

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1709

5 By: Representative Steele
6 By: Senator J. Scott
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN THE
10 SCHOOLS PROGRAM; TO INCLUDE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS
11 IN THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM;
12 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
13
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Subtitle

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16 TO AMEND THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN
17 THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM; AND TO INCLUDE
18 MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS IN THE HUMAN
19 SERVICES WORKERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.
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21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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23 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 20-76-112 is amended to read as follows:

24 20-76-112. Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the
25 Schools Program.

26 (a)(1) The Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the
27 Schools Program is established as a collaborative effort among the Division
28 of Children and Family Services, the Arkansas Workforce Development Board,
29 the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and local school
30 districts.

31 (2) The Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in
32 the Schools Program is designed to help children and families by:

33 ~~(1)(A)~~ Promoting safety of children and strengthening of
34 families;

35 ~~(2)(B)~~ Supporting the community's capacity to produce children
36 who are healthy, children who are in supportive, nurturing, and healthy



1 families, and children who succeed in school; and

2 ~~(3)(C)~~ Promoting the Division of Children and Family Services'
3 family preservation philosophy and family-centered practice.

4 (b) Upon approval of the board, the Division of Children and Family
5 Services shall enter into contracts with local school districts to provide
6 funding for the maximum number of human services workers and mental health
7 counselors.

8 (c)(1) A human services worker shall have a bachelor's degree or a
9 master's degree in social work or a related field.

10 (2) A mental health counselor shall have a bachelor's degree or
11 a master's degree in the mental health or counseling field.

12 (3) A human services worker or mental health counselor ~~and~~ shall
13 provide the following services according to skills and training:

14 ~~(1)(A)~~ Crisis intervention;

15 ~~(2)(B)~~ School conferences and in-service training;

16 ~~(3)(C)~~ Home visits;

17 ~~(4)(D)~~ Transportation for family and student group counseling;

18 ~~(5)(E)~~ Parent training and activities;

19 ~~(6)(F)~~ Supportive service referrals;

20 ~~(7)(G)~~ Individualized coping and conflict management skills; and

21 ~~(8)(H)~~ Assessment of family and student needs.

22 (d)(1) Funding for human services workers and mental health counselors
23 shall be targeted to schools with eighty percent (80%) or more of their
24 children eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program under the National
25 School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq.

26 (2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the
27 Division of Children and Family Services shall develop criteria to prioritize
28 eligibility for the Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in
29 the Schools Program.

30 (e) The Coordinated Health Services Section of the Division of
31 Elementary and Secondary Education shall evaluate the Human Services Workers
32 and Mental Health Counselors in the Schools Program annually in coordination
33 with the Division of Children and Family Services, the board, and the local
34 school districts that hold contracts.

35 (f) A parent or a student has the option to refuse any services
36 recommended under the Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in

1 the Schools Program.

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