2025-2026 Weslaco ISD
Annual Parent/Guardian Informed Consent for School Counseling Services

During the 89th Texas Legislative Session, lawmakers enacted Senate Bill 12, which mandates that schools obtain annual parental consent before offering routine mental health services, including short-term counseling.

In accordance with Senate Bill 12 (SB 12), the 89th Texas Legislative Session, and in acknowledgment of your right to direct your child's mental health care, we are requesting your consent for your child to access non-emergency health services provided by the campus counselor or other authorized school personnel during the 2025–2026 school year.

Additionally, the 89th Legislature requires that school districts inform parents and guardians about health-related services provided at school and reaffirms your right to decline these services for your child.

The Guidance and Counseling program at Weslaco ISD is an integral part of the educational mission. Our certified school counselors and mental health staff are trained professionals who provide support to students.

I. Purpose of School Counseling Services

School counselors provide the following services as part of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including student interests and career objectives.
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk.
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development.
- System support to assist the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

School counselors routinely provide the following services:

- Advise students and their parents regarding the importance of postsecondary education, coursework designed to prepare students for postsecondary education, and financial aid availability and requirements;
- Early mental health prevention and intervention;

- Building skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention;
- Grief-informed and trauma-informed practices;
- Positive school climates, meaning the quality and character of school life, including interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures, as experienced by students enrolled in the District, parents of those students, and personnel employed by the District;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climate.

Counseling services are typically short-term, solution-focused, and preventative in nature. They may be delivered by trained staff through individual counseling, small group counseling, classroom guidance lessons, and consultation with parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators. Times and frequency may vary based on the needs of the student and/or the scheduling of their courses and activities. Parents are welcome to communicate with their school counselor about insights and/or concerns regarding scheduling.

II. Nature of Counseling Services

- **Voluntary Participation:** Student participation in counseling is generally voluntary. While school personnel may refer students for counseling, the decision to engage in ongoing counseling services rests with the student and, significantly, with their parent/guardian.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is a cornerstone of effective counseling. Information shared by your child in counseling sessions will be kept confidential by the school counselor, with the following exceptions:
    - **Imminent Harm:** If the counselor believes your child is an immediate danger to themselves or others.
    - **Abuse/Neglect:** If the counselor suspects child abuse or neglect, they are mandated by law to report this to Child Protective Services (CPS).
    - **Court Order:** If required by a court order.
    - **Permission to Share:** With your written permission or your child's written permission (if they are legally able to provide consent according to their age).
    - **Consultation:** In consultation with other school professionals (e.g., administrators, teachers) on a need-to-know basis to ensure your child's safety, well-being, or academic success, always with the aim of maintaining as much privacy as possible.
- **Limits to Confidentiality for Minors:** As your child is a minor, you, as the parent/guardian, generally have the right to information regarding your child's counseling, unless otherwise stipulated by law (e.g., Texas Family Code, Chapter 32, which allows certain minors to consent to counseling without parental consent in specific circumstances, such as for chemical addiction, drug or alcohol dependency, or suicide

prevention, and in such cases, confidentiality rules apply differently). The school counselor will discuss these limits with your child at the outset of counseling.

III. Parent/Guardian Involvement and Communication

We believe that a collaborative approach among the school, student, and family is crucial for student success.

- **Initial Contact:** You will typically be notified if your child is referred for ongoing counseling services, prior to initiation of services.
- **Updates:** The school counselor will communicate with you when necessary regarding your child's general progress and any significant concerns, while respecting the boundaries of confidentiality.
- **Consultation:** You are encouraged to communicate with the school counselor to discuss your child's needs and progress.
- **Referrals to Outside Services:** If your child's needs extend beyond the scope of school counseling services (e.g., require long-term therapy, psychiatric evaluation, or specialized interventions), the school counselor will assist you with referrals to appropriate community resources.
- **Right to Decline/Withdraw:** A parent may opt-out of mental health-related services annually, and consent may be revoked or reinstated at any time with written notice signed by the parent.

A parent may not opt out of the following:

1. School district emergency responses;
2. Law enforcement or Department of Family and Protective Services activities;
3. Behavioral threat assessment required by law; or
4. Other rights or duties required by law, including the Texas Family Code.

IV. Emergency Procedures

In the event of a crisis or emergency situation (e.g., thoughts of self-harm or harm to others), trained staff will follow established school and district crisis protocols, which may include notifying parents/guardians, school administration, and, if necessary, emergency services.

V. Parental Consent

Under state law, before administering a student well-being questionnaire or health screening form to a student, the District will provide a copy of the questionnaire or form to the student's parent and obtain the parent's consent to administer the questionnaire or the form. To facilitate this process, we are including the forms, screeners, and/or other documents that are commonly used in providing counseling services to your child.

Should the District recommend additional mental health care or the completion of a form or questionnaire not attached, the form will be provided to the parent, and consent obtained before the form or services are provided to the student.

I acknowledge that Weslaco ISD has provided the required notice and opportunity to grant or deny consent regarding the District's mental health-related services for students for this school year, as required by law.

(Please print.)

Student's Name:_____

Current grade level:_____

Campus:_____

I give written permission for my child, identified above, to receive mental health-related services as described in this form and to complete any forms and questionnaires attached:

☐ Yes, I consent to the completion of all attached documents and to the District providing all routine mental-health related services for the 2025-2026 school year.

☐ No, I do not consent to the completion of any of the attached documents, nor do I consent to the District providing any routine mental health-related services for the 2025-2026 school year. In the absence of consent, the school will default to no services other than life saving emergency care.

Parent's Signature: _____

Date:_____

Relationship to Student:_____

Date Received:_____