



# SUPPORT SB 426 (LUCIO)

The purpose of SB 426 is to increase students' access to the professional school counselor(s) assigned to their campus. While SB 426 sets a goal of at least 80% of school counselor time dedicated to the delivery of comprehensive school counseling programs as set forth in Chapter 33 of the Education Code, it allows each district to establish its own standard.

Students, parents and teachers all recommended during the interim hearings and round tables on school safety, that increased access to school counselors is an essential solution to improve campus climate and increase student safety. SB 426 addresses their recommendations.

## ABOUT THIS BILL

- School counselors hold a master's degree and have a minimum of two years of classroom teaching experience. They are not “just” school counselors but classroom teachers and mental health professionals as well. Allowing them to focus 80% of their schedule working directly with students to deliver comprehensive school counseling programs just makes fiscal sense.
- Everyone on a campus is called upon to do their “fair share” to support campus needs. SB 426 helps ensure that fair share duties assigned to school counselors do not interfere with the direct school counseling services students require.
- SB 426 does not mandate that every district adopt an 80% policy. It does not mandate that school districts hire more school counselors. SB 426 simply requires that each school district be intentional on how they utilize the expertise, experience and resources that school counselors bring to each campus. Conversations about campus staffing occur during every budget cycle which is when a policy on school counselor time could be adopted by a district.
- SB 426 only requires that each school board has a good conversation and establishes the best policies to “increase student and staff safety on campus and recognize the unique characteristics of each district.”
- School Safety is the third item on TASB's Advocacy Agenda Priorities, specifically calling on the Legislature “to identify, fund and implement measures – including increased support for counseling services . . . that increase student and staff safety on campus and recognize the unique characteristics of each district.”
- The opt-out clause in SB 426 is specifically designed to address concerns raised in prior sessions by TASB about the need for local school boards to determine the best model for their districts.

### SCHOOL COUNSELORS & COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

- Improve campus climate
- Increase student safety



# The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs is set forth in Chapter 33 of the Education Code. It has been endorsed in the Long-Range Plan for Public Education adopted by the State Board of Education.

**Comprehensive school counseling programs are designed to address the specific and unique needs of a campus or district, with input from administration, parents, faculty and students, and include these four components:**

- Classroom Guidance taught in units in the classroom through differentiated, developmental learning activities with planned lessons for various sized groups of students on an array of topics, including but not limited to safety, character, career options, anti-bullying, etc.
- Individual Planning to guide all students as they plan, monitor, and manage their individual educational, career, personal and social development; and to provide parents and guardians information on postsecondary options
- Responsive Services to intervene on behalf of students whose immediate personal concerns or circumstances put their continued educational, career, personal and social development at risk. Based on level of need, responsive services may be preventive, remedial or crisis-oriented; and
- System Support to identify and coordinate resources and activities on campus and in the community that indirectly benefit students.



How much time a school counselor spends on each component – and on fair share duties – depends on the unique needs of the campus or district.



School counselors create weekly, monthly, semester and annual calendars which can be used to appropriately and effectively allocate their time, not only on directly working with students but on administrative duties as well.



Research has documented that campuses that offer comprehensive school counseling programs see fewer disciplinary referrals, improved academic performance, increased participation in postsecondary opportunities, positive campus climates, as well as reports from staff and students that they feel safer and more optimistic.

## PLEASE SUPPORT SB 426