

REQUIRE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CAREER AND COLLEGE COUNSELING

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House Bill 4552 (reported from committee as H-3)
Sponsor: Rep. Brett Roberts
Committee: Workforce and Talent Development
Revised on 12-14-15

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 4552 would amend Section 1233 of the Revised School Code to add a requirement that a school counselor complete at least 25 hours of professional development covering counseling about the college preparation and selection process and at least 25 hours of professional development regarding career counseling in order to be eligible to have the counselor credential renewed by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The bill would take effect 90 days after the date it is enacted.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill could increase costs for the state by requiring the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Talent and Economic Development and other groups, to create counseling professional development content and curricula standards, to approve valid professional development programs based on those standards, and to monitor the number of completed professional development hours for the renewal of counselor certifications. However, the added responsibilities may only require the redirection of existing staff time rather than the hiring of additional staff, and thus create minimal costs. The bill would have no fiscal impact for local school districts.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

According to testimony presented in committee, some students are not receiving adequate counseling regarding post-high school career and education options. To remedy this, the bill sponsor has proposed requiring school counselors to complete at least 25 hours for career counseling and at least 25 hours covering the college preparation and selection process during the time since a counselor's credential was last renewed. In doing so, it is hoped that counselors will be able to provide better advice on how to select a post-high school path that will lead to a productive career.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4552 would amend Section 1233 of the Revised School Code to add a requirement that a school counselor complete at least 25 hours of professional development covering counseling about the college preparation and selection process and at least 25 hours of professional development regarding career counseling in order to be eligible to have a credential renewed by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The bill would take effect 90 days after the date it is enacted.

This requirement would take effect on January 1, 2018, at which point the department could not renew the license of an individual who had not completed the new hours requirement

in the time since that individual's school counselor credential was issued or last renewed, whichever is most recent, unless the MDE has determined that individual has completed the necessary hours.

The bill would allow professional development provided by a school district, intermediate school district (ISD), public school academy, or nonpublic school under Section 1527 of the Code to count toward the fulfillment of these hours. Section 1527 of the Code requires public schools, ISDs, and public school academies to provide at least five professional development days, and says that a nonpublic school may also offer professional development days.

For purposes of determining whether an individual has met the career counseling hours requirement, the bill would define career counseling as including, but not limited to, exploration of the skilled trades and other careers and pathways that lead to industry credentials awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an occupation.

The department would have to approve the professional development that is required by the bill, and could only approve a professional development program or course if the department determines that the content and curriculum meet standards that are to be developed by the MDE in consultation with the Department of Talent and Economic Development and groups representing school counselors, college admissions professionals, financial aid officers, employers, and others deemed appropriate by the department. The department would be required to develop these standards by December 1, 2016, and to facilitate the involvement of the aforementioned groups. The state superintendent of public instruction would also be able to promulgate or modify rules as necessary to implement the bill's changes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Administrative Code sets the requirements for school counselors in Michigan. Section R 390.1305(2) of the Code states that a school counselor license is valid for up to 5 years. Currently, the requirements for renewal are the completion of 6 semester hours of credit in an approved program or the 18 approved state board continuing education units, or a combination. Online and distance learning coursework meet this requirement if the sponsoring institution has an approved school counseling program. Correspondence credit does not count toward this requirement. All certificates and licenses expire on June 30 of the expiration year indicated on the certificate or license, unless otherwise noted.

Generally speaking, the board of a school district or intermediate school district is currently prohibited from allowing an individual to serve as a school counselor unless that individual meets one or more of the following three sets of requirements:

- (1) Holds a valid teaching certificate with a school counseling endorsement.
- (2) Meets all of the following:

- Holds a master's degree awarded after completion of an approved school counselor education program that includes at least all of the following skills and content areas or their equivalent:
 - Guidance services--philosophy, principles, and practices
 - Individual and group analysis--nature and range of human characteristics and appraisal methods
 - Guidance information--vocational development theory, educational and occupational information
 - Counseling theory and practice--individual and group procedures, administration and coordination relationships, professional relationships, and ethics
 - Supervised experiences--laboratory, practicum, or internship
 - Evaluation--statistics and research methodology, follow-up evaluation, and measurement methods
 - Has successfully completed the department's guidance counselor examination.
 - Has been recommended by an approved school counselor education program to provide services as a school counselor.
- (3) Meets both of the following:
- Has at least five years of successful experience serving in a school counseling role in another state within the immediately preceding seven-year period.
 - Has successfully completed the department's guidance counselor examination.

The new requirements in House Bill 4552 would be in addition to current requirements.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Supporters of the bill believe that by requiring ongoing professional development on the topics of college preparation and career counseling, counselors will be able to achieve better outcomes in regards to assisting students in finding post-high school success in a chosen career. Supporters also believe that the present counseling system pushes students toward choosing college, even in situations where the student may be inclined to pursue technical training and would do better in that curriculum.

Against:

Critics of the bill say it does not solve the main issue affecting students and counselors, which is a lack of counselors able to devote the majority of their time to working with students. Opponents also note that while they do not disagree with the benefits of making students fully aware of their post-high school pathways, bringing down the student-to-counselor ratio is a better option, as it will give students more time with a counselor, ensuring a more thorough dialogue about what pathway will get the student to a suitable career.

POSITIONS:

The following indicated support for HB 4552 (H-3):

Michigan Association for College Admissions Counseling (12-3-15)

The following were neutral or took no position on HB 4552 (H-3):

Michigan School Counselors Association (neutral, 12-3-15)

The following were opposed to HB 4552 (H-3):

Oakland Schools

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.