
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: MS ASSOCIATION OF COUNSELORS: NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION
DATE 3/24/03

Pursuant to their concerns regarding professional standards being set by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, I met with a delegation of school counselors, including Peggy Caldwell their Executive Director, to address these concerns.

Current law (37-19-7) provides that any licensed school counselor who has earned a National Certified School Counselor endorsement and is employed in a local district is eligible for the \$6,000 annual salary supplement (just like National Board Certified Teachers). However, the section also states that *“the salary supplement authorized under this item shall be discontinued 2 years after the date on which the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers a certification process for a Master Teacher certificate for school counselors, and any school counselor receiving the salary supplement will be required to complete the Master Teacher certificate process under item (i) (which is the NBPTS process) in order to continue receiving such salary supplement.”*

Counselors do not want their supplement contingent on passing NBPTS standards:

- Counselors already have their own developed set of standards (National Certified School Counselor endorsement) that are more stringent than NBPTS drafted standards.
- NBPTS’ draft standards for counselors refer to “teachers,” rather than “counselors.” The counselors said that teacher standards are being cut and pasted into standards for counselors. The fields are entirely different. The counselors compared this to pediatricians developing standards for cardiovascular surgeons.
- Process fees for a National Certified School Counselor are cheaper than those for NBPTS certification. Thus, if counselors must earn NBPTS certification, the state will pay more in reimbursements to counselors.

I explained that it appears as if they simply need to have Section 37-19-7 amended to delete the sentence in italics above. I also explained that they will need to educate members of the Legislature as to their concerns and their position, but that this could be delayed due to elections, turnover among legislators, and uncertainty as to committee membership next year. I assured them that I’ll assist them in whatever way possible. I think amending current law will address counselors’ concerns, while not distracting from your membership on the NBPTS, as current language was drafted by Mississippi lawmakers, not by NBPTS.

Please advise if you wish me to handle differently. Thanks!