
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 983 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY THOMAS, KENYATTA, R. BROWN, BURGOS, CIRESI, DEASY,
FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, HOWARD,
ISAACSON, MADDEN, NEILSON, N. NELSON, O'MARA, PISCIOTTANO,
POLINCHOCK, RYAN, SANCHEZ, SAPPEY, SCHLOSSBERG, STEPHENS,
STRUZZI AND WARREN, MARCH 19, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 19, 2021

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in preliminary provisions, providing
6 for study of school mental health professionals.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
11 section to read:

12 Section 129. Study of School Mental Health Professionals.

13 (a) The department shall conduct a study of public schools
14 regarding school mental health professionals, which shall
15 include the following:

16 (1) The number of full-time and part-time school counselors,
17 school social workers and school psychologists in each school in
18 this Commonwealth.

1 (2) In each school in this Commonwealth, the ratio of
2 students to:

- 3 (i) school counselors;
4 (ii) school social workers; and
5 (iii) school psychologists.

6 (3) Whether a school counselor, school social worker or
7 school psychologist is providing counseling assistance to more
8 than one school.

9 (4) The nationally accepted ratios of students to:

- 10 (i) school counselors;
11 (ii) school social workers; and
12 (iii) school psychologists.

13 (5) Recommendations regarding how a school can increase the
14 number of school counselors, school social workers and school
15 psychologists to meet the nationally accepted ratios.

16 (b) The department shall prepare a report based on the study
17 conducted under subsection (a) and shall submit the report by
18 December 21, 2022, to the chairperson and the minority
19 chairperson of the Education Committee of the Senate and the
20 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education Committee
21 of the House of Representatives.

22 (c) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
23 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless
24 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

25 "Department." The Department of Education of the
26 Commonwealth.

27 "School counselor." An individual licensed and certified by
28 the Commonwealth as a school counselor and hired to provide
29 individual or group counseling assistance to students in the
30 elementary, middle or high school grades.

1 "School psychologist." An individual licensed and certified
2 by the Commonwealth as a school psychologist and hired to
3 provide individual or group counseling assistance to students in
4 the elementary, middle or high school grades.

5 "School social worker." An individual licensed and certified
6 by the Commonwealth as a school social worker and hired to
7 provide individual or group counseling assistance to students in
8 the elementary, middle or high school grades.

9 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.