

Instruction

Guidance/Counseling Services

The Board of Education recognizes that a structured, coherent and comprehensive counseling program promotes academic achievement and growth, 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, school social work services, and/or implement equitable 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 support for 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 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 justice practices, positive behavior interventions, and support services, and by developing a variety of intervention strategies, and using those strategies, to meet individual, group, and school community needs before, during, and after a crisis.

Instruction

Guidance/Counseling Services

6. Intervening to ameliorate school-related problems, including issues related to chronic absences.
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.
9. Enhancing students' social and emotional competence, character, health, civic engagement, cultural legacy, and commitment to lifelong learning and the pursuit of high-quality educational programs.
10. Providing counseling services for unduplicated students 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 equity and access to appropriate education systems and public and private services.

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 and postsecondary services, 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 and competencies.
3. Completion of the required curriculum in accordance with the student's needs, abilities, interests, and aptitudes.

Instruction

Guidance/Counseling Services

4. Academic planning for access and success in higher education programs, including advisement on courses needed for admission to public colleges and universities, standardized admissions tests, and financial aid.
5. High-quality career programs at all grade levels 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 self-efficacy for the changing work environment, the changing needs of the workforce, and the effect of work on quality of life.
 - 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, including, but not limited to, those related to regional occupational centers, the federal program administered by the United States Department of Labor offering free education and vocational training to students, known as "Job Corps," the California Conservation Corps, work-based learning, industry certifications, college preparation and credit, and employment opportunities.
 - 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

Instruction

Guidance/Counseling Services

counseling regarding available options for students who fail to meet graduation requirements to continue with their graduation.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish and maintain a program of guidance, placement, and follow-up for all high school students subject to compulsory continuations 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 students the possibility of careers, or courses leading to careers, that are nontraditional for that students' 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. (See BP/AR 5125.1 regarding the release of directory information.)

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with businesses, government agencies, postsecondary institutions including universities and career technical schools, community organizations, and/or other employers to provide students with actual or simulated work-based learning opportunities through college and/or career fairs.

When planning to hold a college or career fair, the Superintendent or designee shall notify each apprenticeship program in the county. The notification shall include the planned date, time and location of the college or career fair. (Labor Code 3074.2)

Personal or Mental Health Counseling

Instruction

Guidance/Counseling Services

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 6920-6929, 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 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 shall 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.

Teacher-Based Advisory Program

Instruction

Guidance/Counseling Services

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 this Board policy and law, including requirements pertaining to student confidentiality and nondiscrimination.

Legal Reference: Education Code, Sections 221.5; 44266; 48431; 49600-49604; 51250-51251; 51513
Family Code, Sections 6920-6929
Government Code, Section 6254
Health and Safety Code, Section 124260
Labor Code, Section 3074.2
Penal Code, Sections 11166-11170
Welfare and Institutions Code, Sections 5850-5883
Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 4930-4931; 80049-80049.1; 80632-80632.5
United States Code, Title 10, Section 503
United States Code, Title 20, Sections 1232g; 7908
Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Sections 99.1-99.67

Policy Adopted: 09/05/2017

Policy Amended: 04/04/2023