



Public Policy Update

School Counselor Ratio Grant

A Bill to Amend the School Aid Act of 1979

Overview

In a climate of diminishing resources and inadequate funding, Michigan schools are becoming increasingly more selective in deciding which programs to offer their students. This is evidenced by the alarming increase in Michigan's student to school counselor ratio. Although the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends a ratio of 1 school counselor to 250 students to adequately meet the needs of students, Michigan currently ranks 47th in the nation with an average K-12 ratio of 1 school counselor to 628 students (ASCA, 2006).

In response to these growing student challenges and to the pressures to implement standards-based educational programs, the Association of Michigan School Counselors and the Michigan School Counselor Association are jointly introducing a bill to amend the School Aid Act of 1979. The proposed legislation establishes a three year grant for reducing School Counselor Ratios in selected school districts serving at risk student populations. Administered by the Michigan Department of Education, the bill would require awarded districts to submit annual evaluation reports to demonstrate the impact that a lower school counselor to student ratio will have on student achievement, school safety, attendance, discipline, graduation rate, and postsecondary choices.

Action Points

1. Please visit the AMSC PPL webpage and take a look at the proposed legislation, supporting documentation, and other pertinent information at <http://www.michiganschoolcounseling.org/ppl.htm> The current members of the Michigan Education Committee are also available on this site. The Chair of this important committee is Representative Tim Melton, who we will be encouraging to place our proposed legislation on an upcoming agenda for review.
2. Representative Marie Donigan has agreed to champion the School Counselor Ratio bill. Please send her a note of gratitude for leading the way on behalf of school counselors and the students and families in which we serve. Her contact information is:
Marie Donigan
N 0790 House Office Building
P. O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514
mariedonigan@house.mi.gov
517-373-3818 (phone)
517-373-5888 (fax)

Thank you all your efforts on in support of school counseling. Encouraging decision makers to reflect on the level of education they are willing to settle for in Michigan is critical in support of those services and programs that school counseling professionals provide.