

Wilmington, Delaware
April 4, 2019

#4634

WHEREAS, research indicates that one in five youth experience a mental health

Sponsor:

disorder, described as serious deviations from expected cognitive, social and emotional development; and

**Council
President
Shabazz**

WHEREAS, the prevalence of certified mental health illness among children is a

Co-Sponsors:

critical issue due to the effects on the child, their family and the community. Amply documented evidence confirms that early intervention and prevention can help to address a child's behavioral and mental needs before symptoms exacerbate into more detrimental social, emotional or academic behaviors or activities; and

**Council
Members
Harlee
McCoy
Gray
Oliver**

WHEREAS, increasing the ratio of certified school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and school nurses to students to minimally meet research-based best practices, would provide students more individual attention for academic or social guidance, early detection of learning problems and difficulties, and mental health service referrals and support; and

WHEREAS, without adequate resources to support our students, these challenges manifest as frequent and at times, severe disruptions in school that take impact learning and affect all our students; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that when mental health prevention and intervention programs are coordinated with families and communities, they are likely to be more effective than stand-alone programs. A strong and trusting relationship among providers, certified school-based mental health professionals, school administrators, educators and parents is

essential to support positive student mental, behavioral, interpersonal and academic outcomes;
and

WHEREAS, leading counseling and mental health organizations, including the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the School Social Worker Association of America recommend that schools maintain all of the following:

- a) A maximum student to school counselor ratio of 250 to 1
- b) A maximum student to school social worker ratio of 250 to 1
- c) A student to school psychologist ratio of 500-700 to 1

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that City Council and its constituent associations urge state and local policymakers and school districts to employ research-based best practice ratios of certified school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, who are the most qualified professionals to provide school-based mental health services to students.

Passed by City Council,

Attest: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution calls upon the Delaware General Assembly to enact legislation employing research-based best practice ratios of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers. Nearly 90% of Delaware elementary schools do not employ a school social worker, and ratios of students to school counselors and school psychologists far exceed national best practices. As youth spend a large amount of time in school settings, it is imperative that state and local policies prioritize the use of school-based mental health interventions, services and personnel to ensure all children, youth and their families can reach their fullest potential.