

Department of Planning and Budget 2020 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB880

House of Origin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Engrossed
Second House	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrolled

2. Patron: Locke

3. Committee: Appropriations

4. Title: Minimum staffing ratio for school counselors.

5. Summary: Changes the effective date from school year 2019-2020 to school year 2020-2021 for the staffing standard that requires local school boards to employ school counselors in accordance with the following ratios: in elementary schools, one hour per day per 75 students, one full-time equivalent at 375 students, one hour per day additional time per 75 students or major fraction thereof; in middle schools, one period per 65 students, one full-time equivalent at 325 students, one additional period per 65 students or major fraction thereof; and in high schools, one period per 60 students, one full-time equivalent at 300 students, one additional period per 60 students or major fraction thereof. Effective with the 2021-2022 school year, the bill requires local school boards to employ one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 325 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary. See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: The introduced budget, HB/SB 30, included \$21.2 million in FY 2021 and \$78.1 million in FY 2022 to support the state share of cost for the additional school counselors required by this bill in school year 2020-2021 and for one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 250 students in grades kindergarten through 12 in school year 2021-2022. Since this House substitute version of the bill requires less funding than is contained in the introduced budget, no budget amendment is necessary to fund the changes.

Further, this House substitute version is consistent with a House amendment to the budget that funds the state share of cost for one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 325 students in grades kindergarten through 12 for school year 2021-2022 and reduces the state general fund appropriation by \$53.2 million in FY 2022; thus, no budget amendment is necessary to comport to the House version of the budget.

A related Senate budget amendment funds the state share of cost for one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 300 students in grades kindergarten through 12 for school year 2021-2022 and reduces the state general fund appropriation by \$38.5 million in FY 2022.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Education, local school divisions

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: The provisions under the House substitute version of this bill require a lower student to school counselor ratio for high schools for the 2020-2021 school year (1:300) than is required in the 2021-2022 school year (1:325). This could result in local school divisions hiring additional counselors in 2020-2021 that might not be retained for 2021-2022.