

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

**Position Statement on the
Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework
2020**

Adopted on October 7, 2020

As outlined in the Connecticut State Board of Education’s (Board) Five-year Comprehensive Plan, 2016-21: *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*, the promise of an excellent public education is to equip every child, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, family wealth, zip code, or disability status, with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college, careers and civic life. Students succeed when they are offered challenging and rigorous programs of study that integrate the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to become productive members of society.

The Board believes that great schools are safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments where students’ academic, social-emotional, and career development needs are met, and students are healthy, joyous, and ready to learn. Efforts to improve school climate, safety and learning must exist through a comprehensive, cohesive schoolwide approach that supports interdisciplinary collaboration to meet the needs of the whole child.

The Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework (CCSCF) is a critical tool in helping schools and students meet academic, post-secondary and social-emotional goals. The CCSCF is planned and implemented in K-12 grade levels in collaboration with principals, school mental health providers, teachers, families, and community stakeholders to maximize the educational success of every student. In alignment with the district’s mission, the implementation of the CCSCF expects every student to be served equitably, based on informed data decision-making. This targeted work assists students in meeting academic standards and prepares every graduate to make informed decisions when choosing from an array of postsecondary options. The CCSCF is planned and delivered by a state-credentialed school counselor and is created from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model.

The Board aims to ensure that schools use the CCSCF to deliver a range of evidence-based supports, programs, and services to address student needs based on a systemwide approach, called a multi-tiered system of supports. The CCSCF ensures equitable access to services for all students and uses a variety of preventions and interventions to improve outcomes in student achievement, discipline, and attendance; assist students in overcoming barriers to learning; make strong connections with educational opportunities in schools; and include a developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on academic, social-emotional and career development for postsecondary readiness and success. The CCSCF has an equity focus to address the needs of historically marginalized and vulnerable students, but is also designed to support all student populations. School counseling programs, in onsite and virtual settings, ensure equitable access to opportunities for all students to participate fully in the educational process. The Board further recognizes that school counselors participate as members of the educational team and employ leadership, advocacy, and collaboration to promote systems and environments that support the school community.

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Guidelines for Policymakers

The Connecticut State Board of Education, in support of its Position Statement on the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework (CCSCF), offers the following guidelines to support the establishment of collaboration among various stakeholders to build a comprehensive learning system that supports the successful implementation of the CCSCF in Connecticut school districts. The CCSCF is a critical tool in supporting and ensuring successful schools and students.

Responsibilities of the State Department of Education

- Ensure dissemination of the CCSCF guidance to deliver a range of evidence-based supports, programs, and services to address student needs through a systemwide approach;
- Provide professional learning opportunities for school counselors to build, implement, and sustain the CCSCF;
- Provide opportunities for professional learning that will support continuous improvement toward cultural competence for school counselors;
- Promote and advance a systemic counseling approach that is strength-based;
- Provide leadership and technical assistance concerning the CCSCF; and
- Engage in a state-level process to identify resources to support school counseling services and the implementation of the CCSCF.

Responsibilities of Boards of Education and Superintendents of Schools

- Ensure the adoption and dissemination of the CCSCF guidance to deliver a range of evidence-based supports, programs, and services to address student needs based on a systemwide approach;
- Provide for a professional learning opportunity for school counselors to build, implement, and sustain the CCSCF;
- Provide opportunities for professional learning that will support continuous improvement toward cultural competence for school counselors;
- Support school counselors in the provision of direct services to students;
- Promote and advance a systemic counseling approach that is strength-based;
- Ensure alignment of curricular resources to support Tier I universal level school counseling lessons that address academic, social-emotional, and career development;
- Utilize the Student and Educator Support Specialist Evaluation (SESS) for the district's school counselor evaluation;
- Ensure alignment of school counselors' Student Learning Objectives and Indicators of Academic Growth and Development with district needs;

- Commit to increasing the diversity of school counselors in the district to reflect a diversity of race, ethnicity, native language, socio-economic status, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and abilities; and
- Engage in a process that considers federal, state and district resources for the implementation of the CCSCF.

Responsibilities of School Leaders

- Ensure the development and support for multidisciplinary teams including school leaders, teachers, student support personnel, school counselors, families, caregivers, and others from the community;
- Encourage school counselors to participate in problem-solving and decision making on school and leadership teams;
- Expect school counselors to develop action/implementation plans that are congruent with the goals of the school improvement plan;
- Expect school counselors to align their program vision, mission and goals to the school's vision, mission and goals;
- Make disaggregated school data available and accessible to school counselors;
- Provide regular feedback to the school counselors on their input in decision making that impacts school goals and initiatives;
- Ensure alignment of curricular resources to support Tier I universal level school counseling lessons that address academic, social-emotional, and career development; and
- Engage with families to assist them in being equal partners in their child's education.

Responsibilities of School Counselors

- Plan, implement, monitor, and assess the CCSCF to deliver a range of evidence-based supports, programs, and services to address student needs based on a systemwide approach;
- Establish a safe, inclusive, and positive school counseling environment that fosters student engagement, values student voice, and emphasizes proactive and positive interventions;
- Collaborate with stakeholders and multidisciplinary teams, other mental health providers, families, teachers, and the leadership team to problem-solve and make decisions;
- Align the CCSCF vision, mission, and goals to the school's vision, mission and goals;
- Utilize the Student and Educator Support Specialist Evaluation (SESS) or the district's school counselor evaluation tool(s) to evaluate performance;
- Align Student Learning Objectives and Indicators of Academic Growth and Development to district needs;
- Follow and use the Student Standards, School Counselor Standards, and Ethical Standards as a basis for all actions;
- Establish and teach clear and consistent classroom expectations, use classroom management strategies that are individualized, personalized, and culturally-competent, and reinforce good behavior;
- Respond to challenging behaviors with relevant support and consider own behavior and the presence of bias when working with and reacting to students;
- Plan, deliver and assess curricular resources to support Tier I universal level school counseling lessons that address academic, social-emotional, and career development;
- Participate in opportunities to shape school and district policies and practices;

- Participate in professional learning opportunities regarding school counseling and the CCSCF;
- Promote access to rigorous standards-based curriculum, academic courses, and learning paths for college and career for all students;
- Lead individual and small-group counseling that encourages students to make positive behavior choices and accept responsibility for their actions;
- Ensure an environment that is open to the provision of direct services to the majority of the students, based on need;
- Examine data on student outcomes and adjust practices as needed to promote the equitable implementation of supports and advocacy;
- Proactively communicate with families about learning expectations and student academic or behavioral performance;
- Develop positive relationships with families to promote student success by focusing on student strengths and strategies for overcoming obstacles when communicating with both students and families; and
- Engage with families to assist them in being equal partners in their child’s education.

Responsibilities of Higher Education Institutions and Teacher Preparation Programs

- Ensure the adoption and use of the CCSCF guidance to deliver a range of evidence-based supports, programs, and services to address student needs through a systemwide approach;
- Prepare pre-service school counselors to effectively create a positive counseling environment focusing on evidence-based, strength-based, and culturally-responsive approaches;
- Recruit and prepare students to serve as counselors and student support services personnel, with a focus on increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the workforce;
- Engage in an on-going improvement process in the development and delivery of school counselor preparation program curricula that addresses problems of practice in the field;
- Work diligently to support students with college and career readiness and opportunities, including historically marginalized and disproportionately underserved student populations;
- Keep the school community informed about relevant community resources;
- Address legal, ethical, and professional issues in pre-K–12 schools;
- Understand developmental theory, counseling theory, career-counseling theory, and racial and social justice theory;
- Understand mental health and the continuum of services, including prevention and intervention strategies for addressing academic, career, and social-emotional development to enhance academic and lifelong success for all students;
- Deliver effective instruction, appraisal, advisement, and counseling; and
- Guide the effective implementation and maintenance of the multi-tiered system of supports and the CCSCF.

Responsibilities of Families and Community Members

- Engage in two-way communication with school counseling staff to co-create a well-rounded picture of the student, as well as shared expectations and understanding of the CCSCF;
- Teach, model, and positively reinforce appropriate behavior and social skills;

- Seek out and use community resources, in collaboration with school staff and community providers, including positive youth development organizations or organizations that address the social-emotional and behavioral needs of youth;
- Advocate for opportunities to support students on college and career readiness and opportunities, historically marginalized and disproportionately underserved student populations; and
- Authentically engage with school leaders, educators and staff to be equal partners in children's education.

Responsibilities of Students (as developmentally appropriate)

- Commit to lifelong learning and engaging in enriching opportunities to increase knowledge and skills;
- Become knowledgeable about the academic, social, and behavioral expectations of your school and community;
- Seek out information, ask questions for clarity, and seek assistance from a trusted adult when support is needed;
- Treat peers, educators, family members, and community members with respect and empathy; and
- Participate in efforts to build a positive school climate.