

14 March 2023

Life Skills Advisors—LiSA

Suggestions for changes to Bill draft (88R 9080).

Representative Armando Martinez
Chief of Staff, Scott Jenkins
Legislative Director, Nallely Najera

Replace the term Counselor with Advisor.

Our proposal is titled Life Skills Advisors.

In Texas the ratio is one counselor for about 450 students. Professionals have testified in House committees on the workload counselors carry, and point out that they are burdened by redundant paperwork and data entry and have limited time to meet with a student.

A counselor is required to have a master's degree. A teacher can be an advisor.

About Advisors

Would relieve some of the load from counselors. In particular students with disruptive behavior, provide techniques to ease and relax tension, assist students identified with mental health problems and help them access resources.

Advisors trained on:

- conflict resolution
- schedule and adjustments
- curriculum on health and safety
- conducting life skills circles
- collaborating with local authorities and service providers.

Advisor as First Responder

This topic in the LiSA proposal is not addressed in the bill draft.

Scuffles and fights do break out among students. When this happens the campus police step in and many times the situation escalates and the student ends up with a police record. In such a situation an advisor would handle it differently. An advisor is known by students, and trained to calm and de-escalate conflicts, and assist students to resolve differences. Police are not trained to do this.

Schedule Adjustments

This topic in the LiSA proposal is not addressed in the bill draft.

Stress is produced by a hectic school schedule. An advisor would help identify the students stress points in their schedule and recommend adjustments.

Curriculum on Health and Safety

An advisor would conduct a class based on a mental health and safety curriculum developed by Texas Education Agency.

Life Skills Circles

An advisor would oversee and moderate Life Skills Circles.

'Harden'

This topic in the LiSA proposal is not addressed in the bill draft.

There are always too many police officers and security guards on campus which creates a sense of being overwhelmed. This cost and security hardware is significant. We ask what is this cost used to prevent?

We believe that students need to be part of the solution concerning school safety.

Respectfully Submitted By:

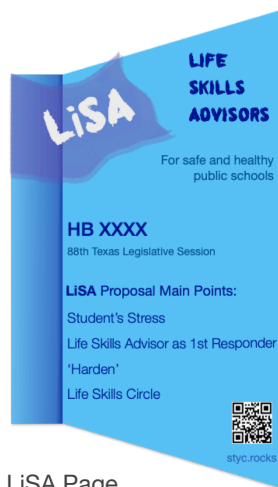
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