

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Establishing a School Guidance Counselor to Student Ratio

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Overview

Experts believe that the effectiveness of a developmental guidance and counseling program is directly related to the counselor-to-student ratio within the program. The number of counselors needed to staff a student counseling program depends on the needs of the students and the school and on the goals and design of the program. Ratio recommendations vary widely. The American School Counselor Association recommends an ideal ratio of 1:100 and a maximum ratio of 1:300.

Section

- 1 **School guidance counselors.** (a) Requires a school board to employ the number of school guidance counselors needed so that the ratio of student to school guidance counselors by the end of the 2019-2020 school year does not exceed 250 to one in grades 9-12, 350 to one in grades 7 and 8, and 450 to 1 in K-6.
(b) Directs the commissioner to develop guidelines to equitably distribute available funds to all eligible public schools. Requires the commissioner to determine and publish a fair method for funding eligible school sites if funding is insufficient.
(c) Makes ratios inapplicable in any year when funding is insufficient.
Makes this section effective 7/1/01.
- 2 **Appropriation.** (a) Appropriates \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2002 and \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2003 from the general fund to the commissioner of children, families, and learning for student to school guidance counselor ratios under section 1.
(b) Directs the commissioner to make aid payments only to the extent that appropriated funds are available.
(c) Increases the base budget for this appropriation by ten percent per fiscal year.
Makes this section effective 7/1/01.