A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO FUND ADDITIONAL SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PERSONNEL
IN RESPONSE TO ANTICIPATED GREATER NEED DUE TO IMPACTS FROM THE
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019.

Whereas, social-emotional support provided by school psychologists, school social
workers, and school counselors can enhance students’ ability to succeed in school and in the
community; and

Whereas, beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, school psychologists, school social
workers, and school counselors will be tasked with providing social-emotional support to
students, faculty, and staff due to public safety measures that have been put in place as a result
of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic; and

Whereas, in prior years, there have been insufficient funds to meet the needs of
students by (i) supporting school mental health support personnel in North Carolina public
schools and (ii) employing school mental health support personnel at nationally recommended
ratios; and

Whereas, it is a top priority of the General Assembly to respond to the increased need
for social-emotional support of North Carolina public school students in these challenging times;
Now, therefore,
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
Public Instruction the sum of four hundred eighty million dollars ($480,000,000) in recurring
funds for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to increase the Instructional Support Allotment. These funds
shall be used to establish a tiered system of support for students by increasing positions for the
following school mental health support personnel in order to meet the following statewide ratios:

(1) At least one school psychologist for every 700 students.
(2) At least one school counselor for every 250 students.
(3) At least one school social worker for every 400 students.

SECTION 1.(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the funds provided
pursuant to subsection (a) of this section will supplement and not supplant any funds already
provided for school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers.

SECTION 2.(a) The provisions of the State Budget Act, Chapter 143C of the
General Statutes, are reenacted and shall remain in full force and effect and are incorporated in
this act by reference.

SECTION 2.(b) Except where expressly repealed or amended by this act, the
provisions of any other legislation enacted during the 2019 Regular Session of the General
Assembly expressly appropriating funds to an agency, a department, or an institution covered under this act, shall remain in effect.

SECTION 2.(c) If House Bill 966, 2019 Regular Session, becomes law, and any provision of that act or a provision of the Committee Report described in Section 42.2 of that act conflicts with this act, this act shall control.

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2020.