



The North Dakota Association of School Psychologists (NDASP) asks lawmakers to oppose SB2340, as currently written. We recognize School Counselors as integral professionals in school buildings and mental health systems. We acknowledge there are not enough School Counselors in North Dakota to adequately serve our students. We also believe the intention of SB2340 was to remedy that situation and better support students. That being said, the bill, as written, does not adequately differentiate the role of School Counselors from other mental health professionals, which could be problematic.

School Counselors are highly trained professionals, and they are invaluable to educational teams. School Counselors and School Psychologists, along with every other professional listed in SB2340 have their own scope of practice and code of ethics. While some roles overlap, there is a need for all of these professionals to support students collaboratively, while recognizing their own competencies.

We recommend that subsection 5 be amended that open School Counselor positions may be **temporarily** filled by the aforementioned professionals, until said positions may be filled by qualified School Counselors. We also recommend that it be noted that any professionals filling these temporary positions respect their competencies, and when necessary consult other School Counselors for guidance. Professionals should also consider their own professional ethics as well as the School Counseling code of ethics.

School Psychologists respect and appreciate the work of School Counselors. We recommend that legislators consult with the [North Dakota School Counselor Association](#) to help remedy the shortage of School Counselors. We need all mental health professionals to best support the needs of North Dakota's students!

Sincerely,

Alannah Valenta, PsyS, NCSP

NDASP President, on behalf of North Dakota Association of School Psychologists