GUIDANCE/COUNSELING SERVICES

The Board of Education recognizes that a structured, coherent, and comprehensive counseling program promotes academic achievement, and serves the diverse needs of all 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 school counseling, school psychology, and/or school social work services to students, and/or implement school programs and services that support students' academic and social emotional development and college and career readiness shall possess the appropriate credential from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing authorizing their employment in such positions. Responsibilities of each position 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 consultations, and information regarding public and private community services

2. Planning, implementing, and evaluating school counseling programs

3. Working within a MTSS structure that uses data to monitor and improve student behavior, attendance, and achievement

4. Coordinating 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 positive behavior interventions and support services

6. Intervening to ameliorate school-related problems, including problems related to chronic absences

7. Using research-based strategies to promote mental wellness, reduce mental health stigma related to any form of conflict or bullying

8. Improving school climate and student well-being by addressing student needs

9. Providing counseling services for students who are classified as English learners, or foster youth, homeless children, and students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals, including interventions and support services that enhance access to services

10. Engaging in continued development as a professional school counselor
Educational And Career Counseling

Beginning in grade 7, parents/guardians shall receive a general notice at least once before career counseling and course selection so that they may participate in the counseling sessions and decisions. (Education Code 221.5)

The educational counseling program shall include academic counseling in the following areas (Education Code 49600):

1. Development and implementation, with parent/guardian involvement, of the student's immediate and long-range educational plans
2. Optimizing progress towards achievement of proficiency standards
3. Completion of the required curriculum in accordance with the student's needs, abilities, interests, and aptitudes
4. Academic planning for access and success in higher education programs, including advisement on courses needed for admission to colleges and universities, standardized admissions tests, and financial aid
5. Career counseling in which students are assisted in doing all of the following:
   a. Planning for the future, including, but not limited to, identifying personal interests, skills, and abilities, career planning, course selection, and career transition
   b. Becoming aware of personal preferences and interests that influence educational and occupational exploration, career choice, and career success
   c. Developing work self-efficacy for the changing work environment, the changing needs of the workforce, and the effect of work on lifestyle
   d. Understanding the relationship between academic achievement and career success, and the importance of maximizing career options
   e. Understanding the value of participating in career technical education pathways, programs, and certifications
   f. Understanding the need to develop essential employable skills and work habits
   g. Understanding entrance requirements to the Armed Forces of the United States, including the benefits of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test

The district's educational counseling program also may include, but not be limited to, identification of students who are at risk of not graduating with their peers, development of a list of coursework and experience necessary to assist students to satisfy the curricular requirements for college admission and successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment, and counseling regarding available options for students who fail to meet graduation requirements to continue with their education.

Policy Adopted: 05/03/07; 08/20/14; 08/24/16; 11/20/19; 6/28/23
The Superintendent or designee shall establish and maintain a program for all high school students subject to compulsory continuation education. (Education Code 48431)

As part of the district's educational counseling program, students may be offered mental and behavioral health services under which a student may receive prevention, intervention, short-term counseling services, and mental health related classroom instruction to reduce stigma and increase awareness of counseling support services.

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 BP 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities.

In addition, 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. (5 CCR 4931)

Colleges and prospective employers, including military recruiters, shall have the same access to students for recruiting purposes. (Education Code 49603; 10 USC 503; 20 USC 7908)

**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.

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 6920-6929, Health and Safety Code 124260, or other applicable law.

A counselor shall consult with the immediate supervisor and, as appropriate, with the district's legal counsel whenever unsure of 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 may assist in the development of the comprehensive school safety plan, emergency and disaster 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.

In addition, 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.