


Coordination of  
Services Team (COST)

# COST Handouts



CENTER   
FOR HEALTHY  
SCHOOLS AND  
COMMUNITIES  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY

# Coordination of Services Team (COST)

## Overview

A Coordination of Services Team (COST) is a strategy for managing and integrating various learning supports and resources for students. COST teams identify and address student needs holistically and ensure that the overall system of supports works together effectively.

A COST is a multidisciplinary team of school staff and providers who:

- create a regular forum for reviewing the needs of individual students and schools overall;
- collaborate on linking referred students to resources and interventions; and
- support students' academic success and healthy development.

### The Benefits of COST

COST creates a space for school staff, administrators, and partners (who may normally work in silos) to collaborate regarding students most in need of extra supports, and to build tailored interventions that utilize the full scope of resources available in the school and community. It also provides a critical setting for staff and partners to reflect on the landscape of academic and social-emotional supports available for all students in a school community, and identify ways to improve school-wide allocation of resources to promote academic success and healthy development.



COST improves coordination, communication, and collaboration across disciplines, which leads to improved:

- Capacity to tailor interventions to each student's unique needs.
- Efficiency and use of limited resources.
- Sense of belonging and quality of services among providers on the team.
- Range of universal and prevention services.

### COST Leadership

As members of a team of multidisciplinary professionals working together in new ways, COST colleagues become agents of change within a school. Typically, a designated staff person, such as an assistant principal, counselor, or community school coordinator, assumes the responsibility of a COST Coordinator. The Coordinator leads the COST meetings and builds COST infrastructure, i.e., referral, tracking, and evaluation systems that support the team's success.

What do COST teams do?	What is the COST make-up?
<p>COST teams perform four major tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify students through a school-wide referral system.</li> <li>2. Assess referred students and explore strengths and supports needed.</li> <li>3. Coordinate efforts to link students to appropriate supports, track progress, and tailor interventions over time.</li> <li>4. Expand the learning supports at the school, make recommendations about resource allocation, and recruit new resources.</li> </ol>	<p>COST make-up varies by school. Possible members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated COST Coordinator</li> <li>• School administrators</li> <li>• School counselors</li> <li>• School nurse</li> <li>• School psychologist</li> <li>• Special education staff member</li> <li>• Teacher representatives for SST, IEP, 504</li> <li>• Afterschool providers</li> <li>• Parent liaison</li> <li>• School Health Center staff</li> <li>• Social workers or clinical case managers</li> <li>• Other student or family support providers</li> </ul>

## Components of the COST Delivery System

### The Five Components of a COST Service Delivery System

Five core components make up the COST service delivery system and maximize a school's capacity to support student success and well-being.

#### 1. Universal Referral

All COST teams need a way to consistently identify students and families that may be struggling and needing additional social-emotional, health, or academic supports. COST creates a central school-wide referral system: teachers, administrators, parents, providers, and students can easily refer or self-refer.

#### 2. Intake and Assessment

After referrals are made, COST teams need a process to assess referrals and gather additional information about the student's situation that may be helpful for the team's discussion. Typically, the COST Coordinator, or designated leads, follows up with the person making the referral and/or the student and family, both to prepare for the meeting and to identify immediate student needs that cannot wait until the next meeting.



#### 3. Regular COST Meetings

Regular meetings with a standing agenda are critical for COST success. Team members come together, review and triage referrals, develop coordinated service plans, and follow up on previously referred students. Meetings are also a forum to strengthen communication and collaboration and to identify school-wide needs and resource gaps.

#### 4. Collaborative Service Delivery

COST encourages collaboration not only in the development of coordinated service plans and resources, but in the delivery as well. Members work together outside of the meetings to align their efforts, address changing needs, and improve outcomes for their shared students, while building a culture of teamwork.

#### 5. Tracking and Evaluation

Tracking delivery of services and student progress can be one of the most challenging aspects of service coordination. At a minimum, a COST Coordinator should track which staff have been assigned to follow up, and when and how they have connected with the student. The next step is to track student progress, while respecting confidentiality rules and integrating with overall school assessment methods. Finally, COST teams should design their own evaluation process to improve team functioning and effectiveness.

# COST vs. SST

Coordination of Services Team	Student Success Team
<b>Purpose</b> <p>A multidisciplinary team of adults work collaboratively to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• triage referrals for student support services and assess student support needs</li> <li>• develop and monitor coordinated interventions and supports at the student/site level</li> <li>• facilitate communication between school staff and providers in order to link students/families with supports</li> </ul>	<b>Purpose</b> <p>A group of adults, responsible for the success of an individual student, work collaboratively to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a strength-based plan</li> <li>• provide academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support and interventions</li> <li>• support the student to achieve educational success</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site administrators</li> <li>• Counselors</li> <li>• Community partners</li> <li>• Special Education staff</li> <li>• Afterschool Program staff</li> <li>• Parent Support staff</li> <li>• Attendance staff</li> <li>• Nurse</li> </ul>	<b>Participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site administrators</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Student's support providers</li> <li>• Student's parents</li> <li>• Student (depending on age)</li> </ul>
<b>Timelines</b> <p>Next COST meeting, revisit referrals made.</p>	<b>Timelines</b> <p>Every 6 to 18 weeks, reconvene SST team to review success of interventions/supports.</p>
<b>For Who</b> <p>Collaborate and coordinate services across the school site for all students.</p>	<b>For Who</b> <p>Collaborate and coordinate supports and interventions for an individual student.</p>
<b>Numbers</b> <p>Multiple students per COST</p>	<b>Numbers</b> <p>One student per SST</p>



# About Us

As part of Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, the Center for Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) has worked for over 20 years with school districts, community partners, youth, families, and policymakers to build school health initiatives that create equitable conditions for health and learning. Together we have developed 28 school health centers, expanded behavioral health supports to over 190 schools, built and lead operations of the REACH Ashland Youth Center, supported youth wellness and family partnership initiatives, and implemented targeted equity strategies for youth furthest from opportunity. Our school health programs and partnerships address urgent health and education inequities and create opportunities for all young people to cultivate their strengths, resiliency, and promise. We focus on supporting the physical health of students – knowing that students can't learn if they are sick, hungry, or absent from school. But we also focus on other aspects of wellness that youth and families need to thrive: social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental, and occupational. For more information about CHSC's work, please visit our website at [achealthyschools.org](https://achealthyschools.org)



## How It Works

Look for the School Health Works icon anywhere on the CHSC website to find resources, tools, guides, and videos to help health and education leaders to build school health initiatives.

[achealthyschools.org/resources](https://achealthyschools.org/resources)