



OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING
**IMPLEMENTATION
GUIDE**



OKLAHOMA
Education

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Introduction

Whether you are a new or seasoned school counselor, this guide is designed to support you as you develop or refine your school counseling program. It recommends key concepts, definitions, and guidance for the development and continuous improvement of school counseling programs. The guide outlines an approach for building and sustaining a program that addresses student needs over time. It assists districts in creating and maintaining a comprehensive school counseling program, a required component of the school support system essential to achieving our statewide goal of excellence for all Oklahoma students (OAC § 210:35-3-106).



REDEFINES ROLES

Comprehensive school counseling programs are developmentally appropriate, proactive, and preventive. They enhance learning by helping students acquire critical skills for lifelong learning and success. When school counselors implement a comprehensive program, they can assist every student in improving academic achievement, developing life skills, and preparing for post-graduation success. Due to their supportive role, school counselors are often called to respond to unexpected events in a school. While this is sometimes unavoidable, if counselors are only reactive, preventive supports may be overlooked. A comprehensive school counseling program ensures that counselors remain focused on proactive, preventive approaches through program goals, action plans, calendars, and time tracking.

CREATES COLLABORATION

A comprehensive school counseling program is not done in isolation. Instead, it is designed and implemented in collaboration with administrators, teachers, students, caregivers, and community partners using leadership, objectivity, and advocacy to promote systemic change and positive student outcomes.

DETERMINES DIRECTION

A comprehensive school counseling program establishes direction through the development of vision and mission statements, annual calendars, and action plans that align with the Oklahoma Student Standards. Comprehensive school counselors uphold professional standards and models of best practice in the field. A lack of direction often leads to inefficient and ineffective actions, but when the pathway to success is clear, school counselors can become effective leaders.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE ICONS

Throughout this guide, you will find valuable resources and strategies to help develop and refine your comprehensive school counseling program. We encourage you to thoughtfully reflect on each section to maximize your program development efforts. While helpful activities are included throughout, we also recommend utilizing the digital resources and links provided in each section.



ACTION ITEM

Utilize the **Action Items** section to identify where you are in the implementation process, plan for the necessary next steps, and gather the necessary artifacts to support your efforts.



THINK ABOUT IT

This section prompts you to reflect on your school counseling activities, efforts, and goals as you implement your comprehensive school counseling program. Real-time reflections are critical to the development and implementation process!



EVALUATE

Just as reflection is important, it is also necessary to evaluate the status of your programming. Utilize the **Evaluate** sections to honestly evaluate your program, practices, and processes. Regularly evaluating your programming will ensure that you implement practices with fidelity and will also support ongoing, continuous improvement of your counseling program.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

While this guide can be used in printed format, you will occasionally need to reference digital resources. When you see the computer mouse symbol, be sure to reference the links to digital resources and templates in the hub.

How to Use the Implementation Guide

The best way to start is to identify where you are now. Oklahoma has created a Comprehensive School Counseling Implementation Checklist, adapted from the Tennessee Department of Education, which can serve as a useful program review tool. It provides an overview of what to anticipate throughout the process of developing your comprehensive school counseling program. Upon first glance, it may feel overwhelming, but don't be discouraged! Developing a successful Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP) is a process. Consider the Implementation Checklist as your roadmap and this implementation guide as your personal tour guide as you walk through each phase in a step-by-step, personalized manner.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

As you work through the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation Guide you will find that it aligns with the school year; however, it is designed so you can begin the implementation process at any time throughout the year! Using this guide's Table of Contents, and the Implementation Checklist resource below, [create your own implementation timeline](#). The **ACTION ITEM** includes a few examples for reference.



ACTION ITEM

JULY/AUGUST

Review Implementation Guide

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

Use-of-Time Review

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY/JUNE

Final Administrative Conference



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Comprehensive Implementation Checklist

Four Components for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

Comprehensive school counseling programs define the school counselor as an educator, collaborator, consultant, and leader. They also clarify the school counselor's role in meeting students' needs and achievement outcomes. This clarification of roles is further emphasized through program definition, management, delivery, and assessment. These processes provide the narrative and data necessary to advocate for systemic change and support for a comprehensive program.

DEFINE - Delineating school counseling professional practice using standards and competencies unique to the profession.

These standards help new and experienced school counselors develop, implement, and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes.



STANDARDS

- Oklahoma Student Standards
- Professional School Counselor Standards



MANAGE - Organizing and allocating resources to best address the goals, strategies, and activities of the school counseling program.

To be delivered effectively, the school counseling program must be efficiently and effectively managed. The following program focus and planning tools guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results.



DELIVER - Organizing and implementing components of the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Implementation Guide through direct and indirect student services.

School counselors deliver developmentally appropriate activities and services directly to students or indirectly for students as a result of the school counselor's interaction with others. These activities and services help students develop the essential skills needed to improve their achievement, attendance, and discipline.



ASSESS - Determining the progress or quality of the school counseling program, particularly to guide future action within the school counseling program and to improve future results for students.

To achieve the best results for students, school counselors regularly assess their program to:

- Determine its effectiveness
- Inform improvements to their school counseling program design and delivery
- Show how students are different as a result of the school counseling program

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY

This guide is peppered with advocacy sections that model how to effectively advocate for your program and give ideas regarding speaking to others about your role as a school counselor.

By defining your role and collaborating with administrators to grasp these four components (define, manage, deliver, assess), counselors can champion policies and procedures that emphasize student well-being.

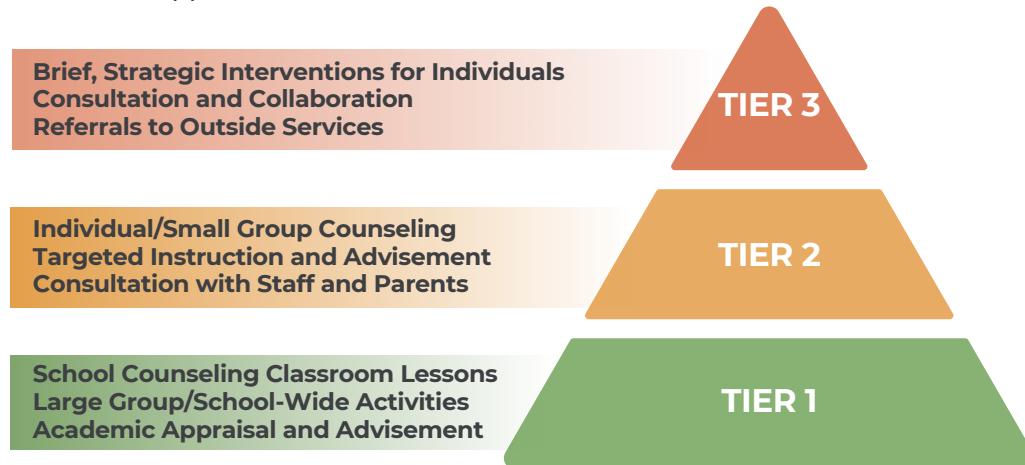
The Alignment of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework for providing comprehensive systems of differentiated support based on the unique needs of individual students to ensure they can thrive. MTSS is a staff-implemented, systemic, prevention-focused framework. This schoolwide prevention and intervention support continuum creates a common language for all students, families, and staff. MTSS is highly effective in improving students' academic and behavioral outcomes through the integration and continuous improvement of systems and services.

While MTSS is a schoolwide approach, it mirrors the direct and indirect student services that school counselors provide in which all students receive the benefits of a school counseling program (Tier One) with targeted interventions for students who need them (Tier Two) and intense interventions and referrals for a small segment of the student population (Tier Three).

DEFINING SUPPORTS

The MTSS approach distinctly clarifies the role of school counselors in delivering mental health services. School counselors offer Tier One support for all students, coordinate or provide Tier Two targeted interventions for specific individuals, and primarily engage in collaboration, consultation, and referral for Tier Three support.



Through the development of an MTSS-informed, comprehensive school counseling program, schools can ensure they are maximizing the time and expertise of their school counselors throughout the year.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY

The school counselor's role is to provide comprehensive programming that supports all students. In some cases, they may offer individual services as part of a student's IEP. If a student's need for life skills or emotion management significantly impacts his/her academic performance and these needs fall within the counselor's expertise, it may be appropriate to include them on the IEP. Limited school resources and the counselor's specific training can also justify their inclusion. Decisions should be made collaboratively, ensuring alignment with the student's best interests and the counselor's capacity. Objectives should specify the duration of services (short-term, strategic, and solution-focused), the skills to be addressed, how progress will be measured, and when Tier Three interventions should be considered.

STEP ONE

Review the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Hub

The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Hub recommends concepts, definitions, and direction for development and continuous improvement. The hub does not suggest that districts will be able to do everything envisioned here initially. Rather, the hub lays out an approach for building and sustaining a program that addresses student needs over time. It seeks to support districts in creating and maintaining a comprehensive school counseling program as a required element of the school support system, essential in achieving our statewide goal of excellence for all Oklahoma students.

SUGGESTED PRACTICE

The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Hub is a robust resource that should be digested and considered in small chunks. Take time to explore the hub to familiarize yourself with it by breaking it into small, digestible pieces to avoid becoming overwhelmed. The ACTION ITEM below will help you through this process.



ACTION ITEM

After reviewing the hub, what topics looked most familiar?

Which topics draw your interest?

Which topics should you prioritize?

How can you use the hub to guide your program?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Oklahoma School Counseling Implementation Guide: Canvas Hub

STEP ONE

Assess Current Program and Practice

The School Counseling Program Assessment or the School Counseling Program Audit can be used to analyze progress toward full implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program and to identify program strengths and areas for improvement. The audit is a brief overview that new school counselors might be more comfortable with. The assessment is more comprehensive and may be more appropriate for seasoned counselors. First, you should choose and complete the most appropriate assessment. Next, analyze the responses to determine program strengths, areas for potential growth, and short- and long-range plans for improvement.



THINK ABOUT IT

Which areas does my program thoroughly address?

Which areas need improvement?

What resources are needed to show growth?



EVALUATE

Using a Likert Scale, rank your program as it addresses each of the four areas of school counseling.

4= Fully Developed

3= Mostly Developed

2 = Somewhat Developed

1 = Completely Undeveloped

DEFINE: 1 2 3 4

DELIVER: 1 2 3 4

MANAGE: 1 2 3 4

ASSESS: 1 2 3 4



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- School Counseling Program Assessment
- School Counseling Program Audit

STEP ONE

Draft Weekly and Annual Calendars

School counselors develop and publish calendars of school counseling events to inform students, parents, teachers, and administrators of what, when, and where school counseling activities will be held. Create weekly and yearly calendars and prepare them for distribution. It is important that you utilize a variety of distribution methods including websites, social media, email, printed calendars posted in multiple areas, etc. This will increase stakeholder accessibility. It is also helpful to translate the calendars into the home languages of students.



ACTION ITEM

Begin drafting your weekly calendar & your annual calendar.

If you have a calendar from the previous year, analyze and reflect upon it.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Weekly Calendar Template
- Annual Calendar Template

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY



By utilizing yearly and weekly calendars as advocacy tools, school counselors can effectively communicate the breadth and depth of their work and advocate for more time, greater support, and additional resources to fulfill their vital role in fostering positive student outcomes in the areas of academics, college and career readiness, and life skills and well-being.



THINK ABOUT IT

When reviewing your calendar from the previous year, what trends did you notice and what changes can be made to improve?

STEP ONE

Assemble the Advisory Council

An advisory council is a representative group of stakeholders that meets at least twice a year to review and advise on the implementation of the school counseling program. The school counseling advisory council can be a school counselor's most valuable resource for objective feedback, recommendations, and advocacy.

WHEN CREATING AN ADVISORY COUNCIL, SCHOOL COUNSELORS CONSIDER:

Purpose: The advisory council's purpose and function are set in advance of selecting advisory council members.

Representation: Ideally, members of the advisory council reflect the community's demographics and include students, parents, teachers, school counselors, administrators, school board members, and business and community members.

Size: Generally, a council between eight and twenty members will create an environment that encourages informed, constructive discussion.

Appropriate Candidates: Appointing members with sincere interest that will engage in meaningful conversation is recommended. Officially invite potential members by letter to serve on the advisory council and provide a brief explanation of the council's purpose and the dates and times of all meetings for the year. Also give potential members an opportunity to decline.

Chairperson: An effective chairperson has skills in group facilitation, effective working relationships, and planning and conducting meetings.

Membership Terms: Membership terms are typically one to three years. Consider staggering terms so there will always be experienced members on the council.

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS ASSIST SCHOOL COUNSELORS BY:

- Reviewing data
- Advising on annual student outcome goals
- Making recommendations about the school counseling program
- Advocating and engaging in public relations for the school counseling program
- Advocating for funding and resources



ACTION ITEM

Make a list of potential advisory council members.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Set the date for your first advisory council meeting and send an invitation.

Date: _____

Invitation sent

STEP ONE

Define Program

The Oklahoma Student Standards serve as a tool for school counselors in Oklahoma to evaluate student progress, shape strategies and initiatives, and establish programs aimed at helping students reach their full potential.

The Professional School Counselor Standards are a set of guidelines to which all school counselors in Oklahoma adhere. These standards guarantee that school counselors can develop and maintain a well-rounded school counseling program that focuses on academic success, career development, and life skills and well-being.



THINK ABOUT IT

How can utilizing the standards help you create a well-defined program?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Oklahoma Student Standards
- Professional School Counselor Standards

NOTES:

STEP TWO

Initial Data Collection

A data-informed school counselor consistently reviews school data to reveal trends across grades or years, gaps in student achievement, opportunity, or attainment, and student needs revealed by changes such as school attendance, disciplinary problems, and academic performance. A data-responsive school counselor further uses data to determine if school counseling program strategies, interventions, and activities are effective and to make decisions about future practice. As vital members of the school leadership team, school counselors must have access to the student information system (SIS) in order to gather academic, attendance, and discipline data.

THE USE OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA HELPS SCHOOL COUNSELORS:

- Monitor student progress
- Identify students who are having difficulties or discipline problems
- Identify barriers to learning
- Understand factors affecting student behavior
- Identify barriers to access
- Close achievement, opportunity, and attainment gaps
- Assess the effectiveness of school counseling program activities
- Improve, modify, or change services provided to students
- Educate stakeholders about the power of a school counseling program

SUGGESTED PRACTICE



A high school counselor discovered that 95% of seniors graduated on time. However, when the data was broken down, it was revealed that 85% of those who did not graduate on schedule belonged to a specific subgroup. This points to a particular need that must be considered in future goal-setting. Analyzing disaggregated data can unveil barriers to access and guide the conversation toward the needs of distinct student groups.



ACTION ITEM

- Find out who is responsible for inputting data at your site.
- Find out who grants access to your SIS and request access.
- Determine what data needs to be gathered.

STEP TWO

Initial Data Collection

In "Making Data Work," Young and Kaffenberger (2018) outline a cyclical model explaining how and why school counselors use data in school counseling programs. The seven-step model outlines a process designed to positively impact student outcomes.



THINK ABOUT IT

How can data be used to design your comprehensive program?

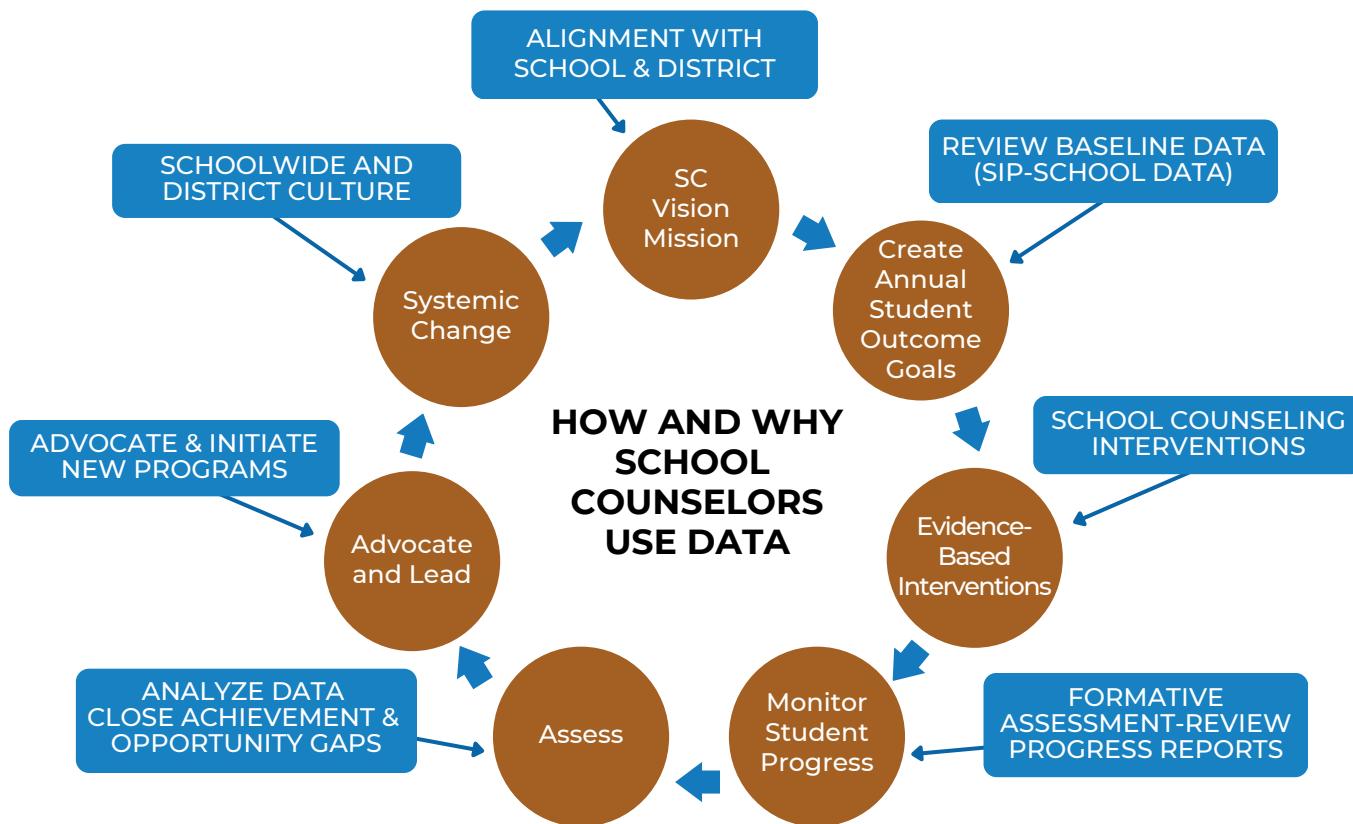


Image adapted from Making MTSS Work - Page 72 - Figure 3.3



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- School Data Summary Template

STEP TWO

Budget

Implementing a robust comprehensive counseling program requires curriculum materials, counseling tools, and access to facilities and equipment. Understanding your school's needs and managing your budget accordingly will ensure that program outcomes are achieved. Analyzing your budget will help you prepare for your annual administrative conference in the next step.

Costs related to the following topics should be considered:

- Study skills
- Test-taking skills
- Organization, note-taking, academic strategies
- Positive self-concept and awareness
- Building positive relationships
- Decision-making
- Drug and alcohol abuse prevention
- Depression awareness and suicide prevention
- School violence prevention
- Educational planning, postsecondary school selection, test preparation, and securing financial aid
- Career exploration and planning: Connection of work and learning, understanding of life and occupational roles
- Employability and job acquisition
- Civic engagement in organizations, community, and society
- Cybersafety

Additionally, supplies for the school counselor's office may be necessary:

- Filing cabinets with locks and shelves for confidential storage of student and resource materials
- Confidential, sound-proof counseling space
- Computers, printers, copier, telephone
- Internet access



THINK ABOUT IT

What are some ways you might be able to supplement your budget?

Considering your school data and relevant student needs, how will you prioritize your funding?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- School Counselor Funding Guide

Notable Quotable

"When I stepped into the role of school counselor, I did not have a budget or a designated pool of money for my program, so I had to get creative. I started by reviewing my data and determining which items were the priority for the year. Next, I drafted a letter explaining my vision and mission and describing how a comprehensive school counseling program benefits everyone. I mailed the letter to all the businesses who typically support our athletic programs, local stakeholders, and community partners and invited them to become a programming partner by making a small donation or purchasing an item from my "needs list." I was overwhelmed with the generous response from the community and was able to fund over 80% of my requested items with the donations I received!"

- Amy, Woodward Public Schools



ACTION ITEM

Make a list of local resources or grants that you could utilize to meet needs over and above budget allocations. Be sure to consider tribal resources, foundations, local businesses, alumni associations, PTO/PTA, community service organizations, and churches.

STEP TWO

Annual Administrative Conference

The annual administrative conference serves as a formal meeting between the school counselor(s) and an administrator during the initial two months of the school year. By aligning on program priorities, implementation strategies, and the structure of the school counseling program, counselors and administrators ensure a more efficient operation that leads to positive outcomes for students.



THINK ABOUT IT

- What items/issues need to be priority in this discussion?
- Based on what you know, what are the top three issues your school needs to address?
- How can these priorities guide your goals for the year?
- If you have last years final administrative conference results, use this data to help guide your goal setting for the coming year.
- What are your advocacy priorities (PD, resources, curriculum)?
- Talk about new student count and ratio.
- Share your calendar of activities for the year.
- Discuss the counseling budget.



ACTION ITEM

Schedule a meeting with your principal.

Date: _____

Make a list of the top three topics for this conference.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY



During the annual administrative conference, school counselors can effectively advocate for their comprehensive school counseling program by showcasing its potential impact on student success and well-being. They demonstrate how their interventions and initiatives align with the school's goals and contribute to positive outcomes. Through proactive planning discussions and the presentation of innovative strategies, counselors can effectively communicate their vision for program enhancement and secure the necessary support and resources from school administrators to advance their goals and better serve students.

Notable Quotable

"The annual administrative conference gives principals and school counselors an opportunity to create a collaborative team that protects the appropriate role of a school counselor that all too often can become out-of-balance. It allows for the conversation to include 'What are we saying is the most important thing for you to be doing for kids, and how can we work smarter, not harder?'"

-Marla,
Principal at Weatherford Public Schools



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Annual Administrative Conference Template

STEP TWO

Engage Stakeholders

Collaboration is the process in which multiple individuals work toward a common goal and share responsibility for the associated tasks. School counselors work with families, administrators, teachers, school staff, career technology centers, businesses, and community organizations to improve student achievement, attendance, and discipline. School counselors partner with stakeholders, both inside and outside the school, as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program. By understanding and appreciating the contributions made by others in educating all children, school counselors build a sense of community, which serves as a platform to create an environment to foster success for every student.



THINK ABOUT IT

Who are the important internal and external stakeholders that can and will support your program?

How will they support your program?

How can you keep stakeholders informed and engaged?

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY



Communication: Use newsletters, briefs, and school website/social media platforms to highlight your work and share data regarding student needs, trends, and outcomes

Professional Development: Offer training for teachers, staff, and parents to increase mental health awareness

Collaborative Planning: Involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of your program to increase buy-in and assistance efforts

Community Partnerships: Work with community organizations and businesses to expand resources and support services available to students and families

Parent Engagement: Engage parents through workshops, meetings, and outreach activities to empower them as advocates for their children

STEP TWO

Initial Advisory Council Meeting

In Step One, you assembled your team and set a meeting date. Now it is time to plan and host your first meeting.

When developing an agenda for an advisory council, school counselors take the following elements into account:

- **Agenda and Minutes:** To ensure meetings are productive, each advisory council session includes a clear agenda and specific objectives to achieve.
- **First Meeting (Fall):** Introduce the council's purpose, present the school counseling program calendar, outline annual outcome goals, and share any pertinent school data.
- **Final Meeting (Spring):** Offer a summary of the program's impact on students based on data. Present and clarify results reports related to the goals. Engage in discussions and seek recommendations for enhancing the program.
- **Additional Meetings (Optional):** As the group evolves and establishes its identity, relevant agenda topics may emerge, such as orientation for new members, planning special events, or providing guidance in response to unique circumstances.



THINK ABOUT IT

What topics are important to discuss in your first advisory meeting?



ACTION ITEM

Make a list of your goals generated in your advisory council meeting.



NOTES



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Advisory Council Agenda Template
- Advisory Council Minutes Template

STEP THREE

Use of Time Review

In Step One you reviewed the OCSC Hub, created a calendar to plan your time, and assembled your advisory/implementation team. In Step Two you scheduled your administrative conference, collected data, held your first advisory team meeting, and engaged your stakeholders. In Step Three you will complete your first use of time calculation, set annual outcome goals, and work further on specific action plans you will take this year to improve student outcomes.

USE-OF-TIME CALCULATION

The Use-of-Time calculator is an important advocacy tool as it allows you to determine the amount of time you are spending on appropriate vs. inappropriate school counseling duties. It allows you to prioritize your work and is also useful for accountability.



In Oklahoma, it is recommended that school counselors spend 80% of their time providing **direct and indirect services to students**. The remaining 20% is for program management, school support services, and fair-share responsibilities.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- USE-OF-TIME CALCULATOR
- APPROPRIATE VS INAPPROPRIATE SCHOOL COUNSELOR ACTIVITIES



THINK ABOUT IT

What do you see as a professional benefit to tracking your use of time, and how can you use this as an advocacy tool in your district?

DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

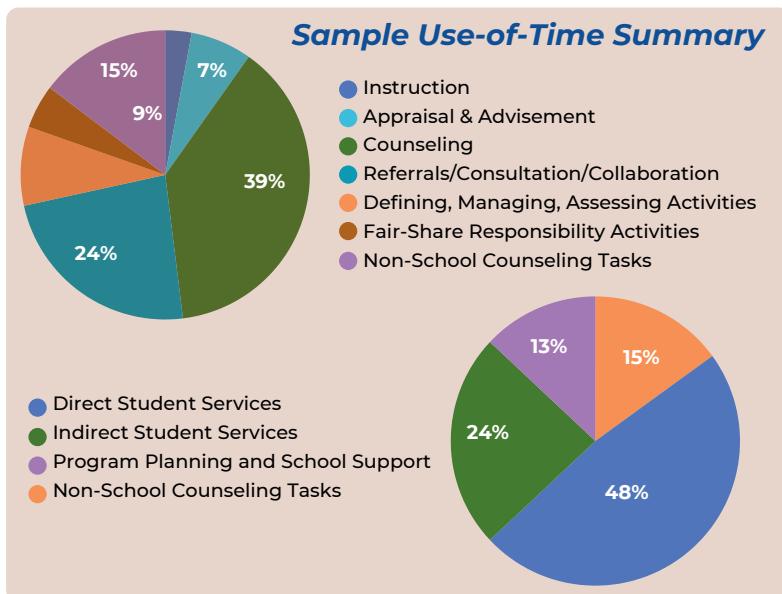
- **Instruction** - academic lessons, career lessons, and life skills and wellness lessons provided in whole group, small group, or individual settings
- **Appraisal and Advisement** - helping students uncover abilities, interests, skills, and achievements and making recommendations to assist in future planning
- **Counseling** - professional assistance and support, crisis response, trauma-informed practices, and MTSS

INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

- **Consultation** - working with teachers, parents, and others that support the student and seeking consultation on best practices
- **Collaboration** - intervention teams, professional learning communities (PLC), and child study teams, as well as collaborative relationships with community partners, caregivers, licensed mental health providers (LMHPs), and prevention services
- **Referrals** - services beyond the scope of the school counselor's role; our ethical duty is to refer to school and community resources for additional assistance

STEP THREE

Use-of-Time Review



ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY

Have a discussion with your administrator about your use-of-time data. Use this meeting to advocate for your role by showing the benefit to your students (in outcome data) when you use your time effectively.

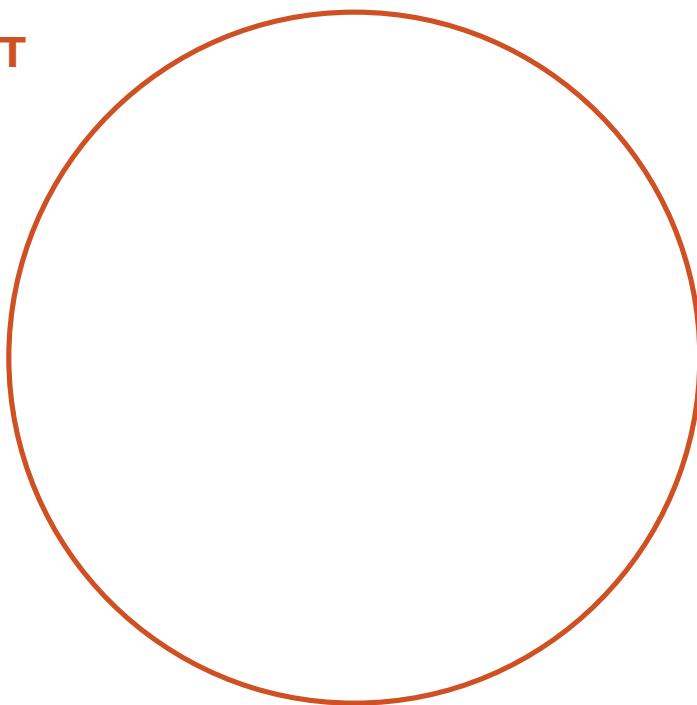
ACTION ITEM

Pick a week early in the school year and track your use-of-time using one of the links provided. At the completion of the week, fill in the pie chart and answer the following questions:

What do the results indicate about your current service delivery, and does it reflect the program priorities? (Think 80/20!)

What is one action step you would like to take as a result of your use-of-time data?

MY USE-OF-TIME PIE CHART
WEEK OF: _____



STEP THREE

Using Data to Create Annual Outcome Goals

In Step Two you reviewed initial outcome data and started to analyze how data could be used to plan your comprehensive program. Using data allows you to monitor student progress and identify barriers to student success and design a program that helps close achievement gaps. It is important to look at outcome data including student achievement, attendance, and behavior reports when identifying your annual student outcome goals for the year as these support the intentionality of your school counseling program. Needs assessment and mindset and behavior data can be beneficial as well; however, individual perceptions can be misleading and may potentially leave out important information that can only be obtained by looking at school-wide data sources that reflect an elevated view.

Elevated View

Imagine you are in a helicopter about 1,000 feet in the air. When you are on the streets below, things like congestion, buildings, winding streets, and other vehicles block your view and can create confusion as you travel to your destination. However, if you are in the air, you can clearly see the structure of the roads, the pathways, and other obstacles that might get in your way as you try to reach your destination. Considering an elevated view of your data allows you to determine your path to improving student outcomes.



THREE TYPES OF DATA ARE IMPORTANT IN GETTING STARTED WHEN DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE YEAR:

PARTICIPATION DATA

Measures how you do what you do.

- How many lessons will you deliver?
- How many students will you serve?

MINDSETS AND BEHAVIOR DATA

Measures attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge gained as a result of your delivery. Pre/post data as well as needs assessment data and/or universal screening tools can help inform your work.

OUTCOME DATA

Attendance Data

Average daily attendance
Chronic truancy rates

Behavior Data

Discipline referrals/
suspension

Achievement Data

Promotion/graduation
rates/test scores/grades

»»» CONSIDERATIONS

As you establish annual student outcome goals, aim to enhance the depth of the data you gather. In the initial years of program development, you may primarily focus on participation or mindset and behavior goals. However, it's essential to continually assess what the data indicates and refine your goals to ultimately emphasize outcome data.

For foundational goal setting, consider concentrating on Tier One goals this year as you strive to improve service delivery. You might also find yourself ready to initiate Tier Two planning and goals. At this stage, understanding your specific position in the journey toward a comprehensive program becomes crucial. No matter where you are on this path, that's where you should begin with your SMART goal.

THINK ABOUT IT

What are your school's goals for this year?

How will you prioritize the data you have?

What other data might you need?

What trends do you see across multiple years of data?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Oklahoma Student Standards
- Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan

STEP THREE

Writing Annual Goals

In previous steps, you reviewed your available data and determined program focus. Now you should record your specific goals for the year. Below are two different examples of goal statements. The first example may be more manageable for beginning school counselors, while the second example represents a more advanced goal written in SMART format. Be sure to consider the questions in the Think About It box on the previous page as you write your goals.

Counseling Program Goal Example

Using your school's mission and goals to determine your focus, write one professional goal you have as you work toward implementing a comprehensive model in your school setting.

Example: *To support XYZ's district mission of all students having skills for college, career and life readiness, I will provide explicit instruction three times in the 2023-2024 school year related to career exposure, workforce skills development, and higher education opportunities.*

Annual Outcome Goal Example

Using the information below, create a SMART Goal statement.

Data Discovery: In your data analysis, you discovered that over the past 3 years, the percentage of 9th grade students who failed one or more courses after the first semester has increased threefold to 43% of the total 9th grade class. This is your targeted group.

Annual Outcome SMART Goal Template:

By _____, _____ will _____
(end date) (target group) (increase/decrease something related to achievement, attendance, or behavior)

by _____ % from _____ to _____
(measure of change) (baseline data) (target data)

Example: *By May (end of year), 9th graders failing one or more classes for the year will decrease by 20% from 43% to 23% or fewer.*

SPECIFIC

Make sure your goals are focused and identify tangible results. Without specifics, your goals run the risk of being too vague to achieve.

MEASURABLE

You must have a clear definition of success. This will help you to evaluate your achievements as well as your progress.

ATTAINABLE

Your goals should be challenging, but still reasonable to achieve. This component can reveal any potential obstacles that you may need to overcome in order to be successful.

RELEVANT

It's about being real with yourself and making sure what you want to achieve works for you. Determine if this aligns with your values and if it is a priority focus for you.

TIME BOUND

Every goal needs a target date, something that motivates you to actually apply the focus and discipline needed to achieve it.

STEP THREE

Inform Faculty and Staff about Your Program and Goals

A comprehensive school counseling program supports positive student outcomes. Time spent on direct and indirect student services should be the largest percent of school counselors' time (80%). Share with your faculty and staff how and when you will provide classroom lessons, implement Tier Two interventions, the procedures for Tier Three interventions and referrals, as well as appropriate versus inappropriate activities for school counselors.



THINK ABOUT IT

As you manage and deliver school counseling services, what are the top three things you want your faculty and staff to consider?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How will you engage your faculty and staff to accomplish your goals?

Advocacy Opportunity



School counselors address the needs of all students. It is recommended that school counselors spend 80% of their time on direct or indirect services for students. This may not be feasible in the beginning, but ongoing advocacy and collaboration efforts can support a more balanced approach to the delivery of school counselor services.

This step is an excellent opportunity to highlight the necessity of a comprehensive school counseling program in supporting positive student outcomes in all areas.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Appropriate and Inappropriate activities for school counselors

STEP THREE

Create an Action Plan and Lesson Plans

With your goal statements in hand, it's time to strategize the delivery of the school counseling activities and services you'll offer throughout the year. To ensure effectiveness, intentional planning is essential, which can be achieved by creating a detailed action plan. You can find helpful forms in the resources section for a thorough planning experience, but this page will serve as a great starting point for your exciting journey ahead.

For each lesson you conduct with students, you will want to answer the following questions:

- What type of effectiveness strategy will I utilize (evidence-based, research-based, best practice)?
- Is my focus on academics, college and career development, or life skills and wellness? What are one or two student standards that will be targeted in this lesson?
- What outcome data are you targeting with your lessons? (attendance, achievement, discipline)
- Identify the learning objective phrased as "Students will _____."

Example: "Students will identify three skills they can use for self-regulation."



EVALUATE

HOW DO I DETERMINE IF MY RESOURCE OR CURRICULUM SELECTION IS PROVEN EFFECTIVE?

EVIDENCE-BASED

The practice has been determined to be effective by scientific inquiry.

RESEARCH-BASED

The practice has elements that have been proven effective through research.

BEST PRACTICE

It is a theory-based practice backed by experts in the field, but it can also mean that another professional in the field has experienced success with the practice.

STUDENT STANDARDS

The initial step is to examine the Oklahoma Student Standards. These standards outline the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students are expected to demonstrate as a result of your program. They also serve as an excellent benchmark for assessing student growth and development, helping students reach their fullest potential while enhancing your advocacy initiatives.

Next, evaluate the resources available to you for lesson creation, including the demonstrated effectiveness of the curriculum or intervention you plan to use.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Oklahoma Student Standards
- Evidence-Based Curriculum Resources
- Closing the Gap Action Plan Results Report
- Sample Lesson Plan Template

What Works Clearinghouse is a great place to start if you are looking for practices, programs, and products that are based on research that indicates effectiveness of educational resources. While not all lessons have to be evidence-based, it is important to work toward utilizing evidence-based lessons to ensure positive student outcomes.



ACTION ITEM

Plan your first lesson

What materials are needed for this lesson?

How will students practice the content?

What is the hook?

Closure: How will students reflect on their learning?

Identify the teaching content:

STEP FOUR

Ongoing Delivery of Direct and Indirect Student Services

School counselors focus their time and efforts on delivering direct and indirect student services throughout the school year. It is recommended that school counselors spend 80% of their time on direct and indirect services and the remaining 20% on program management and school support.

The **DELIVER** component defines the methods school counselors use to provide activities for and services to students. Instruction includes teaching the school counseling curriculum in classrooms, groups, or individually. Counseling is the professional assistance and support provided to a student or small group during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change, or other situations impeding student success.

Direct Student Services

Direct Student Services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students.



Direct Service Activities

- Counseling
- Appraisal and advisement
- Classroom, small-group, and individual instruction

Indirect Student Services

Indirect Student Services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselor's interactions with others.



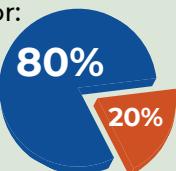
Indirect Service Activities

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

Program Management & School Supports

Approximately 20% of a school counselor's time is reserved for:

- Program management
- School support services
- Fair-share responsibilities
- Data review



Non-school counseling duties take away valuable time from a school counseling program and should be avoided.

EXAMPLES OF SERVICES

Classroom Instruction: School counselors develop lesson plans aligned with the Oklahoma Student Standards. Lesson topics include academic, college/career, and life skills and wellness. The direction of your lesson topics should be based on needs assessment data.

Small Group Instruction: Small groups provide instruction and activities designed to be targeted and intentional. The group size depends on the topic and characteristics of students and should be a minimum of four group sessions, although some research suggests at least eight group sessions are best.

Individual Counseling and Advisement: School counselors assist individual students by providing a safe and confidential space for students to explore and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and to experience opportunities to identify solutions to problems they are currently facing. School counselors provide brief, strategic, solution-focused interventions and recognize that if ongoing mental health supports are needed, a referral to a mental health counselor may be necessary.



THINK ABOUT IT

What school counseling curriculum do you have available to you?

What are your goals for small-group and individual support this year?

What is one obstacle you might face in delivering direct services, and what is one potential solution to overcome the obstacle?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Appropriate and Inappropriate activities for School Counselors
- OK Career Guide
- OK CollegeStart

STEP FOUR

Ongoing Delivery of Direct and Indirect Student Services

Below is a list of common and appropriate school counseling activities in each school counseling domain. This list is not exhaustive of the range of services school counselors provide. Highlight activities that you would like to prioritize as you continue to provide services to your students.

ELEMENTARY

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

- Classroom lessons on study skills
- Monitor and support student performance
- Progress monitoring and reporting
- Meet with teacher PLCs to improve student access and success
- Academic goal-setting conferences with students and families
- Small groups focused on strengthening academic skills
- Work with parent/teacher organizations to offer parent support nights
- Help students understand their own learning styles

COLLEGE & CAREER ADVISEMENT

- Classroom lessons to increase awareness of career clusters
- Organize career days
- Introduce interest inventories and discuss connections between interests and career options
- Use of programs such as Kuder Galaxy for career exploration tools
- Use of books and materials that feature different professions
- Community helper visits
- Create connections between the world of work and students' lives
- Help students plan for transitions in grades and moving to secondary schools
- Make connections between learning and future jobs

LIFE SKILLS AND WELLNESS

- Classroom lessons addressing topics such as mindfulness, emotion regulation, friendship skills, personal safety, bullying prevention, and conflict resolution
- Small groups for students needing more intensive intervention
- Work with school teams to build a culture and climate that is supportive of mutual respect and safety
- Initiate school-wide campaigns such as Kindness Week, drug and alcohol prevention, etc.
- Work with individual students to develop skills that support strong and healthy minds and bodies

MIDDLE SCHOOL

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

- Academic success workshops: note-taking, test prep, organization skills, time management, and study skills/methods,
- Individual academic planning meetings
- Teach goal-setting and journaling to track progress
- Test anxiety workshops
- Learning style inventories
- Academic success nights for parents and families
- Mentorship programs
- Small groups focused on academic skills

COLLEGE & CAREER ADVISEMENT

- Offer career interest inventories
- Activities that connect interests to applicable careers
- Resume writing & job application workshops
- Career days with local business partners & colleges
- Workshops that inform on career clusters and pathways and connecting to high school course options
- Identify gaps in access and collaborate with other professionals to offer activities to close the gap
- "Explore Your Future" nights where parents & students can plan transition to high school
- Provide resources related to work permit requirements

LIFE SKILLS AND WELLNESS

- Develop prevention and early intervention activities to build skills in understanding self, working with others, making good decisions, regulating emotions, and mental health and wellness
- Offer small groups for students needing more intensive interventions
- Teach communication and conflict resolution skills
- Provide brief crisis intervention for student and families
- Teach stress management and coping skills
- Assist students in developing positive peer relationships

HIGH SCHOOL

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

- Individualized academic planning and transcript reviews
- Help students track grades, coursework and connection to post-secondary pathway
- Focused groups on study skills and organization
- Help students understand the connection between learning and college/career planning
- Teach goal-setting and journaling to track progress
- Assist students in developing comprehensive study habits to improve school success

COLLEGE & CAREER ADVISEMENT

- Individual student planning to discuss interests, skills, and career aspirations
- Assist students in aligning career and academic interests to potential colleges that meet those needs
- Support the college application process: essay writing, letters of recommendation, financial aid and scholarship opportunities
- Teach essential job search skills
- Organize college fairs, career panels, and guest speakers about post-secondary options
- Arrange internship and work-based learning opportunities for students
- Organize FAFSA nights

LIFE SKILLS AND WELLNESS

- Offer workshops and groups regarding mental health and wellness
- Help students develop effective communication, problem-solving, self-management, and conflict resolution skills
- Contribute to responsive services for crisis and emergencies such as student trauma, bullying, self-harm, or suicidal ideation
- Implement bullying prevention programs and other culture and climate initiatives to improve the high school experience
- Establish relationship with community partners to expand services available to students and families

STEP FOUR

Mid-Year Review

In Step One, school counselors conducted a program assessment to evaluate progress towards the complete implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, while identifying its strengths and weaknesses. Given that a school counseling program is complex and focused on ongoing assessment and improvement, counselors should reevaluate the program at the mid-year point. The findings from this assessment can also serve as a tool for program advocacy and should be communicated with administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

»»» CONSIDERATIONS

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN COMPLETING A MID-YEAR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT:

- How many students have been served in classroom instruction, small groups, or individual counseling and advisement sessions?
- Is there any new data (Needs Assessment Surveys, OPNA, teacher input/referrals, parent input/referrals, discipline or attendance data, etc.) that needs to be considered?
- What have I learned during grade/subject level or PLC meetings regarding student needs?
- Is the program on-track for completion by the end of the school year?
- What do the pre/post-tests reveal about student progress and learning?

EVALUATE

Using a Likert Scale, rank your program as it addresses each of the four areas of school counseling.

4 = Ahead of pace and meeting all goals
3 = On track to meet goals
2 = Nearly on track to meet goals
1 = Not on track or meeting goals

DEFINE: 1 2 3 4

MANAGE: 1 2 3 4

DELIVER: 1 2 3 4

ASSESS: 1 2 3 4



THINK ABOUT IT

What additional needs have you identified during the first semester?

How are you progressing toward your program goals?

What is one thing you can focus on that would have a big impact on your students?

What is something you are proud about from the first semester?

What direct and indirect services did you provide during the first semester?

What does your data tell you? What went well?

What did you learn in PLC meetings with your teacher teams?

Based on mid-year review and relevant data, what adjustments will you make for second semester?

STEP FIVE

Complete the School Counselor Program Assessment

To ensure optimal outcomes for students, school counselors consistently evaluate their program to gauge its efficacy. This assessment helps them enhance the design and delivery of the school counseling program and demonstrate the impact on students. The **ASSESS** component comprises program assessment and school counselor performance assessment. Through conducting program evaluations and addressing areas for enhancement, school counselors demonstrate dedication to ongoing improvement in school counseling programs.



THINK ABOUT IT

Based on your program assessment, what were at least two successful aspects of your school counseling program?

Based on your program assessment, name at least two aspects of your school counseling program that need to be refined.

What additional professional development would help you feel more confident in the areas where you are not as strong?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- School Counseling Program Assessment



EVALUATE

Rank your comfort level with the following school counseling components. 1 = Least; 4 = Most

Academic	1	2	3	4
----------	---	---	---	---

College & Career	1	2	3	4
------------------	---	---	---	---

Life Skills & Wellness	1	2	3	4
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STEP FIVE

Develop an Impact Summary Statement

After finishing your school counselor program assessment, craft an impact summary statement showcasing the success of your comprehensive programming. This statement should emphasize major accomplishments, measurable student outcomes, and effectively convey the importance and future implications of your efforts.

IMPACT SUMMARY EXAMPLE

Through strategic implementation of a data-driven comprehensive school counseling program, I have improved student outcomes in the areas of academics, college and career readiness, and life skills and wellness. During the school year, I have provided Tier One services through 48 classroom lessons covering topics such as study skills, organization, ICAP, and coping skills. I also led 65 small-group sessions for Tier Two students in the school. Finally, I have recorded over 150 individual sessions with students for counseling, academic advisement, and other topics, as needed.

Below are some of the specific outcomes achieved by the program this school year:

- 98% of students who attended small group lessons on study skills improved their grades in two or more classes.
- 100% of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 completed the Career Interest Inventory of their ICAP.
- Seventy-five families attended Oklahoma's Promise family night, and seventy-three successfully applied for Oklahoma's Promise.
- Discipline referrals decreased by 8% after the whole-school Bullying Prevention Assembly and classroom lessons about friendship.

These results demonstrate the effectiveness of both universal and targeted interventions and collaborative efforts in fostering a culture of consistent attendance and academic achievement.



ACTION ITEM

Use this space to create an impact summary statement and identify goals for next year.

STEP FIVE

Repeat Use-of-Time Calculator

The Use-of-Time Calculator helps document how school counselors spend their time and how much time is being spent on appropriate activities versus inappropriate activities.

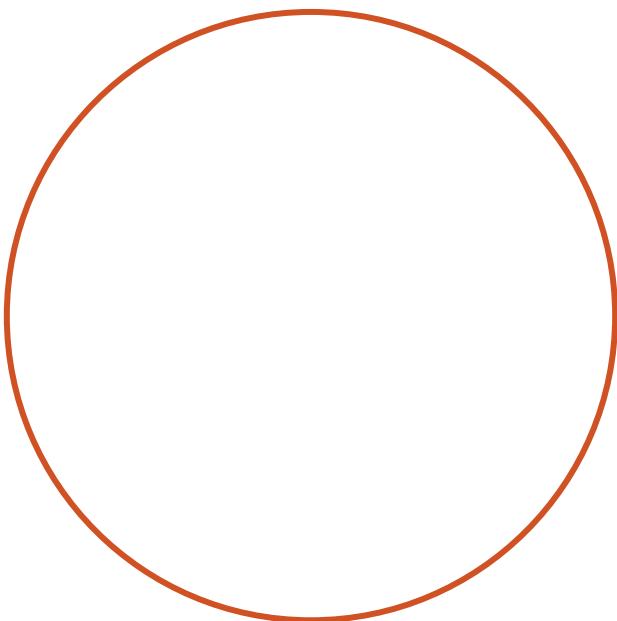


ACTION ITEM

Draw a pie chart reflecting your use-of-time.

Be sure to include time spent on:

1. **Direct Services** such as appraisal/advancement, instruction, and counseling.
2. **Indirect Services** such as referrals, consultation, and collaboration.
3. **Program Planning** and School Support such as reviewing school data, developing goals, and creating action plans as well as fair-share duties.
4. **Non-School Counseling Duties** such as test coordinating, building master schedules, discipline, data entry, clerical responsibilities.



THINK ABOUT IT

What does your data mean for your program?

Which area do you need to prioritize for next year?

Which area do you need to deprioritize for next year?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Awareness Calendar PDF
- Using Calendars in Comprehensive School Counseling

STEP FIVE

Final Administrative Conference

Previously you met with your administrators for your first administrative conference. The final administrative conference provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress of your program through the year and to advocate for necessary changes. Meet with your administrative team again toward the end of the year to review your Impact Summary Statement and to identify what is needed for future success and for continued improvement in student outcomes.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR ROLE AS A CHANGE AGENT

School counselors collect and report data that promotes balanced outcomes among subgroups such as:

- Gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment
- Disproportionate rates of discipline and suspension for various subgroups
- Lower absenteeism rates
- Underrepresentation of various subgroups in rigorous curricula such as concurrent, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate
- Lower participation of various subgroups in post-secondary opportunities

Use this data and your Closing-the-Gap Action Plan during your administrative conference to discuss and address opportunity gaps.



ACTION ITEM

Prepare artifacts that demonstrate your work: calendars, use-of-time calculator, lesson plans, SMART goals, pre/post assessments, what student standards were the focus, etc.

Items to discuss with your administrator.

- How do your school counseling goals align with the school-wide goals?
- What are the issues for growth and focus for the school counseling program moving forward?
- What strategies or initiatives do you believe are most effective in empowering school counselors to serve as change agents within our educational community?
- In planning for the future, how can you overcome barriers and obstacles that you encountered this year?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Annual Administrative Conference
- Closing-the-Gap Action Plan

STEP FIVE

Professional Growth and Continuous Improvement Strategies

School counselors demonstrate the appropriate scope of school counseling practice in varied educational settings and understand their role as a leader, collaborator, advocate, and agent for systemic change. They engage in opportunities to support their professional growth and identity development through ongoing reflection, consultation, and collaboration. Through the creation of a robust Professional Learning Focus (PLF), school counselors have the autonomy to self-reflect and create personalized, measurable goals.

SAMPLE STATEMENTS

- I commit to adopting a personal approach that integrates data-driven decision-making into my counseling practices, adhering to evaluation standards, in order to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of my interventions.
- I will actively work on fostering strong collaborative relationships with educators, administrators, and community partners, in line with evaluation expectations, to create a cohesive and comprehensive approach to student development.
- I will investigate and implement ways to incorporate technology-based tools into my counseling services, complying with evaluation standards, to modernize communication, optimize data management, and enhance the overall efficiency of my counseling program.
- I am dedicated to continuous professional growth and leadership development, in accordance with the evaluation framework, to not only refine my counseling skills but also to make a positive impact on the school community and its environment.



THINK ABOUT IT

To improve and enhance my skills as a professional school counselor and to better serve my students, I will....

To achieve this goal I will...

My timeline for this is...



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- SMART PL Focus

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Crisis and Addendum Information

School counselors work with administrators, teachers, other school staff, families, and community members to provide support during all five stages of crisis management (prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery). Specifically in crisis response, counselors provide immediate and follow-up intervention to meet urgent needs and prevent situations from becoming more severe. School crisis management provides leadership and organization to crisis situations and supplements the direct student service of counseling or other functions with an incident command system initiated during crisis response.

When responding to a crisis, school counselors follow written procedures or guidelines provided by the school or district. It is vital that schools have a comprehensive crisis management plan prepared in the event of a school crisis.



ACTION ITEM

If your school has not adopted a crisis plan, you will want to assemble a team to begin creating one. Your state-required Student Mental Health Protocol is a good starting point for developing a crisis plan. The Oklahoma State Department of Education Crisis Preparedness and Response Team has numerous resources & templates to support you.

Create a contact list of people and agencies who can provide support and assistance during a crisis. Be sure to consider small crises as well as large, more impactful crises.

Review your school crisis plan

- Is it relevant, timely, accurate, and thorough?
- What needs changed or updated?



THINK ABOUT IT

What crises are probable in your district?

What is your role in school-wide crisis response? What training and preparation do you have/need to fulfill this role?

Who else in your building/distict/community can support you with crisis work?

Who in your building or district should be on your crisis team, and what should their roles be?



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- OSDE Crisis Toolkit
- Mental Health Protocol Policy Guidance
- FEMA Incident Command System Guidance
- FEMA Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans
- Oklahoma State Department of Education Crisis Quick Action Guide

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

School Counselor Self-Care

For school counselors, maintaining emotional resilience and providing effective support hinges on prioritizing self-care. The demanding nature of the role, diverse student needs, and complex situations can take a toll emotionally. By focusing on self-care, counselors can recharge, manage stress, and sustain the mental well-being required to offer optimal guidance. It is not only a personal necessity but also a professional imperative that enhances their ability to empower and advocate for students. Self-care involves actively safeguarding one's well-being and happiness and maintaining healthy boundaries, especially during stressful times. Remember, self-care is not selfish; it encompasses caring for hygiene, nutrition, lifestyle, environment, and mental health.



THINK ABOUT IT

- What recharges me?
- What brings me joy?
- How do I find rest?
- What do I need daily, weekly, and monthly?
- What red flags indicate that I am becoming stressed?
- What are my hard boundaries or non-negotiables?
- What are my soft boundaries?



ACTION ITEM

CREATE A SELF-CARE PLAN!

- List three things that help you find balance and reduce stress.

- Identify someone in your building and at home who can help you when you need support.

- My self-care strategies for home:

- My self-care strategies for school:

COLLECTIVE CARE

While self-care is essential, collective care holds equal significance. Collective care emphasizes the importance of extending support to others, including neighbors, community members, colleagues, family, and friends. This concept promotes strategies and practices that benefit everyone within an educational environment, shifting the responsibility for emotional well-being from the individual to the group. Properly implementing collective care can help alleviate burnout, compassion fatigue, and stress.

Both self-care and collective care should be: affordable, sustainable, easy-to-implement, and effective for individuals and the group as a whole.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

- 8 Mindful Practices
- Self-Care Infographic
- My Self-Care Plan

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES
School Counselor Self Care

PHYSICAL STRATEGIES

- Eat healthy and stay hydrated
- Exercise
- Stick to a routine
- Practice good hygiene
- Limit/eliminate alcohol & substance use
- Ensure surroundings are safe & clean
- Take breaks
- Practice breathing & relaxation techniques

SOCIAL NEEDS STRATEGIES

- Stay connected to friends/family who bring you joy
- Perform random acts of kindness
- Volunteer in the community
- Join a support group
- Communicate your feelings with others
- Engage in relationship-building

SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Maintain a schedule for predictability
- Set/monitor daily goals
- Know and monitor signs of stress
- Have quiet time by yourself
- Engage in hobbies
- Limit media exposure
- Journal
- Know your limitations and feel free to say “No”

WORK-BASED STRATEGIES

- Disconnect your email/phone outside of work hours
- Celebrate your/co-workers' successes
- Ask for help when needed
- Take frequent breaks
- Engage in regular consultation with colleagues
- Set realistic work expectations