

Department of Planning and Budget 2020 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB398

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

2. Patron: Keam

3. Committee: Education

4. Title: School counselors and social workers; student to position ratio; certain schools.

5. Summary: Requires school boards to employ one school counselor and one social worker for every 250 students in each elementary school, middle school, and high school in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for federal free lunch.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 145 and Item 143.

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

8. Fiscal Implications: The Department of Education (DOE) estimates an additional state cost under Direct Aid to Public Education of \$99.2 million in FY 2021 and \$92.8 million in FY 2022 to meet the provisions of this bill. This estimate reflects an additional state cost of \$8.9 million in FY 2021 for school counselors, and an additional state cost of \$90.3 million in FY 2021 and \$92.8 million in FY 2022 for social workers. Budget language in Item 145 of HB/SB 30, 2020 General Assembly Session, requires each local school board to employ one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 250 students in grades kindergarten through twelve effective with the 2021-2022 school year. Therefore, the school counselor changes in this bill do not have a state fiscal impact in FY 2022 unless that budget language is modified. Local school divisions would have to provide the local share required to match any additional state funds based on each division's local composite index and any additional funding needed to employ these positions based on the new ratios. Some school divisions may be meeting these requirements currently, and any additional cost to local school divisions is indeterminate.

The Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding model is not programmed to distribute different ratios of school counselors to individual schools based on free lunch percentages. Additionally, social workers are funded under the support position cap and cannot be removed from that cap based on free lunch percentages. Consequently, any offsetting savings to recognized support position costs from the new social worker standard is indeterminate.

DOE estimates an additional state cost of \$15,000 for contract assistance to reprogram the SOQ model to account for the changes required by this bill, with a timeframe of approximately three months for programming and testing.

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

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None