

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5030

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Developing comprehensive school counseling programs.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Mullet, Wellman, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Rivers, Salomon and Wilson, C.).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**House Committee on Education**

**Background:** In Washington, certain specialists who serve in K-12 schools are certified as educational staff associates (ESAs). These specialists include school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, school occupational therapists, school physical therapists, and school speech language pathologists/audiologists.

School counselors develop and lead comprehensive guidance and counseling programs that focus on the academic, career, personal, and social needs of all students. Along with school psychologists and school social workers, school counselors are involved in multitiered systems of support for academic and behavioral skills. Together, this group also focuses on student mental health, works with at-risk and marginalized students, performs risk assessments, and collaborates with mental health professionals to promote student achievement and create a safe learning environment. State law encourages, where possible, responsibilities such as data input and tracking, to be handled by non-licensed, non-certified staff to provide time for counselors to prioritize activities requiring direct student contact.

**Summary:** Each school district must develop and implement a written plan for a comprehensive school counseling program by the beginning of the 2022-23 school year. The school counseling program must be based on regularly updated standards developed by a national organization representing school counselors.

Written Plan. The written plan must:

- establish a comprehensive school counseling program that uses state and nationally

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- recognized counselor frameworks and is systemically aligned to state learning standards;
- provide a process for identifying student needs through a multilevel school data review and analysis that includes, at a minimum, use-of-time data; program results data; and data regarding communication with administrators, parents, students, and stakeholders;
- explain how direct and indirect services will be delivered through the comprehensive school counseling program; and
- establish an annual review and assessment process for the comprehensive school counseling program that includes building administrators and stakeholders.

Plan Implementation. The comprehensive school counseling program must be implemented by school counselors or other ESAs, who must spend at least 80 percent of their work time providing direct and indirect services to benefit students. Tasks such as coordinating and monitoring student testing, supervising students at lunch and recess, and assuming the duties of other non-counseling staff are not direct or indirect services.

Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors or ESAs and students that help students improve achievement, attendance, and discipline. Examples include instruction, appraisal, advisement, and counseling. Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of a school counselor or ESA's interactions with others. Examples include collaboration, consultation, and referrals.

Work time is defined as the portion of an employee's contracted hours for which they are contracted to perform the duties of a school counselor or other ESA assignment.

Guidance and Transition. By December 1, 2021, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must develop and distribute guidance for school districts implementing a written plan and comprehensive school counseling program. OSPI must also consult with and develop guidance for small districts that is appropriate for the staffing resources, school counselor-to-student ratios, and range of duties performed by school counselors and ESAs in small school districts.

Prior to the 2022-23 school year, each school district board of directors must, within existing funds, develop a transition plan for developing and implementing the comprehensive school counseling program plan.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	1	
House	82	16	(House amended)
Senate	47	1	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 25, 2021