



“Promoting Academic Success for Every Student”
A Division of the American School Counseling Association

February 19, 2020

Dear Local Education Agency Leaders,

We are providing this letter in support of students, parents, staff, and other community members advocating for the prioritization of funds for school counselors and other Pupil Personnel Service (PPS) positions. We urge you to invest in such positions to support student achievement, student engagement, school climate, and other outcome areas that are priorities under California’s Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP).

School counseling is an evidence-based practice that supports all students in grades PreK-12. School counselors understand the science of child development and focus on improving all aspects of the educational system to support the “whole child”. They provide mental health services to high needs students. They are the only credential professionals specifically trained to provide evidence-based practices to guide students in making informed decision regarding college, career technical education and career. If they were to have a motto, it would be, “all students deserve equitable treatment to leverage all services to help them be successful in school and in life”.

Experts recommend that there be at least one 1 school counselor for every 250 students. The average ratio in your district far exceeds this number, and this has a detrimental impact on your students.

Here are reasons why your district *must* invest in school counselors.

- School counselors are well-equipped to intervene early with students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. They provide interventions to mitigate underlying issues effecting students such as attendance issues, behavior problems including isolation, discipline, and anxiety and with students who are victims of school or family trauma.
- School counselors are best qualified to facilitate small group counseling on a variety of issues including but not limited to substance abuse, grief and loss, trauma, chronic absenteeism and academic success.
- School counselors analyze problematic trends that impact the entire school community and initiate system-change to improve school climate (i.e., inequities, social media, safety, bullying, family factors, poverty). They provide school engagement strategies and create positive learning environment.
- School counselors provide guidance to students in completing courses to satisfy graduation requirements and entrance to the University of California and the California State University, or career technical education sequences or clusters of courses that satisfy the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 52302, subdivision (a) of Section 52372.5, or paragraph (2) of subdivision (e) of Section 54692, and align with State Board-approved career technical education standards and frameworks.
- School counselors intercede with specific needs within the unduplicated student population including children/youth who are in the foster care system, English learners and low-income youth.



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California has some of the highest students-to-school counselor ratios in the nation, and we’ve included a list of the districts with the highest ratios for the 2018-19 school year according to CA Department of Education data.

If your district is on this list and/or is on the list of districts engaging in unlawful LCFF spending according to the recent ACLU report, we urge you to take swift and significant action. The tools you choose to equip your schools with influences the quality of students and scholars that you will produce. Prioritizing funds for police and security over school counselors contributes to the School-to-Prison Pipeline and is not an evidence-based practice. We hope that you would comply with the law by investing in evidence-based practices and allowing the voices of students and community members to inform local funding. We look forward to receiving updates from our members. Please check out our website at www.schoolcounselor-ca.org for additional resources.



The California Association of School Counselors Inc. (CASC) is a nonprofit membership organization representing over 10,000 school counselors working in California schools.

They are the largest state school counseling association in the nation, providing leadership in advancing the work of school counselors and in leading the profession in providing quality service for ALL California pupils.

Relevant Research - School Counseling: *The effectiveness of school counseling is well documented in research. Hiring school counselors is a cost-effective measure in overall improvements in student behavior and higher graduation rates. Several studies point to the benefits associated with regular access to a school counselor, particularly with students most in need of interventions and support in high-poverty districts (Carrell & Carell, 2006; Dvorsky, 2014; Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley & Pierce, 2012; McIntosh, 2010; Wood, 2013). Students in districts with the adequate school counseling staff beginning in kindergarten, produced higher graduation rates, higher college entrance and persistence rates, lower chronic absenteeism rates, and fewer out-of-school suspensions (Parzych, Donohue, Gaesser, & Chiu, 2019). School counselors providing college and career planning results in increases in Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications, and increased college attendance, which are critical gateways to postsecondary access. (Dunlop Velez, 2016; Radford, Ifill, & Lew, 2016).*



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