



1 Testimony in support

2 SB 2340 – School Counselor ration and what qualifies

3 Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education committee,  
4 NDCEL comes to you today in support for SB2340. We have several  
5 leaders from the field here today to help share with you the rationale  
6 for the bill. I will keep my remarks brief so the experts can spend time  
7 with you today.

8 During the past session the number of counselors was increased  
9 significantly increasing it to one counselor per every 300 students.  
10 This was done without a hearing before an education policy  
11 committee and was instead pushed through appropriations. This  
12 increase in staffing was unfunded and was also one that was  
13 impossible for schools to remain in compliance with as the definition  
14 of a school counselor is quite narrow, availability of school counselors  
15 is very short, and programs that graduate school counselors are few  
16 and far between. We have data to share with you regarding just how  
17 tough it is to comply. Furthermore, in administrative rules NDDPI  
18 determined that other services used to help replace the needed  
19 counselors (example: social workers, behavioral health coordinators,  
20 contracted services with organizations such as the village) are  
21 determined to not count in that requirement although they are doing  
22 the job at the school level.

23 There is a general level of frustration from the field that this position  
24 even has a ratio. No other position in a school has such a requirement.  
25 I will allow for my testifiers from schools to comment on this.



1 This bill clarifies this and ensures that others hired to fulfill the  
2 needed duties in a school to serve our students count toward this  
3 requirement. We value our school counselors very much. That being  
4 said, we also need to be realistic about the students we serve and our  
5 needs in schools, and our hiring reality.

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