

SB 798/HB 5006: Lowering the Standards for School Counselor Certification

Two years of classroom teaching experience is currently a requirement to become certified as a school counselor in Texas. SB 798 by Sen. Middleton and HB 5006 by Rep. Buckley would remove the classroom teaching experience requirement. TCA is working to amend these bills to require additional training, a master's in school counseling, or a year of supervision to ensure Texas school counselors are well-prepared.



What the Legislation Does

- Removes classroom teaching experience as a requirement for school counselor certification.
- The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) could still certify school counselors with classroom teaching experience, but they could not make teaching experience a requirement for the certification.

Key Points

- Consistently, states that do not require teaching experience do require either a master's degree in school counseling, supervision by a certified school counselor, or additional post-graduate coursework related to school counseling as approved by the state. Under the introduced version of the bill, Texas would have no such requirements.
- For example, Arkansas requires either a school counselor master's degree or, if applying with a clinical counseling degree, completion of an additional program specific to school counseling.
- Teaching experience informs the classroom guidance that students need and that is an essential component of the Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.
- School counselors serve on campus committees that require a thorough understanding of how the entire campus climate can support student learning. Teaching experience affords school counselors a systemic view of district and campus policies, procedures, and programs.
- Teaching experience helps school counselors assist teachers with classroom management.
- Most schools that struggle to find school counselors exist in federally designated Mental Health Workforce Shortage Areas. In other words, shortages are likely to persist even if teaching experience is not required.
- One of the four components of the Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs implemented by school counselors in Texas.

Knowledge of comprehensive school counseling programs helps Professional School Counselors excel at all of their responsibilities and fully meet the needs of their students.

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