollars (\$19,500,000) in recurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to increase the Instructional Support Allotment. These funds shall be used to increase positions for school counselors as provided in this act.

SECTION 3.(b) Funds provided for school counselors pursuant to this section shall supplement and not supplant any funds already provided for school counselors.

SECTION 4. Section 3 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2021. Sections 1.1(a), 1.2(a), 1.3(a), 1.4(a), and 2(a) of this act apply beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Sections 1.1(b), 1.2(b), 1.3(b), 1.4(b), and 2(b) of this act apply beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.