

6164.2 Guidance/Counseling Services

The Governing Board recognizes that a structured, coherent, and comprehensive counseling program promotes academic achievement and growth, and serves the diverse needs of district students. The district shall provide an educational counseling program that offers students services and supports within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, in accordance with law. Counseling staff shall be available to provide students with individualized reviews of their educational progress toward academic and/or career and vocational goals and, as appropriate, may discuss social, personal, or other issues that may impact student learning and well-being.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all persons employed to provide direct school counseling, school psychology, school social work services, child welfare and attendance services, and/or to implement equitable school programs and services that support students' academic and social and emotional development and college and career readiness possess the appropriate credential from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing authorizing their employment in such positions. Responsibilities of such positions shall be clearly defined in a job description.

Responsibilities of school counselors include, but are not limited to:

1. Engaging with, advocating for, and providing all students with direct services, such as individual counseling, group counseling, risk assessment, crisis response, and instructional services, including mental health and behavioral, academic, and postsecondary educational services, and indirect services, including but not limited to, positive school climate strategies, teacher and parent/guardian consultations, and referrals to public and private community services.
2. Planning, implementing, and evaluating school counseling programs.
3. Working within a MTSS that uses multiple data sources to monitor and improve student behavior, attendance, engagement, and achievement.
4. Developing, coordinating, and supervising comprehensive student support systems in collaboration with teachers, administrators, other pupil personnel services professionals, families, community partners, and community agencies, including county mental health agencies.
5. Promoting and maintaining a safe learning environment for all students by providing restorative practices, positive behavior interventions, and support services, and by developing and responding with a variety of intervention strategies to meet individual group, and school community needs before, during, and after a crisis.
6. Intervening to ameliorate school-related problems, including problems related to chronic absences and retention.
7. Using research-based strategies to promote mental wellness, reduce mental health stigma, and to identify characteristics, risk factors, and warning signs of students who develop, or are at risk of developing, mental health and behavioral disorders and who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, mistreatment, including mistreatment related to any form of conflict or bullying.
8. Improving school climate and student well-being by addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of students during a period of transition, separation, heightened stress, and critical changes, accessing community programs and services to meet those needs, and providing other appropriate services.

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9. Enhancing students' social and emotional competence, character, health, civic engagement, cultural literacy, and commitment to lifelong learning and the pursuit of high-quality educational programs.
10. Providing counseling services for unduplicated students who are classified as English learners, eligible for free and reduced-priced meals, foster youth, and/or experiencing homelessness, including interventions and support services that enhance equity and access to appropriate education systems and public and private services.
11. Engaging in continued development as a professional school counselor.

Educational and Career Counseling

No counselor shall unlawfully discriminate against any student. Guidance counseling regarding school programs and career, vocational, or higher education opportunities shall not be differentiated on the basis of any protected category specified in law or Board Policy 0410 – Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities.

Additionally, counselors shall affirmatively explore with a student the possibility of careers, or courses leading to careers, that are nontraditional for that student's sex. (Education Code 221.5)

For assessing or counseling students, the district shall not use testing or other materials that permit or require impermissible or unlawful differential treatment of students.

Personal or Mental Health Counseling

A school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker may provide individualized personal, mental health, or family counseling to students in accordance with the specialization(s) authorized by their credential. Such services may include, but are not limited to, support related to the student's social and emotional development, behavior, substance abuse, mental health assessment, depression, or mental illness. As appropriate, students and their parents/guardians shall be informed about community agencies, organizations, or health care providers that offer qualified professional assistance.

Written parent/guardian consent shall be obtained before mental health counseling or treatment services are provided to a student, except when the student is authorized to consent to the service pursuant to Family Code 6924, Health and Safety Code 124260, or other applicable law.

Any information of a personal nature disclosed to a school counselor by a student age 12 years or older or by the student's parent/guardian is confidential and shall not become part of the student record without the written consent of the person who disclosed the confidential information. The information shall not be revealed, released, discussed, or referred to except under the limited circumstances specified in Education Code 49602. (Education Code 49602)

A counselor shall consult with the Superintendent or designee and, as appropriate, with the district's legal counsel whenever there is uncertainty regarding how to respond to a student's personal problem or when questions arise regarding the possible release of confidential information regarding a student.

Crisis Counseling

The Board recognizes the need for a prompt and effective response when students are confronted with a traumatic incident. School counselors shall assist in the development of the emergency and disaster

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preparedness plan, and other prevention and intervention practices designed to assist students and parents/guardians before, during, and after a crisis.

Early identification and intervention plans shall be developed to help identify those students who may be at risk for violence so that support may be provided before they engage in violent or disruptive behavior.

Additionally, the Superintendent or designee shall identify crisis counseling resources to train district staff in effective threat assessment, appropriate response techniques, and/or methods to directly help students cope with a crisis if it occurs.

Teacher-Based Advisory Program

The Board recognizes that a supportive, ongoing relationship with a caring adult can provide a student with valuable advice, enhance student-teacher relationships, and build the student's feelings of connectedness with the school. The Board authorizes the development of a teacher-based advisory program in which teachers advise students in such areas as academic planning, character development, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. Any teacher participating in this program shall be under the supervision of a credentialed school counselor as appropriate, receive related information and training, and be subject to law and this Board policy, including requirements pertaining to student confidentiality and nondiscrimination.

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