

2SHB 1377 - S COMM AMD  
By Committee on Ways & Means

ADOPTED 02/28/2018

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that students'  
4 unmet mental health needs pose barriers to learning and development,  
5 and ultimately student success in school. The legislature further  
6 finds that the need to identify and assist students struggling with  
7 emotional and mental health needs has reached a serious level  
8 statewide. In order to prioritize students' needs first, the  
9 legislature finds that the persons most qualified in the school  
10 setting to lead the effort in addressing this epidemic are the school  
11 counselor, school social worker, and school psychologist. The  
12 legislature further finds that the knowledge-levels and skill-levels  
13 of these nonacademic professionals must be increased in order to  
14 enhance mental health-related student support services.

15 (2) The legislature further finds that in chapter 175, Laws of  
16 2007, appropriate acknowledgment was given to the fact that a  
17 professional school counselor is not just a course and career  
18 guidance professional, but a certificated educator with unique  
19 qualifications and skills to address all students' academic,  
20 personal, social, and career development needs, and that school  
21 counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student achievement by  
22 supporting a safe learning environment and addressing the needs of  
23 all students through prevention and intervention programs that are  
24 part of a comprehensive school counseling program. The legislature  
25 finds, however, that despite the language in RCW 28A.410.043 that  
26 appropriately recognizes that the role of the school counselor is  
27 multifaceted, with a focus upon students' mental health needs as well  
28 as career guidance needs, the reality in the schools is that  
29 counselor staffing levels are well below the national recommendations  
30 of one counselor to every two hundred fifty students. As a result,  
31 there are not enough counselors in the schools and many school  
32 counselors have been tasked primarily with course and career guidance

1 responsibilities at the expense of the mental health side of school  
2 counseling. Similarly, school psychologist staffing levels are below  
3 the national recommendations of one psychologist to every five  
4 hundred to seven hundred students when providing comprehensive school  
5 psychological services, and school social worker staffing levels are  
6 below the national recommendations of one school social worker to  
7 every two hundred fifty students, or one to every fifty students with  
8 intensive needs.

9 (3) The legislature further finds that school counselors, social  
10 workers, and psychologists interact with students on a daily basis,  
11 thus putting them in a good position to recognize the signs of  
12 emotional or behavioral distress and make appropriate referrals. The  
13 legislature finds that individuals entering these professions need  
14 proper preparation to respond to the mental health and safety needs  
15 of students. The legislature further finds that they need ongoing  
16 professional development to address students' mental health needs and  
17 get students the help they need. The legislature further finds that  
18 Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1336, which became chapter 197,  
19 Laws of 2013, increased the capacity of school districts and their  
20 personnel to recognize and respond to youth in need through  
21 comprehensive planning and additional training, but that additional  
22 opportunities for collaboration on a regular and ongoing basis are in  
23 order. By providing professional collaboration opportunities with  
24 local mental health service providers at the school district level to  
25 school counselors, social workers, and psychologists, the legislature  
26 intends to take the next step toward enabling these professionals to  
27 recognize and respond with skill and confidence to the signs of  
28 emotional or behavioral distress that they observe in students and  
29 make the appropriate referrals to evidence-based behavioral health  
30 services.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320  
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 The school counselor works with developing and leading a  
34 comprehensive guidance and counseling program to focus on the  
35 academic, career, personal, and social needs of all students. School  
36 psychologists carry out special education evaluation duties, among  
37 other things. School social workers promote and support students'  
38 health, academic, and social success with counseling and support, and  
39 by providing and coordinating specialized services and resources. All

1 of these professionals are also involved in multitiered systems of  
2 support for academic and behavioral skills. These professionals focus  
3 on student mental health, work with at-risk and marginalized  
4 students, perform risk assessments, and collaborate with mental  
5 health professionals to promote student achievement and create a safe  
6 learning environment. In order that school counselors, social  
7 workers, and psychologists have the time available to prioritize  
8 these functions, in addition to other activities requiring direct  
9 student contact, responsibilities such as data input and data  
10 tracking should be handled by nonlicensed, noncertified staff, where  
11 possible.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410  
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 (1) A school psychologist is a professional educator who holds a  
15 valid school psychologist certification as defined by the  
16 professional educator standards board. Pursuant to the national  
17 association of school psychologists' model for comprehensive and  
18 integrated school psychological services, school psychologists  
19 deliver services across ten domains of practice. Two domains permeate  
20 all areas of service delivery: Data-based decision making; and  
21 consultation and collaboration. Five domains encompass direct and  
22 indirect services to children and their families: Student-level  
23 services, interventions, and instructional supports to develop  
24 academic skills; student-level interventions and mental health  
25 services to develop social and life skills; systems-level school-wide  
26 practices to promote learning; systems-level preventive and  
27 responsive services; and systems-level family school collaboration  
28 services. The three foundational domains include: Knowledge and  
29 skills related to diversity in development and learning; research and  
30 program evaluation; and legal and ethical practice.

31 (2) A school social worker is a professional in the fields of  
32 social work and education who holds a valid school social worker  
33 certification as defined by the professional educator standards  
34 board. The purpose and role of the school social worker is to provide  
35 an integral link between school, home, and community in helping  
36 students achieve academic and social success. This is accomplished by  
37 removing barriers and providing services that include: Mental health  
38 and academic counseling, support for students and parents, crisis  
39 prevention and intervention, professional case management,

1 collaboration with other professionals, organizations, and community  
2 agencies, and advocacy for students and parents. School social  
3 workers work directly with school administrators as well as students  
4 and families, at various levels and as part of an interdisciplinary  
5 team in the educational system, including at the building, district,  
6 and state level. School social workers provide leadership and  
7 professional expertise regarding the formation of school discipline  
8 policies and procedures, and through school-based mental health  
9 services, crisis management, the implementation of social-emotional  
10 learning, and other support services that impact student academic and  
11 social-emotional success. School social workers also facilitate  
12 community involvement in the schools while advocating for student  
13 success.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320  
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) Within existing resources, beginning in the 2019-20 school  
17 year, first-class school districts must provide a minimum of six  
18 hours of professional collaboration per year, preferably in person,  
19 for school counselors, social workers, and psychologists that focuses  
20 on the following: Recognizing signs of emotional or behavioral  
21 distress in students, including but not limited to indicators of  
22 possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide, screening,  
23 accessing current resources, and making appropriate referrals.  
24 Teachers may also participate in this professional collaboration, as  
25 deemed appropriate and allowed by their building administrators.  
26 School districts that have mental health centers in their area shall  
27 collaborate with local licensed mental health service providers under  
28 chapter 71.24 RCW. Those districts without a mental health center in  
29 their area shall collaborate via telephone or other remote means that  
30 allow for dialogue and discussion. By collaborating with local  
31 providers in this manner, educational staff associates get to  
32 collaborate in short but regular segments, in their own schools or  
33 near school district facilities, and school districts are not put in  
34 a position that they must obtain substitutes or otherwise expend  
35 additional funds. This local connection will also help foster a  
36 connection between school personnel and the mental health  
37 professionals in the community to whom school personnel may make  
38 referrals, in line with the legislative intent expressed throughout  
39 Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1336, chapter 197, Laws of 2013,

1 to form partnerships with qualified health, mental health, and social  
2 services agencies in the community to coordinate and improve support  
3 for youth in need and the directive to the department of social and  
4 health services with respect to the provision of funds for mental  
5 health first-aid training targeted at teachers and educational staff.

6 (2) Second-class districts are encouraged, but not required, to  
7 collaborate and provide the professional collaboration as provided in  
8 subsection (1) of this section.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
10 appropriated for this specific purpose, the professional  
11 collaboration lighthouse grant program is established to assist  
12 school districts with early adoption and implementation of mental  
13 health professional collaboration time specified under section 4 of  
14 this act.

15 (2) The superintendent of public instruction shall designate at  
16 least two school districts as lighthouse school districts to serve as  
17 resources and examples of best practices in designing and operating a  
18 professional collaboration program for school counselors, school  
19 social workers, school psychologists, and local licensed mental  
20 health service providers. The program must focus on recognizing signs  
21 of emotional or behavioral distress in students, for example  
22 indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide,  
23 screening, accessing current resources, and making appropriate  
24 referrals.

25 (3) The superintendent shall award grants to:

26 (a) Each school district designated as a lighthouse district  
27 under subsection (2) of this section; and

28 (b) At least four school districts wishing to implement mental  
29 health professional collaboration time, as specified under section 4  
30 of this act, in the 2018-19 school year. In awarding the grants, the  
31 superintendent must prioritize an even mix of rural school districts  
32 and urban or suburban school districts.

33 (4) Grant funds may be used for: Providing technical assistance  
34 to school districts implementing a professional collaboration  
35 program; designing and implementing a professional collaboration  
36 program; developing approaches for accessing resources external to a  
37 school district; collaborating with local licensed mental health  
38 service providers; identifying successful methods of communicating

1 with students and parents; conducting site visits; and providing  
2 supplemental materials.

3 (5) This section expires August 1, 2020.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act does not create any civil  
5 liability on the part of the state or any state agency, officer,  
6 employee, agent, political subdivision, or school district."

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7 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "services;" strike the  
8 remainder of the title and insert "adding new sections to chapter  
9 28A.320 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; creating  
10 new sections; and providing an expiration date."

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