

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 1490 which proposes that school counselors undergo a psychological evaluation every 2 years or have a faculty member be present during student interactions. To become a school counselor, we must meet rigorous requirements which include completing a master's degree in school counseling and obtaining not only a counseling license or credential, but also a teaching license. Many, including myself, opt for the dual degree that includes clinical mental health counseling and school counseling which increases the number of internship hours we must complete. In addition, we are required to pass a background check in order to be employed by a school district. There is then the continuing education that we all must participate in each year to maintain our licensure. All of this should be enough to consider school counselors thoroughly vetted professionals. The fields of clinical mental health and school counseling are both experiencing shortages with the demand for mental health professionals far exceeding the supply.

This is my 3rd year working as a school counselor on a provisional license while completing my master's dual degree and I am scheduled to complete my program in February 2026. As part of the counseling program, we are required to self-reflect often and observe the thoughts and behaviors we are experiencing as a means of monitoring our ability to effectively provide services to clients/students. Additionally, the program requires the development of self-care plans in almost every course throughout the master's program. This underscores the importance of self-reflection and seeking help when needed.

All that has been mentioned is done prior to a school counselor obtaining employment and does not consider the rigorous rules and code of ethics that we are required to maintain. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and American Counseling Association (ACA) both provide a code of ethics that school counselors must abide by or risk losing their licensure. HB 1490 puts school counselors in direct violation of the confidentiality clause of both codes and hinders our ability to build rapport with our students.

HB 1490 discourages individuals from the field of school counseling and strains an already overloaded program that serves all students. This creates additional stigma around the field of counseling and adds additional burden to both school counselors and the school district. All of this discourages students and their families from seeking help when they are most in need. For these reasons, I ask you to vote NO on HB 1490.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sarah Scott-Singer

K-12 School Counselor

Richardton-Taylor Public School