

# Advocating for Equity Across All Levels of Government

DIMENSION 7:

## STUDENT SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS

**ALLIANCE FOR  
RESOURCE  
EQUITY**

Uniting advocates and education leaders  
to unlock excellence for every student



## DIMENSION 7:

# STUDENT SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS

**THE VISION:** Each student — including students of color and students with higher needs — has access to an effective integrated system of supports (which includes an accurate and unbiased identification process) to address their individualized, non-academic needs, so all students can reach high standards and thrive. Each student has access to meaningful guidance to set them up for success beyond high school.

### KEY QUESTION 7.1

**Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?**

## Federal

- **Congress** can:
  - Authorize, oversee and fund programs that help schools provide social-emotional support, such as:
    - Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support students from low-income backgrounds
    - ESSA Title II to support students who are English language learners
    - ESSA Title IV, which includes Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants and School Safety National Activities
    - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding for students with disabilities, which can be used to provide social-emotional support
  - Pass legislation that bans corporal punishment and puts strict limitations on the use of seclusion and restraint

## The US Department of Education can:

- Issue guidance and provide technical assistance, primarily to state education agencies, about how federal funding can and should be used to support students' social and emotional learning and well-being
- Issue guidance on policies and practices that center relationship-building and a whole child approach to best support social and emotional development

## State

### State legislatures can:

- Ban the use of practices that harm students' social and emotional well-being (e.g., corporal punishment, exclusionary discipline, discriminatory dress and grooming codes)
- Require districts to consider alternative forms of discipline (e.g., restorative practices)



- **State education agencies** can:
  - Set strategic goals to reduce disciplinary disparities along lines of race, gender, disability, income, and LGBTQ+ identity
  - Collect and publicly report disciplinary data
  - Distribute state funding designed to create and implement multi-tiered systems of support, which connect students with both universal and targeted resources to meet students' needs
  - Provide professional development opportunities to help teachers better identify and support students' social-emotional well-being and connect students to the targeted resources they need
  - Issue guidance to help schools integrate social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) supports

## School District

- **Local school boards** can:
  - Approve culturally affirming student dress codes and codes of conduct
  - Fund positive discipline practices that support social-emotional growth and multi-tiered systems of support to identify and support students with specific needs
  - Work with district administrators to establish channels for students and caregivers to dispute unfair discipline practices and advocate for themselves
- **School district administrators** can:

- Solicit student input on codes of conduct and dress codes
- Collect, analyze, and share data on school discipline rates by student group
- Provide professional development opportunities for school staff in positive discipline practices
- Implement only evidence-based and culturally affirming social-emotional programs and approaches ([see CASEL Program Guide](#))

## School

- **School leaders** can:
  - Decide how to implement discipline policies and social-emotional learning programs and how to support educators and other school staff in identifying and addressing student behavior and social-emotional needs
  - Engage students and families when creating and implementing school policies and practices in discipline and social-emotional learning
  - Establish positive school climate plans informed by evidence-based social-emotional learning resources and supports
  - Build partnerships with community organizations to support students' social, emotional, and academic development and well-being
- **Educators** decide when and how to use school discipline practices

## Does each student who needs targeted physical and mental health support receive it?

### Federal

- **The US Department of Education** issues guidance and provides technical assistance, primarily to state education agencies, about how federal education funds can and should be used to support students' physical and mental health

### State

- **State legislatures** can:
  - Ban corporal punishment, set limits on the use of practices such as seclusion, restraint, and exclusionary discipline that harm students' physical and mental health, and require districts to replace them with pro-social and restorative practices)
  - Require districts to monitor the progress and impacts of multi-tiered systems of support and make improvements informed by student data
  - Fund evidence-based practices that connect students with resources, such as multi-tiered systems of support
- **State education agencies** can:
  - Provide professional development opportunities to help school staff identify and support the mental health needs of students from diverse backgrounds

### School District

- **Local school boards** can determine codes of conduct and acceptable discipline practices and replace harmful practices with prosocial and restorative practices informed by research
- **School district administrators:**
  - Allocate resources to school districts, including staff and programming, and can provide additional support to high-need schools

- Provide professional development opportunities for school staff to help them identify mental health warning signs and navigate multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)
- Partner with community organizations to provide extra resources and support for students
- Establish norms, routines, and procedures that promote social-emotional learning in school and in the community, such as:
  - Expectations of student behavior developed and agreed upon through collaboration with diversely represented students, families, and educators
  - Procedures for addressing conflicts and unwanted behavior that are aligned to a restorative justice approach and prioritize repairing relationships over exclusionary or purely punitive measures
  - Evidence-based approaches to building relationships with students and creating positive, welcoming learning environments
  - Using data to inform which supports and services students receive

### School

- **School leaders:**
  - Decide how and when to connect students with district and community resources, including when to refer students to mental health supports
  - Maintain partnerships with community organizations, government agencies, and universities that provide support
- **Educators, school counselors, and other school staff** can recommend students for resources and support and/or refer students to professional services as needed

KEY QUESTION  
**7.3**

## Does each student who needs targeted family support receive it?

### Federal

- **Congress** authorizes, oversees, and funds programs for targeted family support, such as:
  - ESSA Title I, which sets aside funding for family and caregiver engagement
  - ESSA Title III to support students who are English learners
  - ESSA Title IV, which sets aside funds to support family engagement
  - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding to support students with disabilities
- **The US Department of Education:**
  - Issues guidance and provides technical assistance, primarily to state education agencies, about how federal education funds can and should be used to provide students with targeted family support
  - Oversees the use of Title I funding designated for meaningful family and caregiver engagement

### State

- **State legislatures** can:
  - Solicit family and community input in state-level decision-making by creating parent advisory councils or other state-level committees
  - Require teachers and school leaders to receive training in student, family, and community engagement and culturally sustaining pedagogy and practices to provide students and families with individualized supports as part of certification

- Allow flexibility in state policies that prevent schools from being able to create student groupings and student/staff schedules that match unique contexts and family needs

- **State education agencies** can:

- Set, and publicly report progress toward, strategic goals to improve family engagement and support
- Establish statewide offices of student, family, and community engagement that provide trainings, supports, and targeted interventions to help identify specific needs and provide families with individualized supports
- Develop evidence-based resources for districts and schools on family and community engagement and targeting supports to families and communities, including information on funding, best practices, and implementation
- Offer professional development to districts or schools focused on student, family, and community engagement, and culturally sustaining practices to provide students and families with individualized supports

### School District

- **Local school boards** can create space for caregivers and community members to voice their opinions on upcoming school board decisions
- **School district administrators** can:
  - Establish systems for family and community engagement that honor the voices of families and caregivers and inform school leaders about their specific needs
  - Hire staff or partner with community organizations to ensure families have access to community resources that meet their specific needs

## School

- **School leaders** can:
  - Determine how and when to engage families and caregivers and solicit input on school-level decisions
  - Partner with community organizations to provide caregivers with holistic supports

- **Educators** can:
  - Decide how and when to engage families in decisions about their students' experiences and individualized support plans
  - Integrate families and communities to create culturally affirming classroom experiences

### KEY QUESTION

## 7.4

### Does each student have access to effective guidance to support postsecondary success?

## Federal

- **Congress** can:
  - Authorize, oversee and fund programs that support a well-rounded education, such as:
    - Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which provides funding for The Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program and School Safety National Activities program
    - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides funding to support students with disabilities
    - The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, which helps states expand career advising
  - Incentivize states to recruit, retain, and support educators and school leaders of color, including school counselors through funding for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), minority-serving Institutions (MSIs) and tribal colleges

- **The US Department of Education:**
  - Distributes federal education funding to states and monitors states' distribution of those funds to school districts
  - Issues guidance, regulations and technical assistance to districts to help provide college preparation students who are experiencing homelessness
  - Issues guidance and technical assistance to ensure counselors provide indirect and direct services to students with disabilities

## State

- **State legislatures** can:
  - Work with state education agencies to determine credential requirements and mandatory continuing education for school counselors
  - Work with state education agencies to require districts to provide counseling services, establish school- counselor-to-student ratios that meet the American School Counselors Association's recommendation of 250:1, and limit school counselors' administrative duties

- Require schools to provide student learning plans for high school and post-high school
- Fund district-level initiatives to improve career guidance and academic counseling programs, recruit and retain qualified school counselors, identify and close performance gaps, and offer career counseling in middle school

● **State education agencies** can:

- Implement standards for academic personal and career counseling systems for grades K-12
- Align state high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for admission to state colleges and universities
- Distribute federal funding and sub-grants to local education agencies
- Collaborate with other state and local agencies (e.g., departments of social services) to provide training to school counselors
- Issue guidance to districts on implementing school counseling models

## School District

● **Local school boards** can:

- Reduce school counselor-to-student ratios to meet or exceed state or national guidelines
- Work with school district administrators to establish partnerships with community members, businesses, and postsecondary institutions to connect students with external college and career experiences
- Require districts to develop school counseling plans (e.g., curriculum, measures for student competency, and counseling staffing requirements)

● **School districts** can:

- Provide career development activities to help students make informed choices about future education and career paths
- Provide professional development to educators, academic counselors and others providing career guidance to better prepare students for in-demand jobs
- Build cultures around college and career pathways beginning in elementary school
- Implement apprenticeship or career mentoring programs
- Establish automatic enrollment policies to increase the number of students in advanced courses

## School

● **School leaders** can:

- Decide to integrate college and career counseling into the school schedule and curriculum
- Hire staff who can help school counselors balance non-counseling duties, which often distract from counseling
- Work with school counselors to gather data on students' college and career readiness, applications, and outcomes
- Work with school counselors to implement early warning systems to alert them when students may be falling behind

● **School counselors** can refer students to outside providers, agencies, or resources (for example, non-school counselors, therapists, and/or psychologists) when necessary

● **Educators** can help students prepare for postsecondary education and the workplace and meaningfully engage families in the process of supporting their students