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AB-2508 Pupil services: educational counseling. (2021-2022)

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Date Published: 08/19/2022 02:00 PM

Assembly Bill No. 2508

CHAPTER 153

An act to amend Section 49600 of the Education Code, relating to pupil services.

[Approved by Governor August 18, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State August 18, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2508, Quirk-Silva. Pupil services: educational counseling.

Existing law authorizes the governing board of a school district to provide a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils enrolled in the school district. Existing law states the intent of the Legislature that school counselors provide a variety of services for all pupils. Existing law requires educational counseling to include academic counseling in specified areas. Existing law authorizes educational counseling to also include counseling in certain areas. Existing law defines "educational counseling" for these purposes.

This bill would urge the governing board of a school district to provide access to a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils enrolled in the school district. The bill would revise and recast the Legislative intent provision on the services of school counselors. The bill would require educational counseling to also include certain postsecondary services and would revise and recast those areas that educational counseling is required to include. The bill would revise and recast those areas that educational counseling is authorized to include. The bill would revise the definition of "educational counseling" for these purposes.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 49600 of the Education Code is amended to read:

49600. (a) The governing board of a school district may, and is urged to, provide access to a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils enrolled in the school district. It is the intent of the Legislature that a school district that provides educational counseling to its pupils implement a structured and coherent counseling program within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support framework.

(b) For purposes of this section, "educational counseling" means specialized services provided by a school counselor possessing a valid credential with a specialization in pupil personnel services who directly counsels pupils and implements equitable school programs and services that support pupils in their academic development, social emotional development, and college and career readiness.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that school counselors do all of the following:

(1) Engage with, advocate for, and provide both of the following services for all pupils:

(A) Direct services, including, but not limited to, individual counseling, group counseling, risk assessment, crisis response, and instructional services, including, but not limited to, mental health, behavioral, academic, and postsecondary educational services.

(B) Indirect services, including, but not limited to, positive school climate strategies, teacher and parent consultations, and referrals to public and private community services.

(2) Plan, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs.

(3) Work within multi-tiered systems of support that use multiple data sources to monitor and improve pupil behavior, attendance, engagement, and achievement.

(4) Develop, coordinate, and supervise comprehensive pupil support systems in collaboration with teachers, administrators, other pupil personnel services professionals, families, community partners, and community agencies, including county mental health agencies.

(5) Promote and maintain a safe learning environment for all pupils 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 crisis response.

(6) Intervene to ameliorate school-related problems, including problems related to chronic absences and retention.

(7) Use research-based strategies to promote mental wellness, reduce mental health stigma, and identify characteristics, risk factors, and warning signs of pupils 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) Improve school climate and pupil well-being by, including, but not limited to, addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of pupils during their times of transition, separation, heightened stress, and critical changes, and accessing community programs and services to meet those needs.

(9) Enhance pupils' social and emotional competence, character, health, civic engagement, cultural literacy, and commitment to lifelong learning and the pursuit of high-quality educational programs.

(10) Provide counseling services for unduplicated pupils who are classified as English learners, eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or foster youth in a manner that promotes equity and access to appropriate education systems and public and private services.

(11) Engage in continued development as a professional school counselor.

(d) Educational counseling shall include academic counseling and postsecondary services, in the following areas:

(1) Development and implementation, with parental involvement, of the pupil'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 pupil'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) Provide high-quality career programs at all grade levels for pupils, in which pupils 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 ever-changing work environment, the changing needs of the workforce, and the effects of work on the 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 pupils, 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.

(e) Educational counseling may also include counseling in any of the following:

(1) Individualized review of the academic and department records of a pupil.

(2) Advising pupils, in consultation with their parents and legal guardians when at all possible, who are at risk of not promoting or graduating with the rest of their class.

(3) Developing a list of coursework and experience necessary to assist each pupil in middle school to successfully transition to high school and meet all graduation requirements.

(4) In schools that enroll pupils in grades 6 to 12, inclusive, developing a list of coursework and experience necessary to assist and counsel each pupil to begin to satisfy the A–G requirements for admission to the University of California and the California State University and encourage participation in college preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, and early college, dual enrollment, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate programs.

(5) Developing pupil knowledge of financial aid planning for postsecondary education by providing pupils with financial aid information, including, but not limited to, information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the California Dream Act application (CADAA), the Cal Grant Program established pursuant to Chapter 1.7 (commencing with Section 69430) of Part 42 of Division 5 of Title 3, local and national scholarship programs, financial aid programs and resources for foster and homeless youth, fee waiver programs, and other financial aid programs and options, and net college cost.

(6) Providing a copy of the lists developed pursuant to paragraph (4) to a pupil and the pupil's parent or legal guardian, ensuring that the list of coursework and experience is part of the pupil's cumulative record.

(7) Developing a list of coursework and experience for a pupil enrolled in grade 12, including options for continuing the pupil's education if the pupil fails to meet graduation requirements. These options shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Enrolling in an adult education program.

(B) Enrolling in a community college.

(C) Continuing enrollment in the pupil's current school district.

(8) Providing a copy of the list of coursework and experiences developed pursuant to paragraph (7) to the pupil and the pupil's parent or legal guardian, ensuring that the list of coursework and experience is part of the cumulative records of a pupil.

(9) Offering and scheduling an individual conference with each pupil in grades 10 and 12 who has not satisfied, or is not on track to satisfy, the curricular requirements for admission to the University of California and the California State University and to successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment, and providing the following information to the pupil and the pupil's parent or legal guardian:

(A) The score of the pupil on the English language arts or mathematics portion of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, established pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 60640) of Chapter 5 of Part 33, administered in grade 6, as applicable.

(B) The availability of financial aid for postsecondary education.

(10) Providing mental and behavioral health services to which pupils receive prevention, early intervention, and short-term counseling services and receive classroom instruction in mental health to reduce stigma and increase awareness of counseling support services.

(11) Providing training to school staff to recognize mental health warning signs.

(f) This section does not prohibit persons participating in an organized advisory program approved by the governing board of a school district, and supervised by a school district counselor, from advising pupils pursuant to the organized advisory program.