

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1355

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### C 113 L 19

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning staffing standards and ratios for counselors in community and technical colleges.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Orwall, Ryu, Sells, Macri, Entenman, Stonier, Valdez, Frame, Gregerson, Tarleton, Doglio, Dolan, Appleton, Bergquist, Slatter, Goodman, Pollet and Santos).

**House Committee on College & Workforce Development**  
**Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development**

#### **Background:**

There is no definition of "counselor" in statutes governing the community and technical college (CTC) system, and there are no statutorily prescribed minimum certification requirements for a person to be employed as a counselor at a CTC. Counselors in the CTC system are considered "academic employees" and "faculty appointments" for purposes of tenure and collective bargaining.

There are approximately 117 faculty counselors in the CTC system. In addition, some colleges have employees under titles such as "advisors" and "education planners." As of fall 2018, there were approximately 225,000 students enrolled in the CTCs.

School counselors employed in Washington's K-12 system must meet minimum requirements and have a valid school counselor certification as required by the Professional Educator Standards Board. Generally, K-12 school counselors must have a master's degree in counseling and complete an approved certification program.

#### **Summary:**

A task force is created to examine issues related to counselors in the CTC system. The task force must examine issues related to minimum standards and staffing ratios, as well as best practices for counseling, how colleges will meet the mental health needs of students and staff, and whether legislation is needed to address the issues.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Members of the task force are as follows:

- two legislators from each of the largest caucuses of the Senate and two legislators from each of the largest caucuses of the House of Representatives;
- four counselors, at least two of which must be members of the exclusive bargaining representatives that represent counselors;
- one student;
- one member representing the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC);
- two presidents from two CTCs, or the presidents' designees; and
- one vice president of student services and one vice president of instruction.

The task force is staffed by the SBCTC and must make findings and recommendations by November 1, 2020. The findings must include data of each CTC's student-to-counselor ratio.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	72	24
Senate	30	16

**Effective:** July 28, 2019