

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans and Directors of Educator Preparation Programs

FROM: Mary Hipp
Director, Office of Educator Services

DATE: June 24, 2025

RE: School Counselor Certification Grade Span Changes in Regulation 43-64

During the 2024–25 legislative session, the General Assembly approved amendments to State Board of Education Regulation 43–64, *Requirements for Certification at the Advanced Level*. This correspondence provides guidance for South Carolina educator preparation providers with approved School Counselor preparation programs.

Currently, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) issues the following certification fields for school counselors: School Counselor–Elementary (PK–Grade 8) or School Counselor–Secondary (Grades 6–12). The amendments to Regulation 43-63 reflect the current preparation of these education professionals and will transition School Counselor certification from elementary and secondary grade spans to Pre-kindergarten (PK)–Grade 12.

School Counselor programs are required to align with standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the specialty area program standards approved by the State Board of Education. CACREP standards require educator preparation providers (EPPs) to prepare school counselors to work across PK–12 settings, not just in elementary or secondary settings.

South Carolina school counselor programs are already aligned with the CACREP standards. To ensure that candidates are prepared to serve in a variety of school settings, field experiences and internships must include placements in both elementary and secondary settings. Currently, the SCDE issues certification in both elementary and secondary grade spans to successful program completers. Moving forward, candidates will be issued the comprehensive field of School Counselor.

The revised regulation authorizes the SCDE to develop guidelines for individuals certified in one grade span to add the PK–Grade 12 field of School Counselor. In fall 2025, the Office of Educator Services will convene a work group to develop these guidelines. Additionally, the SCDE will begin working with providers to develop program standards for course sequences and pathways that will enable individuals with degrees in other types of counseling to become certified as a School Counselor.

The Office of Educator Services has communicated this grade span realignment for the preparation of school counselors to the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). Please be sure to correspond with the CHE regarding any program updates because of this realignment.

Please forward this correspondence to faculty and staff in your school counseling program. For additional information concerning this amended grade span for certification in School Counselor, please contact the Educator Preparation team in the Office of Educator Services: Jacki Walsh, jwalsh@ed.sc.gov, or Jessica McLees, jmclees@ed.sc.gov.