



# 131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

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Legislative Document

No. 829

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H.P. 518

House of Representatives, February 21, 2023

### **An Act to Improve Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools**

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Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle.  
Cosponsored by Representatives: COPELAND of Saco, DOUDERA of Camden, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, MURPHY of Scarborough, SARGENT of York, WARREN of Scarborough, WHITE of Waterville, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4008-A, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 45, §1, is  
3 amended to read:

4 **2. ~~Direct~~ School counselor direct and indirect services to students**. Each school  
5 counselor ~~and school social worker~~ shall spend at least 80% of the school counselor's ~~or~~  
6 ~~school social worker's~~ time providing direct services to and indirect services on behalf of  
7 students.

8 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §4008-A, sub-§2-A** is enacted to read:

9 **2-A. School social worker direct services to students**. Each school social worker  
10 shall spend at least 80% of the school social worker's time providing direct services to  
11 students.

12 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §4015** is enacted to read:

13 **§4015. Board-certified assistant behavior analyst training**

14 School administrative units shall employ an educator at each school in the school  
15 administrative unit who has completed a national board-certified assistant behavior analyst  
16 training. The State shall pay all costs associated with the training and shall provide an  
17 annual stipend of \$3,000 for up to 3 years to the educator who has completed the training.

18 **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §15672, sub-§11**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. D, §36  
19 and affected by §§72 and 74 and c. 12, Pt. WW, §18, is further amended to read:

20 **11. Guidance staff**. "Guidance staff" means full-time equivalent public guidance  
21 counselors, ~~or directors of guidance or school social workers~~ counselors, as documented in  
22 the department's database.

23 **Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §15679, sub-§2, ¶A**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C,  
24 §33, is further amended by amending subparagraph (2) to read:

25 (2) The student-to-guidance staff ratio is ~~350:1~~ 250:1;

26 **Sec. 6. 20-A MRSA §15679, sub-§2, ¶A**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C,  
27 §33, is further amended by enacting a new subparagraph (2-A) to read:

28 (2-A) The student-to-school social worker ratio is 250:1;

29 **Sec. 7. 20-A MRSA §15679, sub-§2, ¶B**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C,  
30 §33, is further amended by enacting a new subparagraph (2-A) to read:

31 (2-A) The student-to-school social worker ratio is 250:1;

## 32 **SUMMARY**

33 This bill does the following.

34 1. It requires that school social workers spend at least 80% of their time providing  
35 direct services to students.

36 2. It requires school administrative units to employ an educator at each school in the  
37 school administrative unit who has completed a national board-certified assistant behavior  
38 analyst training and provides that the State must pay all costs associated with the training

1 and provide an annual stipend of \$3,000 for up to 3 years for each educator who completes  
2 the training.

3 3. It provides that for the purpose of the calculation of salary and benefit costs in the  
4 school funding formula, the elementary school and middle school level student-to-guidance  
5 staff ratio is decreased to 250:1. It also adds a student-to-school social worker ratio of 250:1  
6 for the elementary school, middle school and high school levels.