

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 58

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5 WEBER

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7 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
8 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON HOW TO BETTER LEVERAGE SCHOOL
9 COUNSELORS TO ENHANCE STUDENT OUTCOMES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF
10 THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

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12 WHEREAS, the first and foundational provision of Article X on education in the Montana Constitution
13 states that it is "the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational
14 potential of each person"; and

15 WHEREAS, the development of a child's potential is dependent on the child's health, including the
16 child's mental health; and

17 WHEREAS, the mental health needs of school-age children have increased sharply since the COVID-
18 19 pandemic and because of the societal and educational disruption caused by the pandemic; and

19 WHEREAS, research indicates that 1 out of 4 children experience a significant mental health event
20 each year that impacts their learning; and

21 WHEREAS, school counselors are highly trained educational leaders and mental health professionals
22 who implement evidence-based, comprehensive counseling programs in K-12 schools and work in concert with
23 parents, teachers, and administrators; and

24 WHEREAS, there is a critical shortage of school counselors, and many Montana school districts
25 struggle to hire school counselors; and

26 WHEREAS, school counselors play a crucial role in meeting Montana's constitutional goal for
27 education.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
2 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

3 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
4 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine how to better leverage school counselors to enhance
5 student outcomes.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

7 (1) collaborate in this examination with:

8 (a) school counselors and organizations of school counselors;

9 (b) the Board of Public Education;

10 (c) the Office of Public Instruction;

11 (d) school counselor preparation programs; and

12 (e) other school advocacy organizations;

13 (2) develop a basic understanding of the role that school counselors play in schools and the
14 positive impacts on student outcomes when school counseling programs are effectively and robustly
15 implemented;

16 (3) investigate the extent of the shortage of school counselors in Montana and ways to strengthen
17 the school counselor workforce pipeline;

18 (4) familiarize itself with the current student-counselor ratio within the accreditation standards of
19 the Board of Public Education and examine how the current ratio affects the ability of school counselors to
20 implement effective programs;

21 (5) gather input from school counselors about best practices and challenges they face in
22 implementing effective school counseling programs; and

23 (6) review successful efforts to leverage school counselors to enhance student outcomes in other
24 states and recommendations from national organizations focused on improving student outcomes through
25 effective school counseling programs.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
27 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

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