An Overview Of School Counselors In Kentucky

Presentation To The
Interim Joint Committee On Education
Kentucky Legislative Research Commission

Office Of Education Accountability
November 20th, 2019

Major Findings Related To SB1 And School Counselors

- **Goal: school counselors should spend 60% or more of their time on direct services to students**
  - 57% of counselors did not meet that goal in 2019; varied by level
- **Goal: 250:1 student-to-counselor ratio per school**
  - Few districts currently meet goal
  - To meet goal, the number of school counselors would need to increase by more than 80%
- **Some terms not clear in statute**
  - Direct services to students
  - Types of schools
  - Effective date to require one counselor per school

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Data Used For The Report

- Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)
  - Professional Staffing Data (PSD)
  - Superintendent Annual Attendance Report
  - School counselor e-mail addresses from Infinite Campus
- OEA Surveys
  - School counselors
  - Superintendents
  - Site visits
- Council for Postsecondary Education (CPE)
  - School counselor degrees completed

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Outline

- **Counselors' time**
- Student-to-counselor ratios
- EILA credits for school counselors
- Superintendent reporting requirements

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Direct and Indirect Services

As defined by the American School Counselor Association:

- Direct Services – In Person Interactions With Students
  - Individual or group counseling
  - Individual student planning
  - College and career counseling
- Indirect Services – Delivered On Behalf of Students Through Interactions With Others
  - Consulting and sharing strategies with teachers
  - Parent/teacher conference

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Recommendation 2.2

The term "direct services to students" should be defined more precisely through statutory or regulatory language.

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Average Percent Of Time Spent On Direct Services

Direct Services	All	School Level		
		Elementary	Middle	High
Academic counseling	13%	4%	11%	25%
Mental health counseling	18	19	22	15
Student personal/ social development	10	15	7	8
Counseling students with attendance & discipline problems	9	9	10	10
Other counseling duties not mentioned	2	2	2	3
Total average percent of time spent on direct services*	**53**	**48**	**52**	**61**

*Due to rounding, numbers do not always sum.

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Number Of Counselors Not Meeting 60 Percent Of Time Spent On Direct Services

School Level	Total Number Of Counselors	Total Number Not Meeting 60% Goal
Elementary	328	221
Middle	158	95
High	299	124
Multiple*	39	27
Total	824	467

* Work in multiple schools or grade levels

Overall, 57% of all school counselors reported spending less than 60% of their time on direct services to students.

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Average Percent Of Time Spent On Indirect Services

Indirect Services	All	School Level		
		Elementary	Middle	High
Classroom management suggestions to teachers	3%	5%	3%	2%
Assisting students with special needs (includes ARC meetings)	15	20	16	10
Total average percent of time spent on indirect services*	**19**	**25**	**19**	**12**

*Due to rounding, numbers do not always sum.

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Average Percent Of Time Spent On Duties That Are Not Direct or Indirect Services

Services That Are Not Direct Or Indirect	All	School Level		
		Elementary	Middle	High
Assigning disciplinary actions	1%	2%	1%	1%
Administering tests such as K-PREP, MAP, etc.	9	8	10	10
Maintaining student records	5	5	5	5
Non-counseling duties	5	5	7	5
School administrative duties	2	3	1	1
Other non-counseling duties not mentioned above	2	1	2	2
Professional development	3	3	3	3
Total time spent on duties that are not direct or indirect services*	**28**	**27**	**29**	**28**

*Due to rounding, numbers do not always sum.

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Outline

- Counselors' time
- **Student-to-counselor ratios**
- EILA credits for school counselors
- Superintendent reporting requirements

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Surrounding States' School Counselor Staffing Requirements, 2019

	Student-To-Counselor Ratio	
State	**Required**	**Goal/Recommendation**
Kentucky		**250:1**
Indiana		600:1 grades K-6; 300:1 grades 7-12
Missouri	500:1	300-375:1
Tennessee	500:1 grades K-6; 350:1 grades 7-12	
Virginia	500:1 for elementary 400:1 for middle 350:1 for high	
Illinois		None
Ohio		None
West Virginia		None

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Student-To-Counselor Ratios By School Level

School Level	Average Student-To-Counselor Ratio
Elementary	461
Middle	458
High	404

Note: OEA based these calculations on student-to-counselor ratios in A1 schools. SB1 set a goal of 250:1 per school but did not clarify whether the goal refers only to A1 schools or includes additional schools such as alternative, career and technical, or other schools.

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Other Support Staff

School District Superintendents Reporting Staff That Perform Functions Of School Counselors

Type Of Staff	Total Districts	Total Reported Staff (FTE)
School Psychologist	111	284
School Social Worker	46	85
College and/or Career Coach	93	160
Other Qualified Mental Health Professional	68	183

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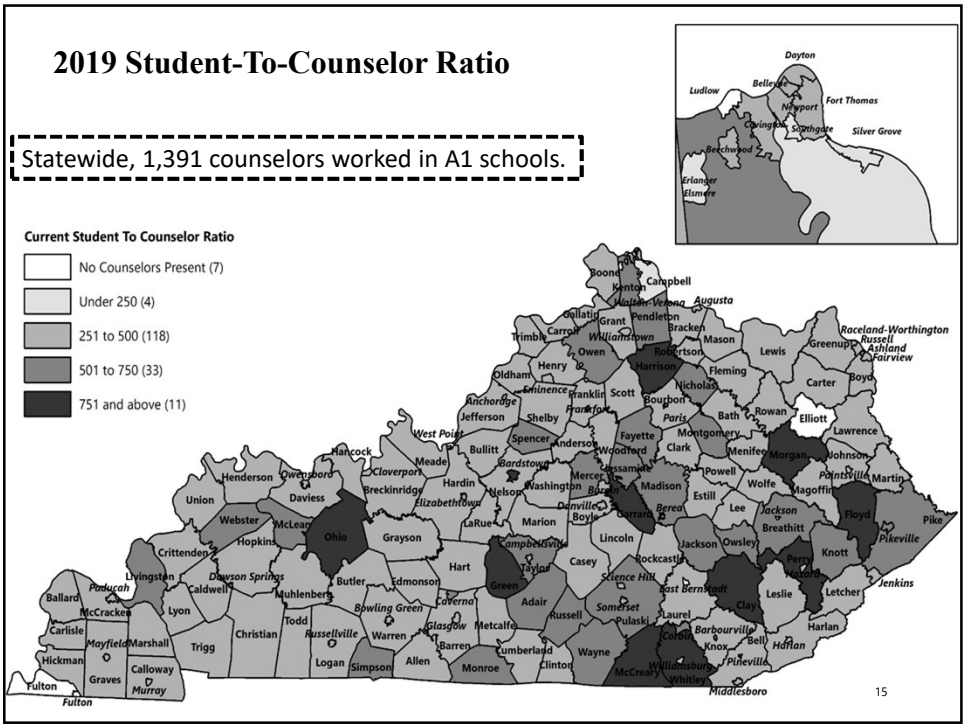
2019 Student-To-Counselor Ratio

Statewide, 1,391 counselors worked in A1 schools.



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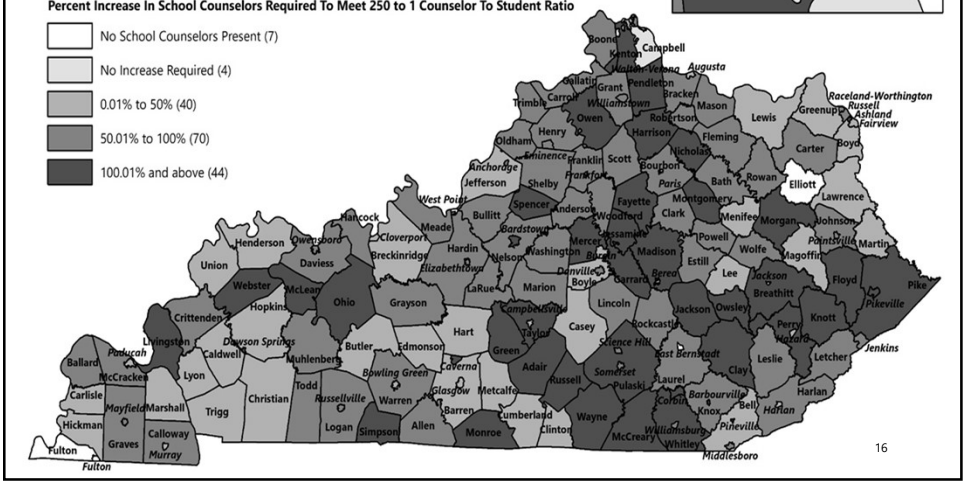
Percent Increase In School Counselors Needed To Meet the Goal Of Having One Counselor For Every 250 Students In Each A-1 School

An additional 1,156 counselors would be needed.



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Estimated Additional Annual Cost Of 250:1 Students Per School Counselor Ratio

Cost Factor	Per Counselor Cost	Annual Cost
Average Base Salary	$60,392	$69,813,152
Administrative Fee	99	114,860
Life Insurance	12	13,872
State Teachers Retirement	9,727	11,244,898
Health Insurance	10,222	11,816,724
Total Cost Additional Counselors		93,003,506

Note: Total is based on the average cost of hiring 1,156 school counselors at A1 schools in 2019. Base salary does not include extra duty pay or pay for extra days worked by school counselors. Health Insurance was calculated using the non-tobacco user rate, LivingWell CDHP for parent-plus.

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Recruitment And Retention

- Greater percentages of counselors eligible for retirement with full benefits compared to all teachers (14% vs. 10%)
- Over 260 graduates annually earn school counseling degrees
- Appears sufficient to cover counselor retirements
  - About 132 retire, leave, or take other jobs in public education annually
  - About one third of superintendents reported challenges recruiting or retaining
  - Greater challenges anticipated

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Outline

- Counselors' time
- Student-to-counselor ratios
- **EILA credits for school counselors**
- Superintendent reporting requirements

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Professional Development Required Of School Counselors As Instructional Leaders (EILA)

- KRS 156.101--Effective Instructional Leadership Act (EILA) requires 21 hours of PD for instructional leaders and defines school counselors as instructional leaders
- 704 KAR 3:325—requires comprehensive training based on identified needs and mentions two regulations that do not exist:
  - 740 KAR Chapter 20
  - 704 KAR 5:120
- Per OEA survey, almost half of counselors participated in fewer than 21 hours of professional development related to their duties as a school counselor in school year 2019.

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Recommendation 2.3

The Kentucky Board of Education should update 704 KAR 3:325 to address the two regulations that are referenced incorrectly.

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Recommendation 2.4

School districts, with support and guidance from the Kentucky Department of Education, should comply with 704 KAR 3:325 and ensure that school counselors are getting at least 21 hours of training each year related to their job duties as a school counselor.

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Outline

- Counselors' time
- Student-to-counselor ratios
- EILA credits for school counselors
- **Superintendent reporting requirements**

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Superintendent Reporting Requirements Per KRS 158.4416

- Superintendents must report annually to KDE:
  - Number and placement of school counselors in each district
  - Source of funding for each position
  - Summary of job duties and work undertaken by **each** counselor
  - Approximate percentage of time devoted to **each** duty over the course of the year
- KDE survey does not meet requirements

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Recommendation 2.1

The information sent to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) by superintendents should include a summary of job duties and work undertaken by each counselor and the approximate percent of time devoted to each duty over the course of the year as required by KRS 158.4416.

The current survey utilized by KDE does not meet the statutory requirement.

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Summary Of Findings

Goal: School counselors should spend 60% or more of their time on direct services to students

- **Percentages not meeting goal vary by school level:**
  - Elementary: 67%
  - Middle: 60%
  - High: 41%
  - High school counselors spend relatively more time on academic counseling and less time on mental health counseling
- **Direct services not defined**

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Summary Of Findings

Goal of 250:1 student-to-counselor ratio per school

- Ratios in 2019:
  - 461:1 (elementary)
  - 458:1 (middle)
  - 404:1 (high)
- To meet goal of 250:1, the number of counselors would need to increase by 1,156 or more than 80%*
- Approximately $93 million in costs

*Calculation based on A1 schools but statute does not specify

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END

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