

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 953

Short Title: Funds for Sch. Mental Health Support Persons. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Brown, Cunningham, Carney, 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 12, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO FUND ADDITIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS OVER FIVE YEARS AND TO INCREASE COMPENSATION FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS WHO ARE ALSO LICENSED CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS.

Whereas, one in seven children have at least one treatable mental health disorder; and
Whereas, the vast majority of students do not have access to regular mental health care; and

Whereas, in addition to the stressors of everyday life, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has seen an increase among students in isolation, loneliness, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation; and

Whereas, isolation, loneliness, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation are treatable by trained mental health professionals; and

Whereas, increased school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists are a core need in local school administrative units across the State; and

Whereas, an investment in the mental health of the students of North Carolina is an investment in our State; Now, therefore,
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 21 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-316.5. Appropriation for school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

(a) Beginning with the 2021-2022 fiscal year, there is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction for the following fiscal years the following amounts to the instructional support allotment:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
<u>2021-2022</u>	<u>\$97,635,089</u>
<u>2022-2023</u>	<u>\$195,270,178</u>
<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>\$292,905,267</u>
<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>\$390,540,356</u>
<u>2025-2026 and each subsequent fiscal year thereafter</u>	<u>\$488,175,445.</u>

(b) When developing the base budget, as defined by G.S. 143C-1-1, for each fiscal year specified in subsection (a) of this section, the Director of the Budget shall include the appropriated amount for that fiscal year.

(c) Funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be allocated to local school administrative units to increase positions for school counselors, school social workers,



1 and school psychologists in the following fiscal years to the following statewide ratios of
 2 personnel to students:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Counselors</u>	<u>Social Workers</u>	<u>Psychologists</u>
3 <u>2021-2022</u>	<u>1:354</u>	<u>1:1,106</u>	<u>1:1,740</u>
4 <u>2022-2023</u>	<u>1:328</u>	<u>1:929</u>	<u>1:1,480</u>
5 <u>2023-2024</u>	<u>1:302</u>	<u>1:752</u>	<u>1:1,220</u>
6 <u>2024-2025</u>	<u>1:276</u>	<u>1:576</u>	<u>1:960</u>
7 <u>2025-2026 and each subsequent</u>			
8 <u>fiscal year thereafter</u>	<u>1:250</u>	<u>1:400</u>	<u>1:700."</u>

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 10 **SECTION 2.(a)** For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, school counselors who are licensed
 11 clinical mental health counselors, as defined in G.S. 90-330(a)(2), shall receive a salary
 12 supplement each month of ten percent (10%) of their monthly salary on the "A" Teachers Salary
 13 Schedule.

14 **SECTION 2.(b)** For purposes of this section, the term "school counselors" refers to
 15 licensed personnel of the public schools who are classified as school counselors.

16 **SECTION 2.(c)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
 17 Public Instruction the sum of eighteen million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$18,800,000) in
 18 recurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to provide compensation increases for school
 19 counselors pursuant to this section.

20 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.