

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1516
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes certain program requirements for school counselor certification; outlines role and duties of school counselor; requires professional development for school counselors; establishes position of School Counselor Liaison in DOE.
- Type of Impact:** Annual expenditure increase to the State.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Education.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that this bill would result in an indeterminate annual expenditure increase for the Department of Education associated with the establishment of the position of State School Counselor Liaison.
- If the department hires a new employee for the liaison position, compensation costs could be in the range of \$75,000 to \$100,000, plus benefits.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the position of State School Counselor Liaison in the Department of Education. The liaison would be responsible for working with school districts and school counselors to facilitate best practices for addressing the mental and behavioral health and wellness of all students. The liaison would serve as a resource expert in school counseling for New Jersey certified school counselors and the Department of Education and would foster and promote professional development for school counselors. The liaison would be required to report annually

to the Governor and the Legislature, including a summary of the activities of the liaison during the year and any recommendations deemed appropriate concerning school counseling services.

The bill directs the State Board of Education to establish professional development requirements for school counselors that include a requirement that each school counselor complete professional development training in areas related to the duties of a school counselor.

In addition to any other requirements adopted by the State Board of Education for school counseling programs, the bill requires that school counseling programs at regionally accredited colleges or universities that lead to a standard educational services certificate with a school counselor endorsement incorporate: the American School Counselor Association's national model for comprehensive school counseling programs or a State-approved model; and training in the delivery of social and emotional learning programming as well as postsecondary and career planning.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS finds that this bill would result in an indeterminate annual expenditure increase for the Department of Education primarily associated with the appointment of a State School Counselor Liaison.

The bill requires the department to appoint a School Counselor Liaison to work with school counselors, school districts, and the Department of Education on matters related to school counseling services. The bill does not specify whether the liaison will be an existing employee of the department or whether the department can hire a new employee for the position. The State would incur annual cost increases if the department hires a new employee to act as State School Counselor Liaison. Assuming that a newly hired employee would receive an annual salary of between \$75,000 and \$100,000 for this role, the annual State personnel costs would be between \$115,050 and \$153,400 when factoring in the State's fringe benefit rate (the rate for FY 2024 is not yet published so the FY 2023 rate is being utilized). If a current employee is appointed for this role, the associated State costs to implement the requirements of the bill will be lower.

The bill may also result in marginal State cost increases associated with the development, to the extent that it does not already exist, of professional development training for school counselors and the potential creation of a State-approved model for comprehensive school counseling programs at certain State institutions of higher education. School districts may also incur indeterminate, likely marginal, annual workload increases related to the school counselor training required under the bill. Similarly, to the extent that public institutions of higher education offering certain school counseling programs need to modify those programs to reflect the requirements of the bill, these institutions may experience cost increases.

Section: *Education*

Analyst: *Abigail Chambers*
 Associate Fiscal Analyst

Approved: *Thomas Koenig*
 Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).