

**FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION****Instruction  
GUIDANCE/COUNSELING SERVICES**

The County Superintendent and County Board recognize that a structured, coherent and comprehensive counseling program promotes academic achievement and growth, and serves the diverse needs of all students of County Superintendent/County Board schools. County Superintendent/County Board students are provided 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 County 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 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 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 issues related to chronic absences and retention.

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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 who are classified as English learners, eligible for free or 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**

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.
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. High-quality career programs at all grade levels in which students are assisted in doing all of the following:

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- 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 ever-changing work environment, the changing needs of the workforce, and the effects 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 programs and 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 County Superintendent'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.

The County Superintendent or designee shall establish and maintain a program of guidance, placement, and follow-up for all high school students subject to compulsory continuation education. (Education Code 48431)

As part of the 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 law or SP/BP 0410 - Nondiscrimination in County Superintendent and County Board Programs and Activities.

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In addition, counselors shall affirmatively explore with students 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 County Superintendent shall not use testing or other materials that permit or require impermissible or unlawful differential treatment of students, unless such different materials cover the same occupations and interest areas and the use of such materials is essential to the elimination of bias and discrimination. (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)

The County Superintendent or designee may 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 County 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)

Additionally, the County Superintendent or designee shall provide the notification to any community college district that has overlapping jurisdiction with the County Superintendent and an opportunity for the community college district to participate in the college or career fair. (Education Code 52770)

**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)

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A counselor shall consult with the County Superintendent or designee and, as appropriate, with the County Superintendent'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 County Superintendent and County Board recognize 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 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 County Superintendent or designee shall identify crisis counseling resources to train County Superintendent 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 County Superintendent and County Board recognize 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 County Superintendent 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 County Superintendent/County Board policy and law, including requirements pertaining to student confidentiality and nondiscrimination.

Adopted: 12/08/2011

Amended: 11/19/2020, 06/15/2023, 11/21/2024

**Legal Reference****Education Code**

221.5 Prohibited sex discrimination

44266 Pupil personnel services credential

48431 Establishing and maintaining high school guidance and placement program

49600-49604 Educational counseling

51250-51251 School age military dependents

51513 Personal beliefs

52770 College and career fairs; community college districts

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Family Code

6920-6930 Consent by minor for treatment or counseling

Government Code

7927.700 Exemption for personnel records if invasion of personal privacy

Health & Safety Code

124260 Mental health services; consent by minors age 12 and older

Labor Code

3074.2 College and career fairs; notice to apprenticeship programs

Penal Code

11166-11170 Reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse

Welfare and Institutions Code

5850-5883 Mental Health Services Act

Code of Regulations, Title 5

4930-4931 Counseling

80049-80049.1 Pupil personnel services credential

80632-80632.5 Preparation programs for pupil personnel services

United States Code, Title 10

503 Military recruiter access to directory information

United States Code, Title 20

1232g Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

7908 Armed forces recruiter access to students and student recruiting information

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34

99.1-99.67 Family educational rights and privacy

**Management Resources**

California Department of Education Publications

California Results-Based School Counseling and Student Support Guidelines, 2007

United States Department of Education Publications

Protecting Student Privacy: Frequently Asked Questions

Websites

California Division of Apprenticeship Standards: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/das/>

American School Counselor Association: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

California Association of School Counselors: <https://www.schoolcounselor-ca.org/>

Commission on Teacher Credentialing: <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/>