

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5595

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As of January 12, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools.

**Brief Description:** Concerning prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wellman, Wilson, C., Billig, Das, Frockt, Pedersen, Randall, Saldaña and Wilson, J.; by request of Office of Financial Management.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/12/22.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Increases minimum allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors within the prototypical school model.
- Provides that allocations for physical, social, and emotional support staff may only be used for salaries and benefits of physical, social, and emotional support staff.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

**Background:** Prototypical School Model. The state's public school funding model allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a prototypical school serving an assumed number of students at defined elementary, middle, and high schools levels. The use of prototypical schools is

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intended to illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size using commonly understood terms such as class size, hours of instruction, and specified staff positions.

The structure of the formula, which appears in statute, provides allocations for classroom teachers at an assumed class size, plus other building-level staff such as principals, teacher-librarians, counselors, and office support. Based on these staffing ratios, the state uses salary assumptions for each of the different staff types to generate state funding allocations. The funding provided to school districts through the prototypical school formulas is for allocation purposes only, and districts have discretion over how the money is spent, subject to some limits.

The prototypical school model currently provides allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors using the following staff unit amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.076	0.060	0.096
Social Workers	0.042	0.006	0.015
Psychologists	0.017	0.002	0.007
Guidance Counselors	0.493	1.216	2.539

**Summary of Bill:**

Staff Allocations. A new staff group called "physical, social, and emotional support staff" is created in the prototypical school model, to include the following staff types: school nurses, social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, classified staff providing student and staff safety, and parent involvement coordinators. School districts may use allocations provided for physical, social, and emotional support staff only for salaries and benefits for staff employed as physical, social, and emotional support staff.

Beginning September 1, 2022, the minimum allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors are increased to the following amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.246	0.336	0.339
Social Workers	0.311	0.088	0.127
Psychologists	0.104	0.024	0.049
Guidance Counselors	0.993	1.716	3.039

In addition to the minimum allocations specified above, the following additional staffing units are provided for school nurses in the 2023-24 school year:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.170	0.276	0.243

Beginning September 1, 2024, the minimum allocations for school nurses are increased again to the following amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.585	0.888	0.824

Skill Center Class Size. The average skill center class size within the prototypical school model is reduced from 20 students per teacher to 19 students per teacher to align with base allocations currently provided in the operating budget.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 5, 2022.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill aligns with voter initiative 1351 and the staffing enrichment workgroup findings of 2019. The bill provides a carve out in funding to better meet student needs while providing a perfect amount of flexibility for staffing these roles. When conducting listening sessions with parents and students, school districts have heard again and again about a need for mental health support. It is the number one challenge facing high school students. Many students have reported planning or attempting suicide. This investment in school nurses and counselors will help promote student social and emotional well-being.

OTHER: School counselors are concerned about being categorized under a bigger umbrella, and are concerned that the legislation as drafted conveys a limited title and job description that doesn't reflect actual responsibilities. Right now schools with different poverty levels would be funded similarly, which is equal but not equitable. The allocation mechanism needs to be equitable based on student needs. While funds should not be diverted to other uses, the language should be broadened slightly to include staff training and related programs and services.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Bob Cooper, National Association of Social Workers WA Chapter; Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Virginia Barry, Stand for Children; Manuela Slye, Seattle Council PTSA; Lynette Brower, WA State Skills Center Association/NCTA; Paul Randall, Tri Tech Skills Center; Michael Uehara-Bingen, Washington State PTA; Dr. Carole Meyer, Moses Lake

School District; Elizabeth Bonbright, President, Tacoma Public School Board of Directors; Dan Steele, School Funding Coalition; Roz Thompson, School Funding Coalition; Erica Hallock, Washington State Nurses Association; Liz Pray; Maddy Thompson, Office of the Governor; Samantha Fogg, Seattle Council PTSA; Julie Salvi, Washington Education Association; Glenn Jenkins, Washington Education Association; Carrie Suchy, Washington Education Association; Christine Nutters, Washington Education Association; Samantha Pacampara, Washington Education Association; Janice Nordland, Washington Education Association; Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of WA (PSE); Sean Dotson, Superintendent, Tumwater School District; Leslie VanLeishout, North Thurston Public Schools; Krestin Bahr, Peninsula School District - Gig Harbor, WA.

OTHER: Amy Brackenbury, Washington School Counselors Association; Dave Larson, Tukwila School Board; Melanie Smith, Committee for Children.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.