



OKLAHOMA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING FRAMEWORK



OKLAHOMA
Education

Permission was received to model the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework after the ASCA National Model (4th Edition). Some text and documents were used with permission from the American School Counselor Association, the Oregon Department of Education, and others as cited.

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The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career, and social and emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications, and other resources, research, and advocacy to school counselors around the globe.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education Student Support Division, created by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister, and led by Shelly Ellis, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent of Student Support, provides a holistic approach to supporting educators and families through academic support, alternative education strategies, college and career readiness connections, social and emotional learning resources, and family engagement supports. For more information, visit the [Student Support webpage](#).

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Toni Morrison once stated, "If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework is the unwritten book that we desired to read. To the school counselors of Oklahoma, may this Framework guide you, but may your heart for your students lead the way.

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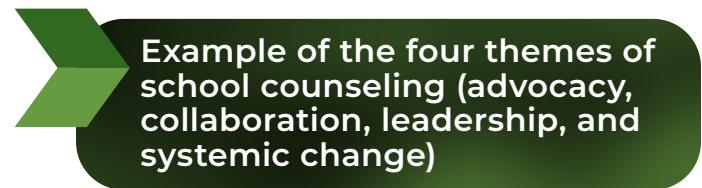
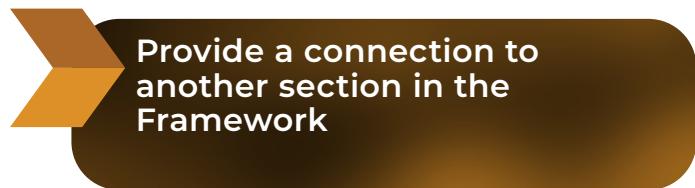
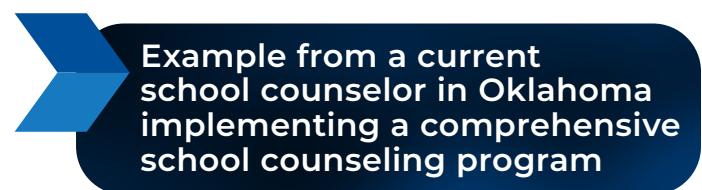
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[Pre-recorded webinars](#) are available for each portion of the ASCA National Model to help as you work towards building and implementing your comprehensive school counseling program.

Key: Throughout the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework there will be boxes with additional information. The color of the arrow determines the type of additional information provided.



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LETTER FROM STATE SUPERINTENDENT HOFMEISTER

Dear Oklahoma School Counselors and Stakeholders,

School counselors have always been keenly aware of the extraordinary challenges our students face every day. As essential members of the school team, they bring extensive expertise to create safe learning environments that address the needs of the whole child, whether that be physical, social and emotional or academic.

Issues like hunger, poverty, and trauma impede academic success for hundreds of thousands of Oklahoma students. School counselors connect students to community resources that can work to solidify equity and shrink achievement gaps. Equipping students with the tools to meet the most basic of needs removes barriers to the schoolhouse and reduces chronic absenteeism.

Often the bedrock of meaningful relationships with students, school counselors are key advocates for student success. Building a rapport with a trusted adult at school can in turn reduce bullying, identify an individualized need or mitigate in-school or out-of-school trauma. School counselors also guide young people through their academic journey. Development of an Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP) is a multi-year process in which school counselors assist students as they explore postsecondary opportunities. ICAPs are intended to be implemented through a schoolwide approach led by school counselors with expertise in career development.

We continue to work toward transformational change in school counseling in Oklahoma. In 2021, Oklahoma invested \$35.7 million of COVID relief funds in the School Counselor Corps, dramatically increasing the number of school counselors across the state. Now, we hope that this framework strengthens the services provided by school counselors, increases the understanding of the role of the school counselor and results in better outcomes for our Oklahoma students.



Sincerely,
Joy Hofmeister
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



INTRODUCTION TO THE OKLAHOMA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING FRAMEWORK

THE PURPOSE

The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework has been developed to ensure school counselors have the support needed to meet the needs of all students in our ever-changing world. The Oklahoma State Department of Education believes every child deserves and must have the opportunity for a strong, competitive education that can lead to a productive and fulfilling life. School counselors are vital members of the educational team that strives to make this vision a reality.

The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework clearly defines the role of the school counselor in 21st century education for students, caregivers, educators, school counselors, administrators, boards of education, school districts, communities, and business and industry. The Framework describes essential program elements that allow schools to design and develop their own programs appropriate to their unique student and community priorities. Utilizing the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, the Framework provides a tool for systemic change, a way of defining school counseling as a program for every student rather than a service for some.

This Framework affirms the pivotal role of the school counselor in Oklahoma's educational institutions and challenges schools to define their school counseling programs based on research and evidence-based best practices.

The Framework recommends concepts, definitions, and direction for development and continuous improvement. **The Framework does not suggest that districts will be able to do everything envisioned here initially. Rather, the Framework 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.



THE ASCA NATIONAL MODEL

Now, in its fourth edition, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, first created in 2003, outlines the components of a school counseling program that is integral to the school's academic mission and is created to have a significant positive impact on student achievement, attendance, and discipline. The ASCA National Model requires school counselors to adapt programs to be comprehensive in scope, results-oriented in design, and developmental in nature.

WHAT ARE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS?

Comprehensive school counseling programs benefit a wide array of stakeholders. When implemented, these programs provide numerous avenues for positive current and future outcomes for stakeholders. These programs ideally provide equitable access for all students to gain the skills to promote lifetime learning, decision-making, long-range planning, career self-management, and social development to become responsible members of their community and world.

Comprehensive programs assure that caregivers are provided access to available school and community resources. Through the employment of a comprehensive school counseling program a positive, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approach is established between all educators: teachers, counselors, and administrators. Furthermore, these programs define the school counselor's role as an educator, collaborator, and consultant, as well as the school counselor's role in meeting student's needs and achievement outcomes. In addition, a comprehensive program clarifies the critical functions of the counseling program. The clarification of roles is further emphasized through the tools provided for program management, delivery, and assessment, which provide administrators and boards of education with the narrative and data necessary for advocating for systemic change and fiscal support for full implementation of comprehensive programs. Additionally, business and industry, and in turn the greater community, become aware of the mental health, social service agencies, and other support systems necessary for student success. This creates the opportunity for collaboration with a variety of stakeholders to support the comprehensive school counseling program.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR VS. SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Historically, the term “guidance counselor” was used to refer to counselors working in the schools. This term has evolved to “school counselor” as the scope of duties has changed and evolved. Although some schools still use the outdated “guidance counselor” term, the American School Counselor Association encourages the use of “school counselor” to more accurately reflect the role. Additionally, research has found that “guidance counselors” are perceived as less competent than “school counselors.”

Guidance counselors of the past:

- Reactive
- Services to some
- Impact measured via feelings and perceptions
- Ancillary role to school improvement process
- Work in isolation

School counselors of today:

- Proactive/data-driven
- Program for all
- Impact measured via achievement, attendance, and behavior data
- Essential role in the school improvement process
- School counselors as school leaders
- Develop, manage and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program

WHY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING?

Redefines roles

Comprehensive school counseling programs are **developmental, proactive and preventative**. They enhance learning by assisting students to acquire critical skills for lifelong learning and success. **When school counselors create a comprehensive school counseling program, they are able to help every student improve academic achievement, navigate social and emotional learning and prepare for successful careers after graduation.** Because of their helping nature, school counselors often respond to reactive needs in a school. While this is inevitable at times, if school counselors are only reactive, preventative supports are forgotten. Comprehensive school counseling ensures school counselors maintain focus on proactive preventative approaches, in the form of program goals, action plans, calendars, and use of time.

Determines direction

A comprehensive school counseling program establishes direction through developing vision and mission statements, annual calendars, action plans and incorporating the Oklahoma Student Standards. Comprehensive school counselors embrace professional standards and models for best practice in the field. A lack of direction often yields actions irrelevant. **When the final destination is clear, school counselors know what to do to get there.**

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, equity, and advocacy to promote systemic change and positive student outcomes.

Bountiful benefits

The [research shows](#) that **students benefit from comprehensive school counseling programs**. There is improvement in reading and math achievement, decreased discipline referrals, improved school climates, and increased student attendance.¹ Additionally, when school counselors operate from a comprehensive school counseling program, the clarity of tasks improves overall function.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD



“I have worked in an elementary school, a high school, and now at the district level. Sometimes it seems that high school counselors think that comprehensive school counseling and the ASCA National Model is not possible in high schools and that it is only for elementary school counselors. We need to work towards shifting the mindset of school counselors, administrators, and educators so that all students, PK-12th grade, have access to comprehensive school counseling.”

**Jessica, District SEL Counselor
Union Public Schools**

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The ASCA National Model presents journal articles that examine the impact of school counseling programs on student outcomes.

THE OKLAHOMA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING FRAMEWORK VISION, MISSION, AND BELIEFS

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework is that every school in Oklahoma implements a comprehensive school counseling program in which 100% of the school counselor's time is devoted to the support of student academic success, social and emotional development, and college and career readiness.

Through a comprehensive school counseling program as outlined in the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework, students will acquire and demonstrate the skills to be lifelong learners and leaders. Oklahoma students are equipped to face the challenges and the opportunities of today's world throughout their PK-12 educational experiences and beyond.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework is to provide evidence-based resources and supports to build comprehensive school counseling programs that meet the needs of all students across the state. The Framework equips school counselors to partner with students, parents, educators, administrators, boards of education, school districts, preparation programs, communities, as well as business and industry to create supportive, safe, nurturing, and academically-focused learning environments for all students. All school counselors design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that are proactive, preventative, and improve student outcomes. Through collaboration, comprehensive school counselors in Oklahoma will have the support to serve all students equitably as they prepare them for success in the ever-changing world of the 21st century.

BELIEFS

The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework was established with the following beliefs in mind:

- Every student can learn, and every student can succeed.
- Every student should have access to, and opportunity for, a high-quality education.
- Every student should graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities.
- Every student should have access to a comprehensive school counseling program.
- Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving school counselors, students, families, teachers, administrators, and education stakeholders.
- School counselors are leaders in the school, district, state, and nation.
- Comprehensive school counseling programs enhance student academic, career, and social and emotional outcomes.

BENEFITS TO STAKEHOLDERS

Benefits for students

A comprehensive school counseling program:

- Prepares students for the challenges of the future by supporting their academic, career, and social and emotional development
- Provides a developmental and preventative focus
- Facilitates academic development and increased achievement
- Promotes college and career readiness
- Strengthens understanding of the self and others in a diverse society
- Ensures equitable access to educational opportunities

CONNECTION

The cadre of school counselors who created the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework created a mission, vision, and beliefs aligned with those of the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Similarly, school counselors should create a mission, vision, and beliefs that align with their school's vision and mission (page 35).

Benefits for the educational community

A comprehensive school counseling program:

- Supports the academic success of each student by integrating school counseling with the academic mission of the school
- Enhances the role of the school counselor as a resource and a student advocate
- Clearly defines the role and function of the school counselor
- Provides a quantitative means of evaluating school comprehensive counseling programs
- Provides a counseling program that is responsive to local needs
- Encourages positive, collaborative working relationships

Benefits for caregivers

A comprehensive school counseling program:

- Increases opportunities for collaboration and communication between caregivers and the school
- Improves caregivers' understanding of the school counseling program and its benefits
- Assists caregivers in obtaining necessary resources
- Ensures academic, postsecondary, and career planning for every student
- Provides support for caregivers regarding each child's educational development and in advocating for their child's academic, career, and personal development

Benefits for the community and the workforce

A comprehensive school counseling program:

- Supports both preparedness and readiness necessary for students' success in the workforce by providing future employees with decision-making skills, pre-employment skills, increased worker maturity, and career self-management skills
- Provides increased opportunities for schools to collaborate with the business community
- Supports economic growth by building a qualified workforce
- Facilitates the development of students as active, responsible citizens
- Encourages greater interaction between the school and the community

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“Without a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors spend their time being responsive, scheduling, or supervising recess. This is ineffective. School counselors need autonomy with accountability.”

**Lisa, Elementary School Counselor
Tulsa Public Schools**

FOUR THEMES OF SCHOOL COUNSELING

The four themes of school counseling: **advocacy, collaboration, leadership, and systemic change** are integral components of a comprehensive school counseling program.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

As educational leaders, school counselors are ideally situated to advocate for every student in meeting high academic, career, and social and emotional needs. Advocating for the academic achievement of every student is a key role of school counselors and places them at the forefront of efforts to promote school reform.

To promote student achievement, school counselors advocate for students' academic, career, and social and emotional, development needs and work to ensure these needs are addressed throughout the PK-12 school experience. School counselors believe, support, and promote every student's opportunity to achieve success in school.

- **Student Advocacy:** Assessing the need for direct intervention within the system on behalf of the student, identifying allies and carrying out a plan of action
- **School/Community Collaboration:** Actions where the school counselor and community collaborate to address a problem and devise an advocacy plan
- **Systems Advocacy:** Identifying systemic problems, gaining information and insight from those who are most affected and implementing advocacy at a systems level
- **Social/Political Advocacy:** Recognizing when student problems must be addressed at a policy or legislative level and advocating for change within those areas

ADVOCACY FOR EQUITY



Horace Mann stated that “education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of conditions of men.” Public education was designed to bridge the inequalities of society to ensure all students the opportunity to excel in school and in life. This tenet has been challenged in recent years as the achievement and opportunity gaps in our schools continue to grow. School counselors are uniquely equipped to advocate on behalf of students to support their social and emotional, academic, and career development needs. (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016)

WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

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 encouraging success for every student.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

ASCA believes that school counselor leaders are “culturally responsive change agents who integrate instructional and school counseling best practices to initiate, develop and implement equitable services and programs for all students.” Effective school counselor leadership requires visionary thinking, challenging inequities, shared decision making, collaborative processing, modeling excellence and a courageous stance. Implementing a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the needs of all students is a proactive way in which school counselors can establish themselves as leaders within their school and district. Leadership enhances the school counselors’ ability to implement and sustain data-driven comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors can implement a program addressing the social and emotional, academic, and college and career development needs of all students through the use of leadership practices. Mason & McMahon (2009) believe that leadership may be the foundation of other essential skills needed for program implementation. John Maxwell said, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.” School counselors are perfectly situated to do this and make tremendous impacts in students’ lives.

FROM DOER TO LEADER

Being a doer means doing what is needed to react and respond to the needs of students and day-to-day happenings in a school. However, being a leader means removing barriers and creating a sustainable impact on the outcomes of all students. A leader responds to problems with data-informed options that result in systemic solutions. **In school counseling, we must be leaders; being a doer is simply not enough.** The needs of Oklahoma students demand that all school counselors move beyond reacting to leading. (Young, 2019)

WHAT IS SYSTEMIC CHANGE?

Schools are a system. When an event occurs that impacts one member or part of the system, it affects other, and often all other, parts of the system. Comprehensive school counseling programs are an important part of the school's system.

With the expectation to serve the diverse needs of every student, school counselors are uniquely positioned to identify systemic barriers that create or reinforce inequity and prevent students from achieving academic, career, and social and emotional success. Systemic barriers may exist at any level -- from classroom procedures to school practices to district policies to state and federal laws. School counselors are models and leaders in working with all stakeholders to remove systemic barriers.

Systemic change takes time and occurs when inequitable policies, procedures, and attitudes are changed, promoting equity and access to educational opportunities for all students. Such change happens through the sustained involvement of all critical players in the school setting, including, and often led by, school counselors. Leadership, advocacy, and collaboration are key strategies needed to create systemic change.

Examples of systemic change that promote equitable treatment of all students:

- Remove barriers and increase access to rigorous courses and learning paths for postsecondary education and career readiness for all students
- Create clear guidelines for addressing inappropriate behavior such as bullying and harassment
- Increase awareness of school safety issues
- Promote knowledge and skills for working in a diverse and multicultural work setting
- Address over-representation or under-representation of specific groups in programs such as special education and gifted education
- Model inclusive language

“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu

MAYA ANGELOU ON SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Maya Angelou summed up the need for systemic change when she stated, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” An unknown author added, “If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.” Systemic changes require that school counselors and administrators let go of systems that are no longer working and replace them with systems that support all students’ individualized needs.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING ASSOCIATIONS

Joining a professional association serves many purposes, from learning of job opportunities to relevant professional development and remaining updated on important policies and industry standards. Understanding the codes of ethics and best practice in the field are also benefits provided by state and national associations. Membership to a state association is important early in a career, yet it is never too late to join.

The Oklahoma School Counselor Association (OSCA) is a chartered state division of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) that supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, social and emotional, and career development, so students achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. OSCA's mission is "to promote excellence in the profession of school counseling by empowering, leading, and advocating for school counselors and the students they serve."

The Oklahoma Counseling Association (OCA) is a chartered state division of the American Counseling Association (ACA). OCA "provides educational opportunities, support, and a community for counselors of all types." OCA has a division specifically for school counselors called the "Oklahoma Professional School Counselor Organization (OPSCO)."

Through a common vision, school counselors can utilize professional counseling associations to help them grow professionally and personally.

CONNECTION

In the words of the chair of ASCA's Ethics Committee, Dr. Carolyn Stone, "Professionalism for school counselors is a legal and ethical imperative. The guiding principles of professionalism help us maintain our standing with our peers, teachers, staff members, administrators, parents, students, and with the courts. School counselors develop their principles of professional behavior through membership in their professional organizations, continuing education, networking with peers, and attendance at workshops and conferences."

ASCA NATIONAL MODEL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ASCA National Model guides school counselors in the development of school counseling programs that are:

- Based on data-informed decision making
- Delivered to all students systematically
- Developmentally appropriate and include curriculum focused on the mindsets and behaviors all students need for postsecondary readiness and success
- Created to close achievement and opportunity gaps
- Results-oriented to improve student achievement, attendance, and discipline

TRAINING AND CREDENTIALING MATTERS.

School counselors are certified educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling, making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, career, and social and emotional development needs through the implementation of a school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success.

RATIOS MATTER.

[Research shows](#) that appropriate student-to-school-counselor ratios have a significant effect on student attendance and lead to higher test scores. The ideal caseload is 250:1.

Oklahoma's average student-to-school counselor ratio is 411 to 1. ASCA recommends a 250 to 1 ratio.

Data from 2020

The framework consists of four components: define, manage, deliver, and assess.

DEFINE

Three sets of school counseling standards define the school counseling profession. These standards help new and experienced school counselors develop, implement, and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes.

STUDENT STANDARDS

- Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

MANAGE

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.

PROGRAM FOCUS

- Beliefs
- Vision statement
- Mission statement

PROGRAM PLANNING

- School data summary
- Annual student outcome goals
- Action plans
- Lesson plans
- Annual administrative conference
- Use of time
- Calendars
- Advisory council

USE OF TIME

School Counselors should spend no more than **20%** of their time in program planning and school support activities. (Including program defining, managing and assessing tasks and fair-share responsibilities)

DELIVER

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 Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success and improve their achievement, attendance, and discipline.

DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

- Instruction
- Appraisal and advisement
- Counseling

INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

ASSESS

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

The ASCA National Model provides the following tools to guide assessment and appraisal.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- School counseling program assessment
- Annual results reports

SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSESSMENT AND APPRAISAL

- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment
- School counselor performance appraisal template

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AMENDMENT FOR STAKEHOLDERS

As described in the National Model Executive Summary, comprehensive school counseling as outlined by the ASCA National Model, guides school counselors in the development of school counseling programs that best serve all students.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

Caregivers, the press, administrators, and the general public may wonder what school counselors do on a daily basis. Gone are the days of school counselors sitting in their offices simply handing out college applications, making schedule changes for students who want to drop a class, or waiting for a crisis to occur. Today's school counselors are vital members of the education team. School counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes. They lead, advocate, and collaborate to promote equity and access for all students by connecting their school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan. Comprehensive school counselors help **all students** in the areas of academic achievement, career, and social and emotional development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.

HOW CAN A SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS?

Appropriate school counseling duties include providing direct and indirect student services.

WHAT DO DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

- Sitewide school counseling classroom lessons based on the Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success
- Small-group counseling
- Individual student academic planning and goal setting
- Short-term counseling to students

WHAT DO INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

- Referrals for long-term support
- Collaboration with caregivers, teachers, administrators, and community for student success
- Advocacy for students at student-focused meetings
- Data analysis to identify student issues, needs, and challenges

USE OF TIME

School counselors should spend a minimum of **80%** of their time providing direct and indirect student services.

WHY SHOULD OUR DISTRICT IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING?

School counselors are certified educators with a minimum of a master's degree. The master's degree in counseling ranges from 33 credit hours to 60 credit hours, with some programs requiring up to 700 internship hours. This extensive training makes school counselors uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, career, and social and emotional development needs. Utilizing school counselors to change schedules, coordinate testing, or other administrative duties is not a useful application of their extensive skill set in counseling.

[A number of recent journal articles](#) have researched and examined the impact of school counselors and school counseling programs on PK-12 student outcomes. The research articles support the value of comprehensive school counseling for students in the domains of academic development, college and career readiness, and social and emotional development when school counselors are utilized correctly.

HOW CAN DISTRICTS SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING?

SCHOOL COUNSELOR AND PRINCIPAL PARTNERSHIPS:

The school counselor and principal relationship is a dynamic and organic relationship that evolves over time in response to a school's ever-changing needs. The goal is to use the strength of the relationship to collaboratively lead school reform efforts to increase achievement for all students. The desired outcome of an effective school counselor and principal relationship is to raise achievement levels for all students and ensure equity in educational outcomes. [Research](#) suggests that **communication, collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared vision** are the key elements to an effective partnership. School counselors and principals benefit from prioritizing a consistent time to meet weekly to discuss goals.

DISTRICT-LEVEL LEADERSHIP:

[School counseling directors/coordinates](#) provide leadership, advocacy, and collaboration at the school, district, and state levels to ensure the development, implementation, and assessment of school counseling programs that benefit **all students**. District leadership trained in school counseling provides the needed support to ensure school counselors receive ongoing and relevant professional development, support during ethical dilemmas or crises, and more. Meeting monthly with district-level leadership and school counselors from across the district in professional learning communities is beneficial.

District-level school counseling leadership also provides direction to school administrators to ensure the appropriate use of school counselors. This collaborative effort ensures **all students** are served by a comprehensive school counseling program.

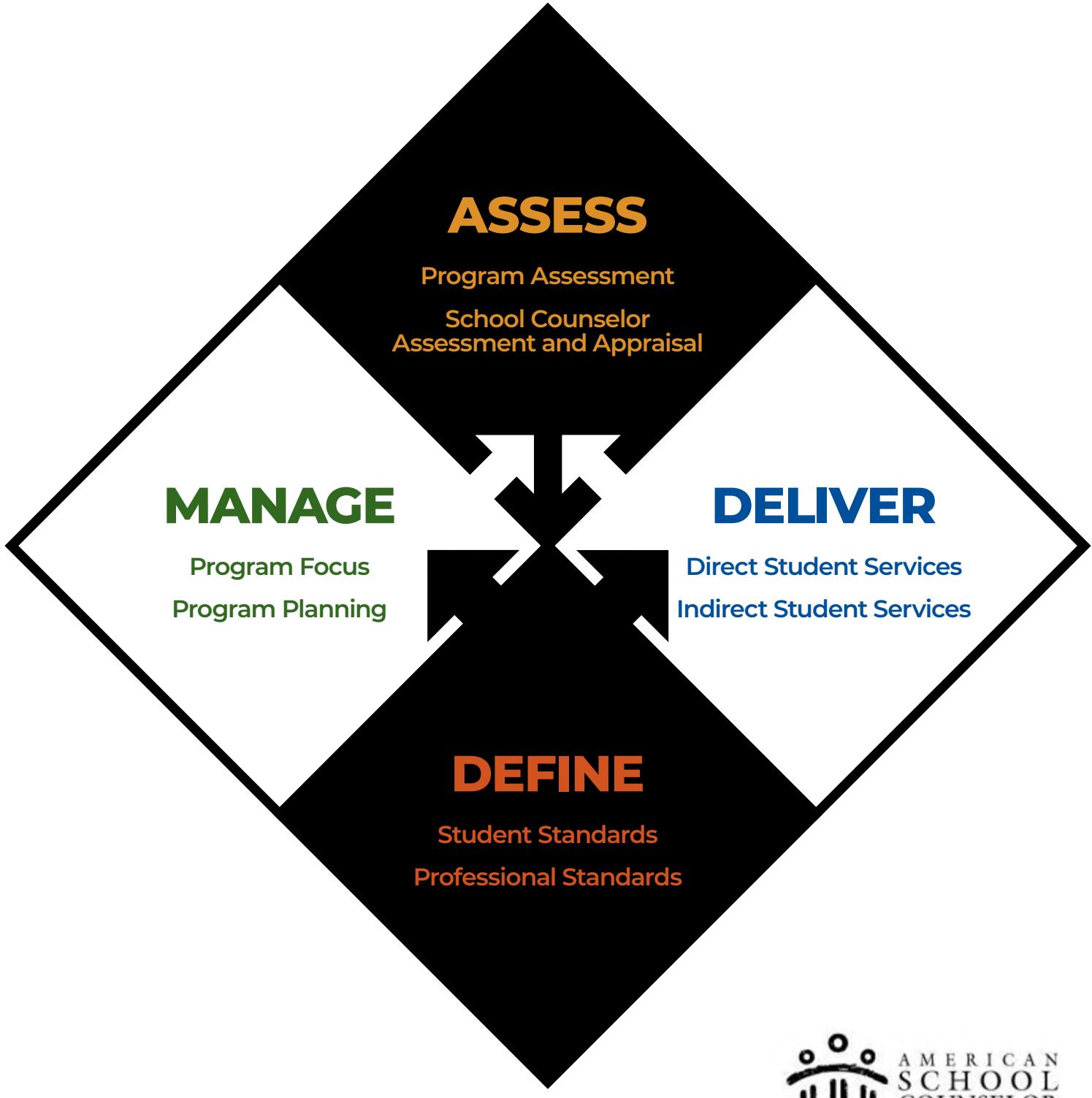
If a district is unable to provide district-level leadership with a background in school counseling, it is recommended that the district assign and compensate a lead school counselor who is well-versed in comprehensive school counseling to fill the void. Additionally, pairing new school counselors with a mentor school counselor in the district can be incredibly beneficial.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“The importance of district leadership that is informed about effective school counseling and believes in the role of a school counselor cannot be understated. District leadership is imperative to provide oversight, processes, procedures, instruction, professional development, and support for a district’s school counselors. Developing the consistency needed to create a comprehensive school counseling program must come from the district’s administrative level so that schools and counselors can operate on the same page and provide equity to students. Additionally, district level leadership is needed in order to advocate for the appropriate role of a school counselor so that they can effectively perform their roles and support students.”

Michelle, Instructional Facilitator of Counseling
Mid-Del Public Schools

THE OKLAHOMA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING FRAMEWORK



DEFINE

Three sets of school counseling standards **define** the school counseling profession. These standards help new and experienced school counselors develop, implement, and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes.

- 1. Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success**
- 2. ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors**
- 3. ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies**

The **Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success** are the student standards that all school counselors in Oklahoma use to assess student growth and development, guide the development of strategies and activities, and create a program that helps students achieve their highest potential.

The **Ethical Standards** and the **Professional Standards & Competencies** are the school counselor standards that all school counselors in Oklahoma use. The **Ethical Standards** specify the principles of ethical behavior. The **Professional Standards & Competencies** ensure school counselors are able to establish, maintain, and enhance a comprehensive school counseling program addressing academic achievement, career planning, and social and emotional development.

RACISM AND BIAS IN SCHOOLS: THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S ROLE

As you define, manage, deliver, and assess your comprehensive school counseling program, it is vital that all school counselors understand their role in eliminating racism and bias in schools. School counselors have a unique opportunity to be an important part of the solution. Through a school counseling program, school counselors promote equity and access for all students and make a significant impact on creating a school culture free from racism and bias. Advancing equity and addressing racism will look different from school to school. However, all school counselors are ethically obligated to directly address racism and bias in schools.

DEFINE

OKLAHOMA STUDENT STANDARDS: MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The [Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#) describe the knowledge, attitudes and skills students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness and social and emotional development. The standards are based on a survey of research and best practices in student achievement from a wide array of educational standards and efforts.

The 36 Student Standards are broad standards that identify and describe the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should be able to demonstrate as a result of a school counseling program. School counselors use the standards to assess student growth and development, create culturally sustaining strategies and activities and build a program that helps students achieve their highest potential.

- **Category 1: Mindset Standards** – Includes standards related to the psychosocial attitudes or beliefs students have about themselves in relation to academic work. These make up the students' belief system as exhibited in behaviors.
- **Category 2: Behavior Standards** – These standards include behaviors commonly associated with being a successful student. These behaviors are visible, outward signs a student is engaged and putting forth effort to learn. The behaviors are grouped into three subcategories:
 - **Learning Strategies:** Processes and tactics students employ to aid in the cognitive work of thinking, remembering or learning

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

"I use the Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success as the framework for the lessons, small groups, and interventions that I develop. They help me answer the question, 'What is the one thing I want students to learn from this intervention?'"

Missy, Elementary School Counselor
Norman Public Schools

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

"The Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success are well-rounded and address social and emotional skills as well as academic and college- and career-readiness skills. Plus, ICAP activities match well with the Student Standards. The Student Standards serve as a great tool to reference when planning counseling lessons or selecting curriculum. Quality curriculum seems to encompass many of the Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success in just one lesson."

Lauren, 11th- and 12th-Grade
School Counselor
Elk City Public Schools

DEFINE

- **Self-Management Skills:** Continued focus on a goal despite obstacles and avoidance of distractions or temptations to prioritize higher pursuits over lower pleasures
- **Social Skills:** Acceptable behaviors that improve social interactions

CONNECTION

In this section, school counseling programs are **defined**. This includes defining the student standards as the Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success. In the next section, school counseling programs are **managed**. This includes using the Student Standards action plan template to plan for classroom instruction and small group instruction. It helps school counselors create an effective plan to identify which Student Standards are taught through classroom and group activities. In the following section, school counseling programs are **delivered**. This includes delivering small group and classroom instruction according to the Student Standards. Finally, school counseling programs are **assessed**. This includes assessing to determine which Student Standards students learned through participation in school counseling activities and provides data useful for program planning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES ALIGNED WITH THE STUDENT STANDARDS: MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

To operationalize the standards, school counselors write or select measurable learning objectives that align with specific mindsets or behaviors, which become the foundation for classroom instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling activities addressing student developmental needs. The learning objectives directly reflect the school counseling program's vision, mission, and goals, as well as the school's academic mission.

A learning objective is a one-sentence statement that describes what students will learn as a result of participation in a school counseling activity. Use the [Learning Objectives Database](#) to search for learning objectives that support the standards. Searches can be completed by keyword, grade level, domain or standard. Each learning objective is designed to meet student developmental needs and align with academic content. The database also allows school counselors to contribute new learning objectives that support and align with a specific standard.

STUDENT STANDARDS: MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES BY LEVEL AND STANDARD

In an effort to further define the [Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#), sample activities have been created for each level to be utilized in small groups and schoolwide. School counselors are not required to do these activities. School counselors are also not expected to create activities for each Student Standards annually. Instead, school counselors determine the mindsets and behaviors based on the needs of their school and students. ([See Data Collection beginning on page 38.](#)) While the school counselor leads the comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors collaborate with educators and other stakeholders in the implementation and delivery of the Student Standards within the school's comprehensive school counseling program.

Note: These are just sample activities. Some activities could be done at various grade levels.

CASEL COMPETENCIES AND STUDENT STANDARDS: MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS ALIGNMENT

The key indicates the overlap between the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) five core competencies related to Social and Emotional Learning and the Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success. The Behaviors are highlighted to represent which core competency aligns. To learn more about the connection between the Mindsets & Behaviors and the CASEL competencies, view the webinar [“SEL + School Counseling = Thriving Students”](#) presented by Wood, Martin, & Kern

Key
Responsible Decision Making
Self-Awareness and Self-Management
Social Awareness and Relationship Skills

Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success	Sample activities for early childhood and elementary	Sample activities for middle school	Sample activities for high school
MINDSET STANDARDS			
M 1. Belief in development of whole self, including healthy balance of mental, social and emotional and physical well-being	Students will participate in activities that encourage healthy daily habits such as exercise, mindfulness, and making healthy food choices. Implement "Mindful Mondays" or "Wellness Wednesdays."	Students will have access to and be encouraged to participate in activities that improve their mental, social and emotional, and physical well-being. Activities might include suicide awareness presentation, peer relationships lessons, social media safety awareness.	Students will complete a self-assessment of mental, social and emotional, and physical well-being.
M 2. Sense of acceptance, respect, support and inclusion for self and others in the school environment	Students will participate in schoolwide morning meetings and/or community circles.	Students will receive ongoing support through social and emotional learning lessons with an emphasis on teamwork and collaboration. Students will be encouraged to join clubs, fine arts activities, or sports activities.	Students will complete a survey on belonging in the school environment, and staff will use the data to develop opportunities for all students to build community.
M 3. Positive attitude toward work and learning	Students will learn ways to develop a growth mindset.	Students will gain an understanding of individual learning styles and how to use these styles to improve their academic performance.	As part of the ICAP process, students will complete an online work values inventory to identify what motivates them to work and learn, then use this knowledge in the process of choosing a career pathway as well as internships or service learning projects
M 4. Self-confidence in ability to succeed	Students will learn about learning styles, study skills, and/or test-taking skills.	Students will practice skills that lead to success, including time management and positive self-talk utilizing learning style assessments tied with study skills.	Students will take online skills inventories as part of the ICAP process.

M 5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes	Students and staff will have access to a resource library of tools to reinforce the connection of effort and outcomes.	Students will be made aware of and utilize tutoring and other support systems for learning as needed.	Students will be given opportunities to share about a time they were successful and what contributed to their success.
M 6. Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are necessary for long-term success	Students will participate in interest-based lessons that help them enhance motivation to learn.	Students will learn to set long-term goals and complete ICAP introductory activities focusing on the levels of education required for various pathways within career clusters. Students will participate in extracurricular fairs and consider enrollment in exploratory classes and clubs.	Students will complete the ICAP process including online interest inventories and skill assessments, as well as create a personal plan to complete the post-secondary educational requirements needed for the career pathways they choose to pursue.

BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

LEARNING STRATEGIES	Sample activities for early childhood & elementary	Sample activities for middle school	Sample activities for high school
B-LS 1. Critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions	Students will participate in group work, have opportunities to express creativity, and learn to evaluate pros/cons of ideas. Students will learn appropriate ways to handle conflict resolution.	Students will be given opportunities for recognizing assumptions, evaluating differing arguments, and drawing conclusions (such as Socratic questioning).	Students will evaluate and analyze world views/differences. Students will utilize daily journaling when making decisions about plans.
B-LS 2. Creative approach to learning, tasks and problem solving	Students will be given opportunities for dramatic play, creative writing, creating art using multiple mediums, and other activities to promote creativity.	Students will be given opportunities for novel/creative uses for familiar situations and objects.	Students will learn ways to incorporate their passions and hobbies into future plans. Students will use poems and song lyrics to describe emotions and experiences.
B-LS 3. Time-management, organizational, and study skills	Students will be able to describe the value and importance of school/education, setting goals, and learning.	Students will practice utilizing organizational tools such as binders, digital folders and school agendas.	Students will identify resources and obstacles in achieving their current and postsecondary educational goals.

<p>B-LS 4. Self-motivation and self-direction for learning</p>	<p>Students will learn work habits that lead to school success.</p>	<p>Students will be introduced to the use of a school planner/agenda to manage lessons and activities both in school and outside of school. Students will analyze situations predicting good and bad consequences resulting from decisions made in learning situations.</p>	<p>Students will create and follow a written plan of steps and a timeline to complete a project.</p>
<p>B-LS 5. Media and technology skills to enhance learning</p>	<p>Students will learn steps to increase internet safety and appropriate use of technology.</p>	<p>Students will learn the importance of appropriate use of social media and other digital platforms, and the importance of reporting inappropriate content.</p> <p>Students will use media and technology to enhance learning such as Prezi, Canva, Flipgrid, Kahoot, etc.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate media/technology skills through online tools such as OKCareerGuide or OKCollegeStart as an integral part of the ICAP process.</p> <p>School staff will use social media to share important dates and deadlines with students and caregivers.</p>
<p>B-LS 6. High-quality standards for tasks and activities</p>	<p>Students will learn about a growth mindset and the importance of effort in attaining goals.</p>	<p>Students will attend school in a climate that prioritizes academic and relational engagement, student effort, and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Students will develop a portfolio of their best work.</p>
<p>B-LS 7. Long- and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals</p>	<p>Students will learn what goals are and how to set personal goals.</p>	<p>Students will learn what a SMART goal is and create a SMART goal for their academic year.</p>	<p>Students will set goals, make a specific plan of how to reach those goals, and evaluate their progress periodically.</p>

<p>B-LS 8. Engagement in challenging coursework</p>	<p>Students will learn about igniting their purpose and passion for achieving at high levels.</p> <p>Students will learn how to use positive self-talk when engaging in challenging situations.</p>	<p>Students will learn about rigor and will be able to identify rigorous coursework.</p> <p>Students will learn about perseverance and determination looking at individuals as successful examples.</p>	<p>Students will attend school in an environment that encourages the mindset that learning is the goal and reduces the importance of letter grades in order to facilitate taking risks.</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to take more rigorous coursework based on the use of informal and formal data (teacher opinion, standardized test results, etc.).</p>
<p>B-LS 9. Decision-making informed by gathering evidence, getting others' perspectives and recognizing personal bias</p>	<p>Students will read texts from various viewpoints in order to learn the concept of perspective.</p>	<p>Students will incorporate listening skills to address interpersonal conflict in peer mediation or conflict resolution activities.</p>	<p>Students will participate in activities that help them to see situations from the perspective of people different from themselves and participate in restorative circles.</p>
<p>B-LS 10. Participation in enrichment and extracurricular activities</p>	<p>Students will participate in enrichment activities (possibly led by colleges/career techs), clubs, and other extracurricular opportunities.</p>	<p>Students will have access to clubs, activities, and other available opportunities within the school and the community.</p>	<p>Students will participate in a schoolwide club/organization recruitment fair that includes both school and community opportunities.</p>
<p>SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS</p>	<p>Sample activities for early childhood & elementary</p>	<p>Sample activities for middle school</p>	<p>Sample activities for high school</p>
<p>B-SMS 1. Responsibility for self and actions</p>	<p>Students will participate in restorative circles.</p> <p>Students self-reflect on the consequences of their actions in social situations.</p>	<p>Students will participate in adult-facilitated discussions to provide opportunities for restorative justice.</p> <p>Through ICAP activities, students identify their responsibilities for planning for their futures.</p>	<p>Students will participate in round table discussions about current events and discuss ways restorative justice could be utilized.</p>

<p>B-SMS 2. Self-discipline and self-control</p>	<p>Students will learn and practice listening skills, following directions, and/or mindfulness techniques.</p>	<p>Students will identify appropriate coping strategies and use them in context.</p> <p>Students will participate in class/small-group discussions on how self-control could impact academic success, future careers, and/or relationships with peers, family members, future co-workers, etc.</p>	<p>Students in need of additional support may participate in a check-in/check-out program with school staff.</p>
<p>B-SMS 3. Independent work</p>	<p>Students will participate in self-managing and goal-setting tasks: bell work/launch tasks, collecting needed materials and executing a task, emotion regulation, and/or goal-setting and tracking.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate how to chunk large assignments into manageable sizes.</p>	<p>Students will review skills for time management and pacing to complete individual projects and tasks.</p>
<p>B-SMS 4. Delayed gratification for long-term rewards</p>	<p>Students will participate in an MTSS token economy/reward system based on goal attainment and school achievement.</p>	<p>Students will learn to track their own behavioral, academic, and/or attendance data to see progress toward a pre-established reward.</p> <p>Students will build a Goal Map, showing short-term goals that lead to a long-term goal.</p>	<p>Students will understand the importance of building resumes for future use in college and career experiences.</p>
<p>B-SMS 5. Perseverance to achieve long and short-term goals</p>	<p>Students will define “perseverance” as a vocabulary word. Students will observe interactive modeling to understand what perseverance looks and sounds like. Students will use role-play to practice perseverance.</p>	<p>Students will establish and work toward the achievement of positive and realistic short- and long-term goals identifying both obstacles to achieving goals and supports that help them achieve goals.</p> <p>Students will develop a plan and action steps with reasonable timeframes for completion.</p>	<p>Students will practice tracking their own academic progress and grade-point averages and activities quarterly, by semester, and annually to support their goal achievement.</p>
<p>B-SMS 6. Ability to identify and overcome barriers</p>	<p>Students will practice the concept of a growth mindset.</p>	<p>Students will learn to recognize when and how to ask for help.</p>	<p>Students will be provided with supports and resources to help them overcome barriers and will demonstrate how to access those supports and resources.</p>

B-SMS 7. Effective coping skills	Students will be taught and practice mindfulness and deep breathing.	Students will review and discuss a list of coping strategies adding additional skills they may be aware of, then will identify the ones that best work for them.	Students will participate in lessons on suicide prevention.
B-SMS 8. Balance of school, home and community activities	Caregivers of students will be provided with time management skills and recommendations to help their students balance responsibilities, including bedtimes, outside activities, home responsibilities, and school expectations.	Students will be guided, and then will practice using a planner/agenda to balance school requirements, extracurricular activities, and home responsibilities.	Students will make a visual representation of the time they spend on various activities and compare it to a visual representation of the time they feel they should or want to spend on various activities.
B-SMS 9. Personal safety skills	In accordance with Erin's Law, students will be taught concepts that help prevent child sexual abuse such as safe and unsafe touches and secrets. Students will be able to identify safe and trusting adults.	Students will participate in drug and alcohol awareness and prevention, cyber safety, healthy relationships including whom to trust, and personal well-being lessons.	Students will learn about healthy relationships and participate in dating violence prevention lessons.
B-SMS 10. Ability to manage transitions and adapt to change	Students will be taught and will practice procedures to successfully transition between activities in the classroom.	Students will learn and practice strategies to limit anxiety surrounding transitions. Students will reflect on times of change (example: starting middle school), and identify how they adapted to the changes, who helped them through that change, and what they learned from that experience. Caregivers will be informed about strategies to help students adapt to change.	Students will apply previously learned adaptation strategies to life experiences such as transitioning from middle school to high school and transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce.
SOCIAL SKILLS	Sample activities for early childhood & elementary	Sample activities for middle school	Sample activities for high school
B-SS 1. Effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills	Students will participate in games and activities that develop listening and communication skills.	Students will participate in large and small group activities that allow them to demonstrate effective listening and communication skills.	Students will participate in a debate or essay contest on a particular topic. Students will learn to write professional e-mails and letters to community members.

<p>B-SS 2. Positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them</p>	<p>Students will participate in lessons on inclusive schools.</p> <p>Students will participate as virtual pen pals with partner classrooms outside their school district.</p>	<p>Students will learn to be upstanders.</p> <p>Students will participate in teamwork and group projects in various student groupings.</p> <p>Students will identify personal character strengths and virtues and discuss the differing strengths and virtues of others.</p>	<p>Students will recognize how role expectations can lead to conflict including gender, age, racial groups, and ethnic groups within different societies.</p> <p>Students will have access to clubs and organizations that support all types of students and their interests.</p>
<p>B-SS 3. Positive relationships with adults to support success</p>	<p>School staff will promote and coordinate engagement opportunities for students with school personnel, community members, and volunteer groups.</p>	<p>Students will contribute to a climate of support and mutual respect.</p> <p>School staff will provide opportunities for students to work with adults in various situations, including student-led conferences.</p>	<p>Students will be assigned to participate in advisory small groups that connect a staff member with a small group of students regularly.</p>
<p>B-SS 4. Empathy</p>	<p>Students will participate in initiatives that promote empathy, including bullying prevention, acts of kindness, inclusion practices, and diversity conversations.</p> <p>Students will participate in a lesson on why it is important to identify how others feel and how to identify others' feelings (facial cues, body language, etc.).</p>	<p>Students will participate in bullying prevention lessons.</p> <p>Students will be given opportunities to share their different cultural perspectives on situations and events and listen to others' perspectives.</p>	<p>Students will be exposed to the stories of others' life experiences.</p> <p>Students will participate in conversations surrounding injustice.</p>
<p>B-SS 5. Ethical decision-making and social responsibility</p>	<p>Students will learn about civic responsibility.</p>	<p>Students will discuss higher-order values, including the environmental impact of decisions, being a good citizen, and ways to help their school and community.</p> <p>Students will define the terms "trustworthy" and "honest," then explain how employers might want to work with employees who demonstrate trustworthiness and honesty.</p>	<p>Students will read about current events and evaluate whether or not the decisions made are ethical using a clearly defined criteria.</p>

<p>B-SS 6. Effective collaboration and cooperation skills</p>	<p>Students will participate in community-building activities and lessons utilizing 1-1 pairing, small groups, and large groups through the lens of inclusion.</p>	<p>School staff will incorporate cooperative learning experiences within lessons. Students will break down the various roles of team members and demonstrate understanding of those roles by completing an assigned task with assigned group members.</p>	<p>Students will work successfully with others who have different viewpoints, cultures, and belief systems from their own.</p>
<p>B-SS 7. Leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse groups</p>	<p>Students will be engaged in organized games and activities, including athletics, shared chores/ duties/responsibilities, and classroom games.</p>	<p>Students will participate in project-based opportunities. Students will take a personality test. They will discuss in groups and compare/contrast the qualities and the benefits of each personality to the working environment of a group.</p>	<p>Students will seek experience to lead, facilitate or organize projects or groups.</p>
<p>B-SS 8. Advocacy skills for self and others and ability to assert self, when necessary</p>	<p>Students will be provided with practice in self-advocacy skills, including raising hands to be heard, sticking up for themselves.</p>	<p>Students will become aware of their personal and educational strengths and how to utilize them. Students will define "advocacy" and demonstrate appropriate ways to advocate for self, as well as for others. (Example: How would you communicate your concerns so that others will listen and understand your perspective?)</p>	<p>Students will write a letter to an elected official or another leader in order to persuade them to make a change that would benefit themselves or someone else.</p>

<p>B-SS 9. Social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment</p>	<p>Students will practice appropriate social greetings and interactions through the use of social stories.</p>	<p>Students will practice appropriate formal and casual social behaviors in a variety of settings including 1-on-1, small groups, classrooms, school, and community. Students can evaluate appropriate and inappropriate behaviors they have observed and reflect upon how they would work for them if they continued in a work environment.</p>	<p>Students will practice professional skills such as phone etiquette and interviewing.</p>
<p>B-SS 10. Cultural awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness</p>	<p>Students will be exposed to cultural norms and expectations that are different from their own.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate cultural sensitivity by researching a cultural norm different from their own and writing about the significance of that cultural norm. Students will learn to appropriately seek more information when they do not understand a cultural norm that is different from their own.</p>	<p>Students will watch and/or participate in conversations where people from a culture different than their own and will reflect on what they learn.</p>

DEFINE

To learn more about the Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:

- [ASCA Student Standards Webinar](#)
- [ASCA Student Standards aligned with Career Conversations](#)
- [ASCA Student Standards aligned with ICAP](#)

COLLABORATION IN ACTION

School counselors are encouraged to work with other school counselors in their district to vertically align school counseling curriculum. When a curriculum is vertically aligned or vertically coherent, what students learn in one lesson, course, or grade level prepares them for the next lesson, course, or grade level. Teaching is purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students are learning the knowledge and skills that will progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

While Oklahoma has adopted the ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success to be used by all school counselors in Oklahoma, there are additional standards to consider when designing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. These may include, but are not limited to:

- [CASEL's Social and Emotional Learning Framework](#)
- [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#)
- [NCAN K-12 College and Career Readiness Calendar](#)
- [The National Career Development Guidelines Framework](#)
- [Character Counts! Model Standards For Academic, Social, Emotional, And Character Development and School Climate](#)

OKLAHOMA'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Brackett and Rivers (2014) identified four reasons that addressing emotions is vital for school success: 1. For attention, learning, and performance 2. For decision making 3. For fostering good relationships 4. For health and well-being. Research shows that emotional intelligence is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes among children and adolescents, including improved cognitive and social functioning, psychological well-being, and higher academic performance. Oklahoma's social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies were created as a framework for integrating SEL into schools so that students will learn, practice, and model essential personal skills that will contribute to their academic, college and career, and personal success. The Oklahoma SEL Competencies are a schoolwide, systemic approach to social and emotional learning for PK-12 students and adults. The SEL competencies are based on CASEL's Core Competence Areas and include benchmarks and strategies broken into adult, 9th-12th, 6th-8th, 3rd-5th, K-2nd, and PreK grade bands. The Oklahoma SEL Competencies and companion implementation guide is aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Effective SEL implementation is a process led by a team of educators dedicated to SEL. While the Oklahoma SEL Competencies are meant to be implemented schoolwide and continuously taught and reinforced in each classroom, the school counselor serves as an expert on social and emotional development and can help educators understand the importance of SEL, train educators on ways to integrate SEL in the classroom, and more.

DEFINE

ASCA ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) specify the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the highest standard of integrity, leadership, and professionalism. They guide school counselors' decision-making and help standardize professional practice to protect both students and school counselors.

The ASCA Ethical Standards:

- Serve as a guide for the ethical practices of all school counselors, supervisors/directors of school counseling programs and school counselor educators regardless of level, area, population served or membership in this professional association.
- Provide support and direction for self-assessment, peer consultation and evaluations regarding school counselors' responsibilities to students, parents/guardians, colleagues and professional associates, schools district employees, communities and the school counseling profession.
- Inform all stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, community members and courts of justice of best ethical practices, values and expected behaviors of the school counseling professional.

ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & COMPETENCIES

The [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#) outline the mindsets and behaviors school counselors need to meet the rigorous demands of the school counseling profession and PK-12 students' needs. These standards and competencies help ensure new and experienced school counselors are equipped to establish, maintain and enhance a comprehensive school counseling program addressing academic achievement, career planning, and social and emotional development.

These standards and competencies can be used in a variety of ways including:

School counselors

- Self-assess their own mindsets and behaviors -Formulate an appropriate professional development plan

School administrators

- Guide the recruitment and selection of competent school counselors
- Develop or inform meaningful school counselor performance appraisal

School counselor education programs

- Establish benchmarks for ensuring school counseling students graduate with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to develop a school counseling program

ORGANIZATION OF THE ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & COMPETENCIES

The ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies are organized by mindset standards and behavior standards and competencies. The standards are broader topics that describe the knowledge, attitude and skills school counselors need to implement a school counseling program. The competencies are more specific and measurable indicators of the behavior standards.

Mindsets

The mindset standards include beliefs school counselors hold about student achievement and success. Although it may be possible to measure these beliefs, the mindsets are more readily recognized through the behaviors a school counselor demonstrates as a result of the implementation of a school counseling program. Therefore, the mindset standards do not have correlating competencies.

Behaviors

The behavior standards include essential behaviors school counselors demonstrate through the implementation of a school counseling program including:

1. **Professional foundation** – the essential skills that are the basis of a school counselor's professional orientation
2. **Direct and indirect student services** – interactions that are provided directly to students or indirectly for students in collaboration with families, teachers, administrators, other school staff and education stakeholders
3. **Planning and assessment** – activities necessary for the design, implementation and assessment of the school counseling program

Each behavior standard has specific competencies that are measurable indicators of the broader standard. These competencies can be used to further define the behaviors necessary for the implementation of a school counseling program.

MANAGE

The **manage** component of the ASCA National Model provides organizational assessments and tools designed to guide, target, structure, and construct a school counseling program to get results. The manage component includes two sections: **program focus and program planning**.

Note: The manage component includes many templates. All templates can be found [here](#).

PROGRAM FOCUS

BELIEFS

Beliefs are personal and individual and are derived from our backgrounds, culture, and experiences. Beliefs drive our behaviors. Ethical standards for school counselors call for the examination of one's own beliefs and consideration of how they may have an impact on practice. By reflecting on personal beliefs, school counselors can promote equity. Beliefs are an important summary of a school counselor's commitment to implementing an equitable, inclusive, and culturally sustaining school counseling program. (Grothaus et al., 2020)

School counseling beliefs development tool

	School Counselor Belief	Why is this belief important for students?	What does this belief mean to the school counseling program?	What does this belief inspire the school counselor to do?
Example:	Every student will be supported by a data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program	Provides academic, social and emotional, and college and career development supports for all students	Program should support all students, be comprehensive and data-driven; “guidance counseling” of the past is not acceptable	Implement a comprehensive school counseling program that aligns with the National Model and Oklahoma’s Framework

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

Beliefs example from Missy Smith's Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) in Norman Public Schools: **The Lincoln school counselors believe** every student is unique and can achieve success. Every student deserves a community that honors each voice and provides them with rich opportunities to grow and develop their potential. Every student can be culturally competent and welcoming of diversity. Every student has the right to a developmentally appropriate, comprehensive school counseling program provided by a certified school counselor. **The Lincoln school counseling program should** be a collaborative effort between the school counselor, administrator, teachers, and parents; it is most successful when all of these stakeholders work together for the benefit of students. Aid student success by advocating for appropriate and timely supports and create positive interactions among students, staff, and community by fostering an inclusive environment of equity and trust and by supporting and modeling restorative practices. We should use data to identify students who are at risk and provide supports to close the achievement gap and lead them to successful outcomes. We will take appropriate steps to instill a college and career ready mindset.

VISION STATEMENT

The school counseling vision statement communicates what school counselors hope to see for students five to 15 years in the future. The central focus of the vision should **not** be the school counselor or their school counseling program. Instead, the focus needs to present an image of what a student who is served by a comprehensive school counseling program looks like in the future. Try to avoid letting fear minimize the vision. It aligns with the school and district vision statements (if available) and focuses on students to create a picture of success.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

Vision statement example from Rebecca Barry's Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) in Shawnee Public Schools: "Every Will Rogers Elementary School student is equipped with the skills needed to be college-bound and/or career oriented. They have the skills needed to creatively solve problems and maintain healthy relationships. Graduates possess skills, knowledge and attitudes that allow them to be lifelong learners, complex thinkers, and responsible citizens."

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Having a vision is a characteristic of effective leadership. Articulating that vision motivates followers to accomplish goals and work cohesively toward a shared purpose. “You must have a vision to get stakeholders to join you in the mission! The vision provides direction and is the first and most important step in helping students. If you first build a strong vision, others will clearly understand your motives, actions, and needs in order to best serve students. Your vision should continue to be your starting line with any initiative or advocacy needs.”

Erica, Student Supports and Counseling Facilitator
Edmond Public Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement provides the focus, action, and direction to reach the vision. It aligns with the school and district mission statements (if available). The mission statement ensures all students benefit from a school counseling program emphasizing equity, access, safety and accountability, diversity, collaboration, family and community partnerships, success, and long-range results.

Example From the Field

Mission statement example from Sarah Kirk’s Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) in Norman Public Schools: “The mission of Monroe Elementary’s Comprehensive School Counseling Program is to maximize the full potential of every student in a collaborative partnership with the school community.”

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The mission statement provides a succinct way to inform all stakeholders of the school counseling program’s overarching purpose, including administrators, teachers, other school staff, stakeholders, and parents.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

When examining your beliefs, vision, and mission, reflect on your “why.” What is your “why” for being a school counselor? Laura Ross, School Counselor of the Year 2020, stated that you must “remember your ‘why’ to fuel your ‘what.’”

MANAGE

PROGRAM PLANNING

DATA

A data-informed school counselor consistently reviews school data to reveal trends across grades or years, inequities 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. School counselors have access to academic, attendance, and discipline data and are vital members of a school's data team.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

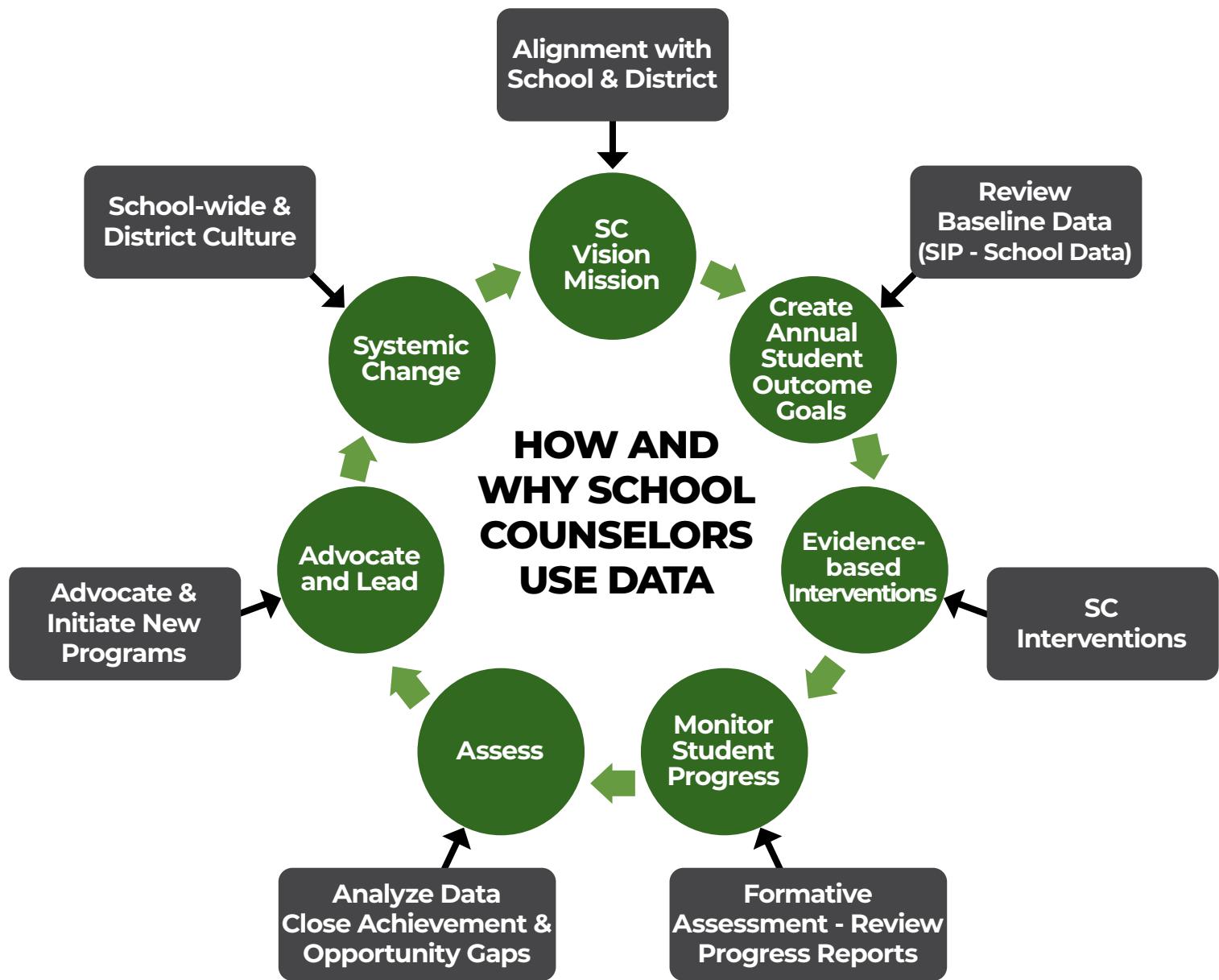
“Collecting student data is important because it allows me to customize my curriculum to the needs of my students for the year. For example, student data revealed that students were having a difficult time managing their anxiety and anger. Using this data, I was able to develop and implement a unit on coping skills, which empowered students to use these skills in their everyday lives.”

**Chelsea, 5th Grade School Counselor
Mustang Public Schools**

The use of 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 access and equity issues
- 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

MANAGE



(Young and Kaffenberger, 2018)

In “Making Data Work,” Young and Kaffenberger (2018) outline a cyclical model of how and why a school counselor uses data in school counseling programs. The seven-step model identifies a process to positively affect student outcomes.

MANAGE

Types of data	Description	Examples
Participation (Who?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of students involved ■ Number of lessons or sessions ■ Length of time ■ Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 30 students participated in six 45-minute classroom lessons ■ 92 6th graders participated in a 3-hour career fair at the technology center
Mindsets & Behaviors (What?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Administered to students and provides self-reported data from students ■ Measures student change in knowledge, attitudes, skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 88% of 8th-graders have written a goal using the SMART goal format ■ 88% of 2nd-graders can name two techniques to calm down after becoming angry
Outcome (Why?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Impact on student achievement ■ Impact on attendance ■ Impact on discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discipline referrals/suspension rates ■ Promotion/graduation rate ■ State test scores ■ Benchmark scores/reading levels ■ Grade-point average ■ Average daily attendance/chronic truancy rate
Supplemental Data (What else?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gathered from caregivers, students, and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Universal screeners² ■ School safety and climate surveys² ■ Needs assessments²

“Take the problem out of the kids and put it in a context. Then and only then can we work on a solution.

Precise statements of the problem context lead to smaller, more efficient, and more effective interventions.”

-Robert Hornder, National Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

The Big 5

It is important that schools collect specific information with every discipline referral. This data is often called “The Big 5” and includes the location, time of day, student name, type of infraction, and grade level. Data teams consistently look at “The Big 5” and share the information with staff (at least monthly). “The Big 5” quickly identifies red flags such as a location where a significant number of referrals are occurring, a grade level in need of support, or a type of infraction that needs to be addressed through skill-building. This data drives the interventions that are put in place throughout the school.

2

Reference [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment \(PPRA\) Guidance document](#) for information regarding PPRA-compliance with student surveys

Disaggregating data

To ensure that every student achieves high academic standards, it is important to understand data from the entire student body. However, it is even more critical to understand the disaggregated data. When disaggregating data, school counselors separate data by variables to determine if there are any groups of students who are not performing as well as others.

CONNECTION

Disaggregated data helps to inform the Closing-the-Gap Activities. Closing-the-gap activities often change from year to year based on student needs, as demonstrated in the school's data. ([page 48](#))

Although there are many ways to disaggregate data, frequently used categories include:

- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Free or reduced lunch
- Course enrollment
- Language spoken at home
- Special education
- Gifted and talented program enrollment
- Disability/special education
- Grade level
- Teacher assignment
- Type of referrals such as fighting, dress code, insubordination, etc. (Compare and determine if certain student groups more often receive specific referral types.)

Additionally, it is vital to consider **who is visible and who is invisible** in the data.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

A high school counselor found that 95% of high school seniors graduated on time. However, once the data was disaggregated, 85% of the students who did not graduate on time were students of color. This highlights a specific need that should be addressed in future goal-setting. Disaggregated data often brings to light issues of equity and access and helps focus the discussion upon the needs of specific groups of students.

Conducting a root cause analysis

A root cause analysis (RCA) is a procedure used to identify what happened, how it happened, and why it happened. RCA categorizes problems occurring for three reasons: a physical condition (i.e., overcrowded classrooms), a human condition (i.e., a teacher with poor classroom management), or an organizational condition (i.e., a punitive school discipline policy). This examines whether an intervention is needed at the systems level, staff level, or student level. This process allows the data team to identify the root cause of the difficulty. (Taylor & Burgess, 2019)

Often, schools assume that the problem is occurring at the student level and put student interventions in place. However, if the problem is at the system or staff level, a student intervention will likely be ineffective. For example, if a student is disciplined for inappropriate behavior on the bus (student level intervention) but the school team does not consider possible bus overcrowding for underserved populations (systems level problem) or bus procedures that are not well-enforced (staff level problem), the student level intervention may not be effective.

Steps of a root cause analysis include: 1. Identify the problem; 2. Collect data; 3. Identify possible causal factors; 4. Identify root causes; 5. Recommend interventions and solutions.

Equity risk ratios

Equity risk ratio data measures the risk of a certain event happening in one group compared to the risk of the same event happening in another group. By calculating risk ratio data, school counselors and data teams can identify groups of students that are more likely to receive an office referral, be chronically absent, etc. By identifying inequities through risk ratios, appropriate interventions can be put in place. As discussed in root cause analysis, a student intervention is not always needed, and instead, the needed intervention is at the system or staff level. For example, suppose equity risk ratio data determines that Hispanic and Black students are more likely to receive an office referral than their white peers, a staff intervention may be needed. The intervention could be professional development on equity, neutralizing discipline, culturally sustaining principles, or cultural awareness (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). There are many risk ratio calculators available on the internet by searching “MTSS risk ratio calculator.”

GETTING THE COMPLETE PICTURE

The Big 5, disaggregated data, root cause analysis, and equity risk ratios are often used together to get a complete picture of the problems occurring and what interventions can be put in place to address the specific difficulties. These processes are more proactive, systematic, and less likely to be influenced by bias, culture, and teacher perception. It can seem overwhelming to sift through so many sources of data, but there are many resources to support data collection for school counselors, MTSS, and data teams. By utilizing multiple sources of data, school counselors are better equipped to provide equitable and effective student services.

MANAGE

SCHOOL DATA SUMMARY

The school data summary template guides school counselors' review of school data and helps establish annual school counseling priorities. By responding to the detailed questions of the [template](#), school counselors identify the following:

- Who in the building can help the school counselor access, collect and understand school data?
- What are the school's annual improvement plan goals?
- What trends are evident across multiple years of data?
- How does your school's data compare with that of the district, state data and similar schools?
- What other data do you need?
- Which prioritized data points will guide your school counseling program?

CONNECTION

Three Questions Every Data-Driven MTSS Support Team Must Ask Weekly:

- Which students are “at risk” or declining in academics, attendance, and/or social and emotional learning — but do not have intervention plans in place?
- How are our intervention plans progressing?
- What is our intervention enrollment by race and ethnicity?

More information about a school counselor's role in the Multi-Tiered System of Support beginning on [page 94](#).

MANAGE

Needs assessments

Needs assessments are frequently used as a quick and easy way to gather data about your student population. A needs assessment is a survey completed by students, caregivers, teachers and administrators that offers a data-informed direction for a comprehensive school counseling program. It can assist school counselors in identifying student needs, informing curriculum development to address those needs, and pinpoint the high-need areas for small groups.

As a cautionary note, administering needs assessments or opinion surveys as a first step or for any purpose other than gathering supplemental information about an identified student need can lead to misinformation. Asking others to identify needs based on their perspective as a first step of data collection provides limited data and is problematic. An individual's perception may be narrow, such as not including the whole school or the bigger picture, and relying on that perception undermines the school counselor's expertise. Needs assessments are not the best source to identify student needs, develop annual student outcome goals or direct school counseling activities or interventions. They are best used for gathering additional information about previously identified needs in participation, Mindsets & Behaviors, and outcome data.

If you do use a needs assessment as a way to gather supplemental data, be sure to add demographic data such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc., to help you look at intersectionality through the needs assessment.

For example, imagine a needs assessment is administered at a school. 40% of caregivers complete the needs assessment. The demographic data of the caregivers indicates that 75% of respondents were white, 20% of the respondents receive free or reduced lunch, and 70% of the respondents have a student in kindergarten or first grade.

Schoolwide data indicates that 50% of the school is white, 50% of the school receives free or reduced lunch and 40% of the school is in kindergarten or first grade. This indicates why needs assessments may not generate accurate information about the entire student body. 75% of the people completing the survey were white yet only 50% of the school is white. 20% of the people completing the survey receive free or reduced lunch yet 50% of the school receives free or reduced lunch. 70% of the people completing the survey have a kindergarten or first grade student yet 40% of the school is in kindergarten or first grade. Needs assessments gather perceptions and opinions of those completing the survey. However, it is likely that needs assessments do not paint the entire picture.

OKLAHOMA NEEDS

When assessing needs, school counselors can also consider the statewide needs of Oklahoma students. [United Health Foundation \(2020\)](#) and [Kids Count \(2020\)](#) highlighted the following areas of need in Oklahoma.

Tragically, Oklahoma leads the country in key trauma rankings:

- 19.8% (45th) of Oklahoma children ages 0-17 have experienced two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- 15.6% (46th) of Oklahomans are food insecure, with one in eight Oklahoma families reporting that they often do not have enough food
- 25% of Oklahoma children in families receive public assistance
- 9.8% of Oklahoma students drop out of high school
- 1st nationwide in number of children witnessing domestic violence
- 11th nationwide for percent of population experiencing depression
- 9th nationwide for rate of suicide

Meanwhile, Oklahoma ranks near the bottom in efforts to improve physical and mental health:

- 42nd nationwide for child well-being
- 50th nationwide for nutrition and exercise
- 39th nationwide for depression
- 41st nationwide for suicide

These statistics directly affect Oklahoma students. Schools can recognize their role in combating the high prevalence of chronic conditions and risk factors in Oklahoma.

It is not uncommon for data to feel overwhelming. However, school counselors can be a part of the school team that reviews and analyzes school data. School counselors are knowledgeable, skilled, and involved in this standard practice to contribute to data discussions, inform and guide school priorities, and align the school counseling program with the identified priorities. If this is not an area of comfort, school counselors can seek [professional development](#) in data-informed school counseling. Over time, collecting data becomes more natural and can help provide a better understanding of the impact of the school counseling program.

MANAGE

ANNUAL STUDENT OUTCOME GOALS

Annual student outcome goals are statements that guide the implementation of school counseling activities and interventions. Annual student outcome goals:

- Are based on school outcome data
- Promote improved student achievement, attendance or discipline
- Give focus to the school counseling program
- Are written to be implemented at the beginning of the school year
- Are written using the ASCA SMART goal template

What Are SMART Goals?

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Time-bound

ASCA SMART Goal Template

By	<input type="text"/>	,	<input type="text"/>	 <i>End Date</i>	 <i>Targeted Group</i>				
will	<input type="text"/>					 <i>Increase/decrease something related to achievement, attendance or behavior</i>			
by	<input type="text"/>	%	from	<input type="text"/>	to	<input type="text"/>	 <i>Measure of change</i>	 <i>Baseline data</i>	 <i>Target data</i>

SMARTIE GOALS

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) recommends SMARTIE Goals. SMARTIE goals follow the SMART goal format and add the **IE** attributes: **I**nclusive -- Does this goal invite traditionally excluded individuals to make decisions and contribute in a way that shares power? **E**quitable -- Does this goal include an element of fairness or justice that seeks to address inequity?

MANAGE

How to implement the [annual student outcome goal plan](#):

- Use achievement, attendance and discipline data to create annual student outcome goals aligned with school improvement plans. Additionally, culturally sustaining student outcome goals attend to equity and inclusivity.
- Write goals in a measurable format, including baseline and target data within the goal statement. (This is very important and often forgotten. For example, stating that students will be “college and career ready” is not specific, measurable, or time-bound.)
- Use student data and results from survey tools to monitor and refine annual student outcome goals.
- Communicate student outcome goals to administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders.

Note: It is important to be mindful that goals are written from a culturally sustaining perspective and do not require that students “must assimilate to achieve” (Grothaus et al., 2020).

ACTION PLANS

School counselors design and implement instruction aligned to the **Oklahoma Student Standards** ([page 19](#)) in classroom, small group, and individual settings. Delivering the school counseling program efficiently and effectively requires intentional planning, facilitated by developing action plans. here are two action plan templates: the Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Action Plan and the Closing-the-Gap Action Plan/Results Report.

[**CLASSROOM AND GROUP MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS ACTION PLAN**](#)

The delivery of school counseling activities and services to students improves student achievement, behaviors and attitudes. The classroom and small group Mindsets & Behaviors action plan template helps school counselors create an effective plan to teach students the knowledge, attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level, informed by specific Student Standards, in a variety of settings.

The Student Standards guide the planning and delivery of all student activities and interventions. The purpose of the classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors action plan is to provide an overview of the delivery of direct services in large group, classroom and small group settings.

Completing the Mindsets & Behaviors action plan ensures:

- A systematic approach is used to provide all students access to specific school counseling program activities.
- Targeted Student Standards are adequately and appropriately addressed.
- Activities and services are thoughtfully scheduled.
- Optimal settings for delivery content are identified.

MANAGE

CLOSING-THE-GAP ACTION PLAN/RESULTS REPORT

The closing-the-gap action plan template serves as a guide to address academic, attendance or disciplinary discrepancies existing between student groups. These discrepancies, often referred to as gaps, are identified through the review of disaggregated data ([page 41](#)), and school counselors develop detailed action plans indicating activities and resources leveraged to close the gaps.

Closing-the-gap activities often change from year to year based on student needs as demonstrated in the school's data. As the closing-the-gap action plan/results report is grounded in data to identify gaps, the students with needs identified in the gap and activities and interventions delivered to close the gap often change from year to year. The template helps school counselors with the design, implementation and documentation of closing-the-gap action plans.

The closing-the-gap action plan/results report allows for the creation of inventions including both direct and indirect services to support students and to work with those who hold the potential to influence the students. For example:

- Student strategies may include relevant lessons in classroom settings, a specific small group experience, individual counseling, appraisal and advising.
- Stakeholders may be addressed by providing specific training or information to teachers and parents.
- Additional strategies may involve referrals to others whose work supports the alleviation of the identified gap, such as mentors.
- Systemic issues may be addressed as processes/procedures that possibly contribute to the gap are identified and changed.

We work toward equitable systems by identifying gaps and providing opportunities and supports. Equity is about providing supports for better outcomes. Justice is about removing barriers for better outcomes.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN ACTION

Collect and report data that exposes inequitable outcomes such as:

- **Gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment**
- **Disproportionate rates of discipline and suspension for students of color**
- **Lower attendance rates**
- **Underrepresentation of students of color in rigorous curriculum such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate**
- **Lower participation of underrepresented groups participating in higher education**

Once the data is collected, create Closing-the-Gap Action Plans to address the inequities directly.

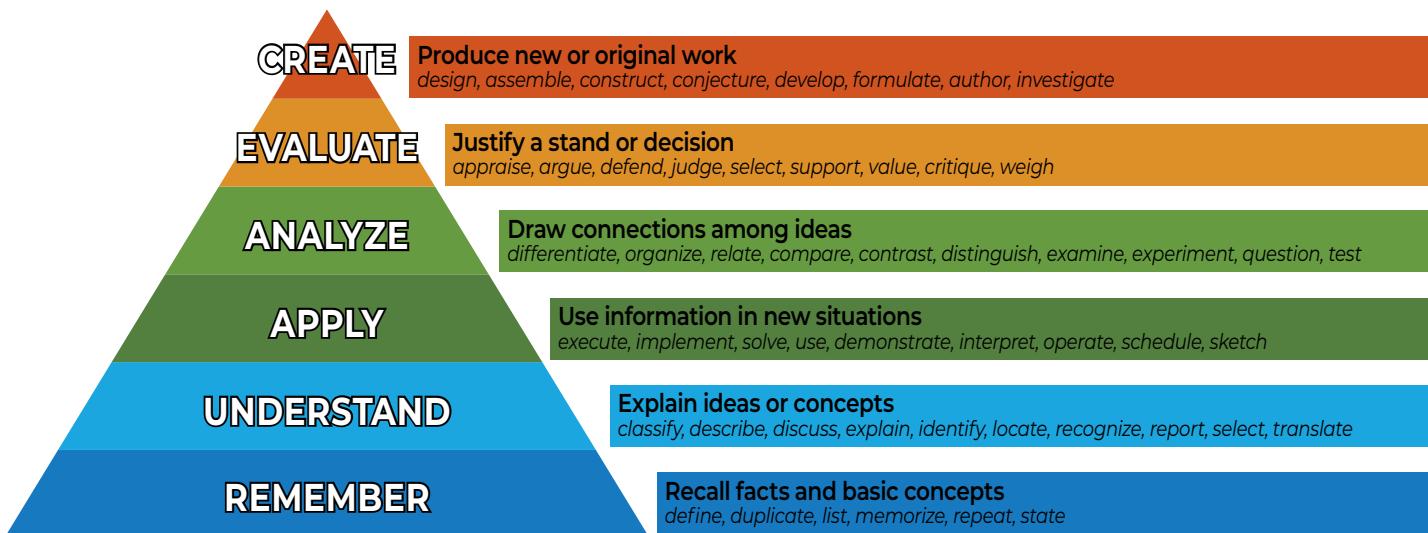
MANAGE

LESSON PLANS

To successfully deliver classroom lessons related to the school counseling curriculum, the importance of lesson planning cannot be overstated. The [lesson plan template](#) can help school counselors plan an effective classroom lesson. Lesson plans include:

1. Evidence base – Identify the level of evidence available regarding the anticipated efficacy of the lesson.
2. Oklahoma Student Standards ([page 19](#)) – Identify one to two standards for the lesson.
3. Learning objectives – State a clear, measurable learning objective.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



Verbs from Bloom's Taxonomy may be helpful in writing measurable learning objectives.

4. Materials – List any curriculum and materials needed to deliver the lesson.
5. Procedure – Include steps to:
 - Introduce the lesson
 - Present the content
 - Practice the content
 - Summarize and close
6. Assessment plan – Determine how data will be collected.
 - Participation data – Identify the expected number of students who will participate.
 - Mindsets & Behaviors data – Collected by allowing students to create a tangible product/activity that matches the objective or pre-/post-tests.
 - Outcome data – Identify what academic, attendance or disciplinary data the lesson is designed to affect.
7. Follow up – Plan for how you will follow up with any students who do not master the lesson competencies.

MANAGE

School counselors can enhance their lesson plans by ensuring they **create culturally sustaining lesson plans**. In doing so, school counselors can connect with all students.

School counselors can deliver curriculum that is relevant to students' lives, honors their voices, cultures, and experiences, and is representative of the community's culture groups. A great way to create culturally sustaining lessons is to connect the lesson to the cultural identities of all students including race and ethnicity, gender, cultural style, personality, and interests. It is important to create lessons that include books and examples of people with differing cultural identities. Additionally, activities within the lessons can include opportunities for students to celebrate diversity through art, music and creative expression. By allowing students to express their identities, they feel more connected to the classroom and to the school. School counselors can also bring in speakers, mentors, and guests who reflect the cultural composition of the school. (Grothaus et al., 2020)

ENGAGING STRATEGIES FOR LESSON PLANNING

- Think-pair-share
- Debate
- Graphic organizers
- Four corners
- Experiment
- Games
- Movement
- Breathing breaks
- Mindful moments
- Songs
- Presentations
- Utilize technology
- Role play
- Popcorn share
- Gallery walk
- Peer tutoring
- Centers
- Poems
- Partner work
- Videos
- Journaling
- Literature

OUTCOME DATA IN LESSONS

While it is unlikely one lesson will have a strong impact on outcome data, a full curriculum or series of lessons on a topic may have a more significant impact. Although it is impractical to collect outcome data on every lesson presented, it is recommended that school counselors collect all three types of data each year.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The knowledge and use of effective classroom management strategies is imperative to the success of any educational environment, and school counseling is no exception. One of the key pedagogical skills for the delivery of successful instruction is culturally responsive classroom management strategies. The development and refinement of these skills can be attained through collaboration with colleagues, professional development, and exploration of a variety of resources available through counselor and teacher professional organizations. Many research-based best practices for classroom management identify strategies that are the same as the keys to establishing a positive school counselor-student relationship and rapport: cooperation, flexibility, knowledge of personal interests, equity, and awareness of student needs and backgrounds. Preparation cannot be overlooked as the foundation for the success of any lesson, program, or session. Although each individual will have their own niche to classroom management, it is important to recognize and employ any district or site-specific approaches to classroom management and behavior interventions in use.

MANAGE

[Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#), [Responsive Classroom](#), and [Great Expectations](#) are a few common approaches used in Oklahoma schools. As Charles and Jim Fay remind educators in their [Nine Essential Skills for the Love and Logic Classroom](#), each strategy or program is just a tool in the collective toolbox and not the only approach to a successful instructional setting. The effectiveness of classroom management is no different than the other tools used in executing a successful comprehensive school counseling program. The school counselor must constantly collaborate, evaluate and educate one's self on the effectiveness of the approaches used and best practices of the profession.

ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE

The annual administrative conference is a formal discussion between the school counselor(s) and administrator that takes place within the first two months of school. When school counselors and administrators meet and agree on program priorities, implementation strategies, and the school counseling program organization, the school counseling program is likely to run more smoothly and is more likely to produce the desired results for students.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“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 Pankratz, Principal
Weatherford Public Schools

The [annual administrative conference template](#) provides an outline for the discussion and can be used to document the agreement made between the administrator and each school counselor.

CONNECTION

During the administrative conference, go over annual student outcome goals ([page 46](#)), school counselor use of time ([page 52](#)), action plans ([page 47](#)), calendars ([page 54](#)), and the advisory council ([page 71](#)).

MANAGE

When put into effective action, priorities are data-driven, and the role of the school counselor is consistently evaluated through the lens of time spent in direct and indirect services. Systems can be created through collaboration and delegation that sustain and balance the role of a school counselor. Implementation of staff development, Professional Learning Communities, assessment tools, practices, etc., can all play an important role in creating systemic implementation.

ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

School counselors advocate for the school counseling program by explaining the benefits of a comprehensive school counseling program to administrators and providing rationale for appropriate activities for school counselors. Often, school counselors feel uncomfortable using leadership to advocate for their school counseling program, especially with their administrators. Seth Goodin (2009) explained this phenomenon by stating that “leadership is scarce because few people are willing to go through the discomfort required to lead. When you identify the discomfort, you’ve found the place where a leader is needed. If you are not uncomfortable in your work as a leader, it’s almost certain that you are not reaching your potential as a leader.” How can you use your advocacy and leadership skills to strengthen your school counseling program, even if it means embracing vulnerability and discomfort?

USE OF TIME

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.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“Prioritizing my time can be difficult at the high school level but so vital. I try very hard to let face-to-face interactions take priority. I compress clerical duties to take up as little of my time as possible. I consistently advocate with my administration to take non-counseling duties off my plate. I do this by first trying to make sure that I have a good relationship with the people in my district that have the power to take those duties off my plate. Second, I make a point to utilize my time effectively at school. If I am requesting that something come off my plate so I can see more students, I make sure that I see more students once the duty is removed. I’m very careful to do what I say I am going to. This builds trust among my colleagues, so that when I ask to have something removed from my plate, my principal and superintendent know I am asking for a good reason.”

Lauren, 11th and 12th Grade School Counselor
Elk City Public Schools

MANAGE

The daily work of a school counselor may differ depending on the setting and context (urban, suburban or rural; elementary, middle, high school or career technical center; and so on). However, ASCA recommends all school counselors spend at least 80% of their time on direct and indirect services to students. It is recommended school counselors use the use-of-time calculator at least twice each year. Direct and indirect services and appropriate activities versus inappropriate activities are explained in detail in the **deliver** section starting on [page 73](#).

CONNECTION

While it is recommended that school counselors spend 80% of their time providing student services, the direct services **should not** include discipline, teaching/substituting classes, or being included in a specials/electives rotation (except in certain scenarios such as if the rotation is bi-weekly and school counselors are not required to grade). ASCA Ethical Standard A.5.c (2016) states, “inappropriate dual relationships include, but are not limited to, providing direct discipline, teaching courses that involve grading students or accepting administrative duties in the absence of an administrator.”

While every school and school district differs, finding time and opportunity for appropriate direct student services should be a non-negotiable. **School counselors should provide classroom instruction lessons at least once a month in each grade level.** School counselors can push in to teach lessons during morning meetings, during advisory or homeroom time, or any other time that fits the school schedule. These lessons can be seen as necessary, preventative, and prioritized. When school counselors are able to teach a robust classroom instruction curriculum, the positive outcomes can include decreased office referrals, decreased classroom disruptions, and increased academic performance. School counselors should also have opportunities to have continuous small groups for students in need of tier two social and emotional, academic, and college and career supports. Small groups can be during lunch, response to intervention time, or any other time that fits the school schedule. Small groups are an effective way to help students build skills necessary to be successful in school and in life. Often school counselors report that they cannot provide classroom instruction or small groups because of administrative and other duties. School counselors work collaboratively with administration to find a way to provide these direct student services that are the core of a comprehensive school counseling program.

MANAGE

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. When distributing and displaying calendars, it is important to distribute in a variety of ways including websites, social media, email, printed calendars posted in multiple areas, etc. to increase their reach to all stakeholders. It is also helpful to translate the calendars into the home languages of students.

Weekly calendars (example on [page 70](#) and template [here](#))

School counselors creates a weekly calendar that provides a detailed plan of the school counselor's activities for the week. Although the weekly calendar is somewhat flexible due to crises or immediate student needs that may occur unexpectedly, this calendar serves as a plan for program implementation on a daily basis.

It is important to balance the need for flexibility with the intentional delivery of scheduled events. The weekly calendar provides a source for monitoring time spent on delivery of a school counseling program and may also serve as documentation of contacts with students. A weekly calendar including all planned activities, with all student identification removed to protect confidentiality, should be published to stakeholders.

Each school counselor has a weekly calendar that includes activities such as:

- Classroom instruction
- Group and individual counseling
- Meetings with students
- Special events
- Collaboration/consultation
- Data analysis
- Committee and fair-share responsibilities

MANAGE

Annual calendar (examples beginning on [page 56](#) and template [here](#))

School counselors use the annual calendar to prioritize and communicate school counseling program priorities. The annual calendar can increase visibility of the school counseling program and provide focus on events or activities delivered or coordinated by the school counselor(s).

The school counseling program has an annual calendar that includes activities such as:

- School counseling classroom instruction
- Back-to-school night
- Open house
- Student/parent/teacher meeting days
- College and career activities and events
- Evening activities provided through the school and the community
- Cultural events

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

"I use SCUTA for my weekly calendar. It provides an excellent, seamless way for me to document confidential interactions and account for my time. It produces graphs, charts, etc., showing how I spend my time and with whom. SCUTA is aligned with ASCA standards and includes Student Standards to assign to student interactions. I can constantly check how I am doing with my 80/20 use-of-time with the multiple reports SCUTA can perform. SCUTA has made me a more accountable and productive school counselor."

**Blaine, PK-2nd Grade School Counselor
Plainview Public Schools**

SCUTA is used by school counselors and school districts to develop a data-driven, evidence-based school counseling program. It follows the ASCA National Model recommendations and offers confidential, comprehensive documentation and a use of time analysis system. It is an invaluable tool for school counselors who want to implement best practices, keep accurate records, and develop a data-driven school counseling program. (Note: SCUTA Pro requires payment.)

Example annual calendars have been provided for PK-12, elementary school, middle school, and high school. Please note, these are example annual calendars. The services and activities on your school's annual calendar reflect the specific needs of your school based on annual student outcome goals. Although dates have been left off the examples, annual calendars include specific dates of events and activities.

MANAGE

EXAMPLE PK-12 ANNUAL CALENDAR

Key	
■ All Levels	► Middle School
▼ Elementary School	▲ High School

A minimum of 80% of time recommended for direct and indirect student services and 20% or less in program planning and school support.

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
	<p>Direct Student Services Activities</p> <p>Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. They include the following (include dates of school counseling initiatives or events, classroom and group activities, career or college nights, schoolwide academic support events, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instruction and group activities ■ Appraisal and advisement ■ Counseling (individual/small group) ■ Crisis response 	<p>Indirect Student Services Activities</p> <p>Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others (including significant collaborations, leadership and advocacy activities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultation ■ Collaboration ■ Referrals
Ongoing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Twice-a-month classroom instruction lessons in each grade level ■ Daily student check-ins/check-outs ■ Student leadership club ■ Lunch bunch ■ Group and individual counseling ■ Crisis counseling ■ New student transition (transition planning and academic advising) ■ Restorative circles ■ In-class student observations ▲ ICAP -- monthly activities and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weekly PLC/Team meetings ■ Guiding coalition meetings (school improvement team) ■ District counseling PLC ■ IEP/504 meetings (support as part of the academic team, non administrative) ■ Parent meetings ■ RTI meetings ■ Various committee meetings ■ Collaboration with community agencies ■ Ongoing professional development ■ Coordinate community resources (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Food for Kids Backpack program, Operation School Bell, etc.) ■ Frequent and ongoing collaborative conversations with administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Update counselor website monthly or as needed ■ Faculty meetings ■ Promote achievement, attendance, behavior and/or school safety ■ Address schoolwide data, policies and practices to address closing-the-gap issues ■ Address schoolwide plan for academic, career and social and emotional development

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce role of school counselor ■ Open house ■ Work with MTSS team or administrators to launch Universal Screener for all students to identify possible topics for classroom instruction, small groups, and individual referrals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 6th grade orientation ▶ Hand out OK Promise Information to all eighth-grade students ▲ Meet with new and returning students to determine academic needs and appropriate class placement ▲ New student and ninth-grade orientation night ▲ Hold new student luncheons for the first few days of school ▲ Review seniors' transcripts to verify they are on track for graduation, OK Promise and NCAA ▲ Hand out OK Promise Information to all ninth- and 10th-grade students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meet the Teacher Night ■ Teacher in-service training ■ Meet with all staff during PD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss with school staff counseling program objectives and/or changes - Protocols for referring students to the counselor(s) - Processes of handling a student in crisis or believed to be in crisis. (reporting) - DHS referral process/ steps ▲ Assist with notifying parents of Advanced Placement testing information with ordering deadlines ▲ Post national test dates for ACT, SAT, PSAT and AP
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: conflict resolution, academic success, growth mindset ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Distribute needs assessments ■ Hispanic Heritage Month activities ■ Suicide Prevention Awareness Month activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Senior class meetings regarding: transcripts, college applications, scholarships, financial aid ▲ ICAP- Career Awareness sample ICAP timeline ▲ Meet with juniors regarding the PSAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Register and attend meetings with college representatives -- Counselor Days. ▲ Parent night regarding post-secondary processes, scholarships and financial aid (FAFSA) information
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: fire safety, healthy choices, bullying prevention ■ Red Ribbon Week activities, assembly ■ Bullying Prevention Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent Teacher Conferences

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: hygiene, gratitude ■ Military Family Appreciation Month activities ■ National Native American Heritage Month activities ■ Celebrate World Kindness Day activities ■ Career Awareness Month activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Eighth-grade local tech center visit ► Career Interest Inventory ▲ Student visits to CareerTechs and applications given to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OSCA Annual Conference ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community ▲ Academic All-State nominations due ▲ Assist with the AP exam order to meet the deadline
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: kindness, compassion ▲ Presentations for CareerTech academies for freshman ▲ Assist with academic planning for the next school year's enrollment ▲ Assist with next year's course descriptions and enrollment information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community ▲ Assist with PSAT distribution and help with understanding of test results
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: Stop, Go Tell (sexual abuse prevention), peer relationships, decision making ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Great Kindness Challenge Week activities ▲ New student luncheon ▲ Applications due to CareerTechs and begin working with CareerTechs to set up student interviews ▲ Check seniors' academic standing for graduation including current class schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent Engagement Night -- possible topics: Oklahoma's Promise, enrollment, online safety ▲ Academic advising for coursework (enrollment for next year) ▲ Plan Parent Night for late January/early February to inform parents of pre-enrollment information and dates

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: understanding feelings, goal setting, "Ned" show ■ National School Counseling Week activities ■ African American History Month activities ■ Career and Technical Education Month activities ▲ Provide sophomores and juniors concurrent enrollment process ▲ Assist students with pre-registration and enrollment activities for the upcoming school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent-teacher conferences ► Seventh-grade career fair ▲ Hold a Concurrent Information Night for parents. Invite local colleges/universities to attend ▲ Assist with parent and student conferences related to future education and career plans ▲ Arrange meetings with middle school counselors for incoming freshman 	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: test-taking skills, teamwork ► Fifth-grade tours/enrollment ▲ Assist students with reviewing their ICAPs and update if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For Counselors Only Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reflect on program goals and activities of school counseling curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible instruction topics: transition lessons, career, mental health awareness ■ Career Expo Week activities ■ Alcohol Awareness Month activities ■ Child Abuse Prevention Month activities ▲ Remind students of concurrent enrollment dates for the upcoming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Continue assisting with upcoming school year enrollment and scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support state testing ■ Support end-of-year awards /activities ■ Spring advisory council meeting
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible instruction topics: review topics, end-of-year closure lesson, write letters to new teacher, career exploration ■ Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month activities ■ Mental Health Month activities ▲ Verify transcripts and graduation for seniors ▲ Complete Oklahoma Promise verification form for graduating students and return to OSRHE ▲ Review all completed transcripts for accuracy of grades, credits and posting test scores ▲ Provide information regarding education alternatives for those who did not meet graduation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Complete pre-registration and enrollment for the next school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluate academic year and analyze data ■ Develop goals and objectives for the next year ■ Submit counseling program evaluation and improvement report to administration ▲ Assist with graduation activities

MANAGE

EXAMPLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ANNUAL CALENDAR

A minimum of 80% of time recommended for direct and indirect student services and 20% or less in program planning and school support.

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
	<p>Direct Student Services Activities</p> <p>Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. They include the following (include dates of school counseling initiatives or events, classroom and group activities, career or college nights, schoolwide academic support events, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instruction and group activities ■ Appraisal and advisement ■ Counseling (individual/small group) ■ Crisis response 	<p>Indirect Student Services Activities</p> <p>Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others (including significant collaborations, leadership and advocacy activities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultation ■ Collaboration ■ Referrals
Ongoing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Twice-a-month classroom instruction lessons in each grade level (or your assigned level) ■ Daily student check-ins/check-outs ■ Student leadership club ■ Lunch bunch ■ Group and individual counseling ■ Crisis counseling ■ New student transition (transition planning and academic advising) ■ Restorative circles ■ In-class student observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weekly PLC/Team meetings ■ Guiding coalition meetings (school improvement team) ■ District counseling PLC ■ IEP/504 meetings (support as part of the academic team, non administrative) ■ Parent meetings ■ RTI meetings ■ Various committee meetings ■ Collaboration with community agencies ■ Ongoing professional development ■ Coordinate community resources (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Food for Kids Backpack program, Operation School Bell, etc.) ■ Frequent and ongoing collaborative conversations with administrators

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce role of school counselor ■ Open house ■ Work with MTSS team or administrators to launch universal screener for all students to identify possible topics for classroom instruction, small groups, and individual referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher in-service training ■ Meet the Teacher Night ■ Meet with all staff during PD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss with school staff counseling program objectives and/or changes - Protocols for referring students to the counselor(s) - Processes of handling a student in crisis or believed to be in crisis. (reporting) - DHS referral process/ steps
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: conflict resolution, academic success, growth mindset ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Distribute needs assessments ■ Hispanic Heritage Month activities ■ Suicide Prevention Awareness Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fall advisory council meeting
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: fire safety, healthy choices, bullying prevention ■ Red Ribbon Week activities, assembly ■ Bullying Prevention Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent-teacher conferences ■ Annual canned food drive
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: hygiene, gratitude ■ Military Family Appreciation Month activities ■ National Native American Heritage Month activities ■ Celebrate World Kindness Day activities ■ Career Awareness Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OSCA Annual Conference ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: kindness, compassion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: Stop, Go Tell (sexual abuse prevention), peer relationships, decision making ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Great Kindness Challenge Week activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent Engagement Night -- possible topics: bullying prevention, online safety, cultural competency
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: understanding feelings, goal setting, "Ned" show ■ National School Counseling Week activities ■ African American History Month activities ■ Career and Technical Education Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent-teacher conferences
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: test-taking skills, teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For Counselors Only Conference
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible instruction topics: transition lessons, career, mental health awareness ■ Career Expo Week activities ■ Alcohol Awareness Month activities ■ Child Abuse Prevention Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reflect on program goals and activities of school counseling curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans ■ Support state testing ■ Support end-of-year awards/activities ■ Spring advisory council meeting
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible instruction topics: review topics, end-of-year closure lesson, write letters to new teacher, career exploration, summer safety topics ■ Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month activities ■ Mental Health Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluate academic year and analyze data ■ Develop goals and objectives for next year ■ Submit counseling program evaluation to administration

MANAGE

EXAMPLE MIDDLE SCHOOL ANNUAL CALENDAR

A minimum of 80% of time recommended for direct and indirect student services and 20% or less in program planning and school support.

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
	<p>Direct Student Services Activities</p> <p>Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. They include the following (include dates of school counseling initiatives or events, classroom and group activities, career or college nights, schoolwide academic support events, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instruction and group activities ■ Appraisal and advisement ■ Counseling (individual/small group) ■ Crisis response 	<p>Indirect Student Services Activities</p> <p>Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others (including significant collaborations, leadership and advocacy activities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultation ■ Collaboration ■ Referrals
Ongoing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Twice-a-month classroom instruction lessons in each grade level ■ Daily student check-ins/check-outs ■ Student leadership club ■ Lunch bunch ■ Group and individual counseling ■ Crisis counseling ■ New student transition (transition planning and academic advising) ■ Restorative circles ■ In-class student observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weekly PLC/Team meetings ■ Guiding coalition meetings (school improvement team) ■ District counseling PLC ■ IEP/504 meetings (support as part of the academic team, non-administrative) ■ Parent meetings ■ RTI meetings ■ Various committee meetings ■ Collaboration with community agencies ■ Ongoing professional development ■ Coordinate community resources (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Food for Kids Backpack program, Operation School Bell, etc.) ■ Frequent and ongoing collaborative conversations with administrators

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce role of school counselor ■ Open House ■ Work with MTSS team or administrators to launch universal screener for all students to identify possible topics for classroom instruction, small groups, and individual referrals ■ Sixth-grade orientation ■ Hand out OK Promise Information to all eighth-grade students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher in-service training ■ Meet the Teacher Night ■ Meet with all staff during PD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss with school staff counseling program objectives and/or changes - Protocols for referring students to the counselor(s) - Processes of handling a student in crisis or believed to be in crisis. (reporting) - DHS referral process/ steps
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: conflict resolution, academic success, growth mindset ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Distribute needs assessments ■ Hispanic Heritage Month activities ■ Suicide Prevention Awareness Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fall advisory council meeting
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: fire safety, healthy choices, bullying prevention ■ Red Ribbon Week activities, assembly ■ Bullying Prevention Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent-teacher conferences
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: hygiene, gratitude ■ Military Family Appreciation Month activities ■ National Native American Heritage Month activities ■ Celebrate World Kindness Day activities ■ Career Awareness Month activities ■ Eighth-grade local Tech Center visit ■ Career Interest Inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OSCA Annual Conference ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support	
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible classroom instruction topics: kindness, compassion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community 	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible classroom instruction topics: Stop, Go Tell (sexual abuse prevention), peer relationships, decision making Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) Great Kindness Challenge Week activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Engagement Night -- possible topics: Oklahoma's Promise, enrollment, online safety 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible classroom instruction topics: understanding feelings, goal setting, "Ned" show National School Counseling Week activities African American History Month activities Career and Technical Education Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent-teacher conferences Seventh-grade career fair 	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible classroom instruction topics: test-taking skills, teamwork Fifth-grade tours/enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Counselors Only Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on program goals and activities of school counseling curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible instruction topics: transition lessons, career, mental health awareness Career Expo Week activities Alcohol Awareness Month activities Child Abuse Prevention Month activities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support state testing Support end-of-year awards/activities Spring advisory council meeting
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible instruction topics: review topics, end of year closure lesson, write letters to new teacher, career exploration Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month activities Mental Health Month activities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate academic year and analyze data Develop goals and objectives for the next year Submit counseling program evaluation to administration

MANAGE

EXAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL ANNUAL CALENDAR

A minimum of 80% of time recommended for direct and indirect student services and 20% or less in program planning and school support.

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
	<p>Direct Student Services Activities</p> <p>Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. They include the following (include dates of school counseling initiatives or events, classroom and group activities, career or college nights, schoolwide academic support events, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instruction and group activities ■ Appraisal and advisement ■ Counseling (individual/small group) ■ Crisis response 	<p>Indirect Student Services Activities</p> <p>Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others (including significant collaborations, leadership and advocacy activities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultation ■ Collaboration ■ Referrals
On-going Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Twice-a-month classroom instruction lessons in each grade level ■ Daily student check-ins/check-outs ■ Student leadership club ■ Lunch bunch ■ Group and individual counseling ■ Crisis counseling ■ New student transition (transition planning and academic advising) ■ Restorative circles ■ In-class student observations ■ ICAP -- monthly activities and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weekly PLC/team meetings ■ Guiding coalition meetings (school improvement team) ■ District counseling PLC ■ IEP/504 meetings (support as part of the academic team, non-administrative) ■ Parent meetings ■ RTI meetings ■ Various committee meetings ■ Collaboration with community agencies ■ Ongoing professional development ■ Coordinate community resources (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Food for Kids Backpack program, Operation School Bell, etc.) ■ Frequent and ongoing collaborative conversations with administrators

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support	
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce role of school counselor ■ Open House ■ Meet with new and returning students to determine academic needs and appropriate class placement ■ Assist with new student and ninth-grade orientation night ■ Hold new student luncheons for the first few days of school ■ Review sophomore, junior, and senior transcripts to verify they are on track for graduation, OK Promise and NCAA ■ Hand out OK Promise Information to all ninth- and 10th-grade students ■ Work with MTSS team or administrators to launch universal screener for all students to identify possible topics for classroom instruction, small groups, and individual referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher in-service training ■ Meet the Teacher Night ■ Meet with all staff during PD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss with school staff counseling program objectives and/or changes - Protocols for referring students to the counselor(s) - Processes of handling a student in crisis or believed to be in crisis. (reporting) - DHS referral process/ steps ■ Assist with notifying parents of Advanced Placement testing information with ordering deadlines ■ Post national test dates for ACT, SAT, PSAT and AP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create and/or update counselor website ■ Create and/or update school counseling brochures ■ Write school counseling program outcome goals ■ Complete annual calendar ■ Complete annual administrator conference on the goals of the school counseling program ■ Plan for counseling and other direct services for students ■ Confirm national, state and local test dates and publicize these dates ■ Coordinate school visits for postsecondary and military representatives
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: conflict resolution, academic success, growth mindset ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Distribute needs assessments ■ Hispanic Heritage Month activities ■ Suicide Prevention Awareness Month activities ■ Senior class meetings regarding transcripts, college applications, scholarships and financial aid ■ ICAP- Career Awareness sample ICAP timeline ■ Meet with sophomores and juniors regarding the PSAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Register and attend meetings with college representatives -- Counselor Days. ■ Parent Night regarding postsecondary processes, scholarships and financial aid (FAFSA) information ■ Confirm October 1 reporting data needs with administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fall advisory council meeting
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: fire safety, healthy choices, bullying prevention ■ Red Ribbon Week activities, assembly ■ Bullying Prevention Month activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent-teacher conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Begin setting up CareerTech visits for 10th-grade students

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: hygiene, gratitude ■ Military Family Appreciation Month activities ■ National Native American Heritage Month activities ■ Celebrate World Kindness Day activities ■ Career Awareness Month activities ■ Student visits to CareerTechs and applications given to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OSCA Annual Conference ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community ■ Academic All-State nominations due ■ Assist with the AP exam order to meet the deadline
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: kindness, compassion ■ Presentations for CareerTech academies for freshman ■ Assist with academic planning for the next school year's enrollment ■ Assist with next year's course descriptions and enrollment information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assist with PSAT distribution and help with understanding of test results ■ Help coordinate holiday support for families from school/community
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: Stop, Go Tell (sexual abuse prevention), peer relationships, decision making ■ Coffee with counselors (caregiver engagement) ■ Great Kindness Challenge Week activities ■ New student luncheon ■ Applications due to CareerTechs and begin working with CareerTechs to set up student interviews ■ Check seniors' academic standing for graduation including current class schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent Engagement Night -- possible topics: Oklahoma's Promise, enrollment, online safety ■ Academic advising for coursework (enrollment for next year) ■ Plan Parent Night for late January/early February to inform parents of pre-enrollment information and dates
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible classroom instruction topics: understanding feelings, goal setting, "Ned" show ■ National School Counseling Week activities ■ African American History Month activities ■ Career and Technical Education Month activities ■ Provide sophomores and juniors concurrent enrollment process ■ Assist students with pre-registration and enrollment activities for the upcoming school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent-teacher conferences ■ Hold a Concurrent Information Night for parents. Invite local colleges/ universities to attend ■ Assist with parent and student conferences related to future education and career plans ■ Arrange meetings with middle school counselors for incoming freshman

MANAGE

	Deliver	Program Planning and School Support	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible classroom instruction topics: test-taking skills, teamwork Assist students with reviewing their ICAPs and update if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Counselors Only Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on program goals and activities of school counseling curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible instruction topics: transition lessons, career, mental health awareness Career Expo Week activities Alcohol Awareness Month activities Child Abuse Prevention Month activities Remind students of concurrent enrollment dates for the upcoming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue assisting with upcoming school year enrollment and scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support state testing Support end-of-year awards/activities Spring advisory council meeting
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible instruction topics: review topics, end-of-year closure lesson, write letters to new teacher, Career Exploration via OKCareerGuide, OKCollegeStart, or your district's ICAP online platform Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month activities Mental Health Month activities Verify transcripts and graduation for seniors Complete Oklahoma Promise verification form for graduating students and return to OSRHE Review completed transcripts for accuracy of grades, credits and posting test scores for all students Provide information regarding education alternatives for those who did not meet graduation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete pre-registration and enrollment for the next school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate academic year and analyze data Develop goals and objectives for the next year Submit counseling program evaluation and improvement report to administration Assist with graduation activities

MANAGE

EXAMPLE WEEKLY CALENDAR

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		Child Study Team (CST) all day-- I will attend meetings for students whom I am working with			
7:00-8:00	Greeting Students and Families/ Collaborative Student Meetings	Greeting Students and Families/ Collaborative Student Meetings	Greeting Students and Families/ Collaborative Student Meetings	Greeting Students and Families/ Collaborative Student Meetings	Greeting Students and Families/ Collaborative Student Meetings
8:00-9:00	Weekly Assembly SEL Presentation	Daily Mindful Moment during Announcements	Check-In with Students	Check-In with Students	Deliver Food for Kids Bags
9:00-10:00	School Counselor/ Admin Meeting	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Collaboration with Teachers/ Staff
10:00-11:00	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Program Planning	Program Planning	CST Meeting with School Psych	Deliver Food for Kids Bags
11:00-12:00	Individual Short-Term Counseling	Individual Short-Term Counseling	Individual Short-Term Counseling	Individual Short-Term Counseling	Individual Short-Term Counseling
12:00-1:00	Lunch Respond/Send Emails	Lunch Respond/Send Emails	Lunch Respond/Send Emails	Lunch Respond/Send Emails	Lunch Bunch
1:00-2:00	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Classroom Counseling Lessons	Classroom Counseling Lessons
2:00-2:30	Small Groups	Small Groups	Small Groups	Small Groups	Small Groups
2:30-3:00	Data Collection	Data Collection	After-School Mindfulness and Yoga Club	After-School Kindness and Inclusion Club	Data Collection
3:00-3:30	Collaboration with Teachers/ Staff	Collaboration with Teachers/ Staff	Collaboration with Teachers/ Staff	Collaboration with Teachers/ Staff	Collaboration with Teachers/ Staff

MANAGE

	TIME IN PERCENTAGES	TIME IN HOURS
Direct Services	67%	28.5 hours
Indirect Services	13%	5.5
Program Planning and School Support	20%	8.5
Non-School Counseling Tasks	0	0

A minimum of 80% of time recommended for direct and indirect student services and 20% or less in program planning and school support.

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.

Advisory councils assist school counselors by:

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

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“The advisory council helps the school remain focused on the student and the school counseling program. The advisory council expands the school counselor’s reach. With an advisory council, school counselors are not alone in advocacy and strategic planning. Plus, I like to share my data with my advisory council first! Then, we discuss how to share the data with all stakeholders.”

**Erica, Student Supports and Counseling Facilitator
Edmond Public Schools**

MANAGE

Creating an advisory council

When creating an advisory council, school counselors consider items such as:

- **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 diversity and include students, parents, teachers, school counselors, administrators, school board members and business and community members.
- **Size:** Generally, a council between eight and 20 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.
- **Agenda and minutes:** To ensure effectiveness, each advisory council meeting has a specific agenda and goals to be accomplished.
- **First meeting:** Inform members of the council's purpose, presenting the school counseling program calendar and goals, and share any relevant school data.
- **Final meeting:** Provide a summary of the program impact on students grounded in data. Present and explain results reports for goals. Discuss and solicit recommendations for program improvement.
- **Additional meetings (optional):** As the group forms and develops an identity, agenda topics may naturally arise such as orientation to advisory council, special event planning, or advisement in response to unusual situations.

DELIVER

The deliver component defines the methods school counselors use to provide activities and services to students and for students. This component consists of two broad categories: **direct and indirect student services**.

DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. This includes:

- Instruction
- Appraisal and Advisement
- Counseling

INSTRUCTION

Instruction includes teaching the school counseling curriculum to students in **classrooms, groups, or individually**.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

School counselors develop lesson plans aligned with the Student Standards. Classroom instruction is often considered a tier one support. Examples include:

- **Academic lessons** on topics such as study skills, goal setting, long-term planning, self-motivation, and balancing school, home, and activities
- **Career lessons** on topics such as building self-awareness of skills and interests, exploring careers, and understanding connections between lifestyle and career choices
- **Social and emotional lessons** on topics such as self-discipline, peer relationships, personal safety, coping skills, and mindfulness skills

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES

Classroom instruction may be supplemented with activities involving larger groups of students such as presentations, guest speakers, assemblies, college and career fairs, service learning projects, school tours, etc. Large group activities are considered a direct student service and part of the comprehensive school counseling program.

OKLAHOMA HOUSE BILL 1661

OK HB 1661 states that all schools must “provide for an educational program as designed and developed by the OSDE for students and parents in preventing, identifying, responding to and reporting incidents of bullying.” This could be taught through instruction or large group activities. The OSDE provides resources for bullying prevention including a Bullying Prevention Model Policy.

SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION

School counselors work with small groups of students to provide instruction and activities designed to improve student success. A small group typically includes up to 10 students in a minimum of four group sessions. Although, some research has found that evidence-based group counseling curriculums are usually at least eight group sessions. Small groups are often considered tier two supports. Examples of small group instruction include:

- **Academic small groups** on topics such as study skills, goal-setting, motivational support, or training for peer mentoring and tutoring programs that partner older students with younger students to support specific goals for success
- **Career small groups** focus on specialized activities for in-depth experiences around specific career interests
- **Social and emotional small groups** on topics such as stress management, self-regulation, students who have endured race-based trauma, deep breathing and mindfulness skills (if you are curious why mindfulness in schools is important, [watch this video](#)), overcoming obstacles, or building self-management and social skills

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

If you feel like you never have enough time in the day to provide enough direct services to students, get creative on how you provide instruction. For example:

- Offer to host book clubs using books such as: *Blended, Out of My Mind, Wonder, Ruby on the Outside, Stamped, Crash, Rules*.
- Volunteer to sponsor a club or organization: Kindness Club, “No Place for Hate,” Mindfulness/Yoga Club, Gay/Straight Alliance, Girls on the Run, Student Council, Multicultural Club, Peer Mediation, Affinity Groups, etc.

BUILDING COLLEGE AND CAREER INTEREST EARLY

College and career exploration in classroom and small group instruction can begin in elementary school and continue throughout a student's PK-12 education. While it is not expected that young students choose a college or career path, building interest and exploration of opportunities is vital. College and career exploration can also help build motivation if young students lack a desire to attend and put forth effort in school. Self-directed interest inventories can be used with students of all ages beginning in kindergarten (there are many free resources available on the internet). Additionally, introducing caregivers to concepts related to interest inventories and college and career readiness can plant seeds that make a big difference as the student progresses through school. Ideas of how to build college and career interest early include:

- Host a career exploration gallery walk
- Partner with a local career technical education (CTE) program (such as Oklahoma CareerTech)
- Invite individuals from a wide variety of careers (including current CTE students) to share
- Introduce Holland's Six Vocational Personality Types and how specific careers fit into the categories
- Use the a research-based personality test to help students better understand themselves
- Collaborate with teachers and library media specialists on research projects that involve students researching careers, training or education needed, skills needed, costs, etc.

(School, 2020)

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

"Students are extremely connected with technology and often use social media to compare themselves to others and to impossible ideals. I utilize individual, small group, and classroom instruction to teach students techniques to foster a healthy body image in order to help students find peace and acceptance with their bodies. However, when a student is in need of intensive, on-going mental health counseling, it is imperative that I refer them to long-term counseling services."

Michelle, High School Counselor
Adair Public Schools

DELIVER

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

School counselors work with individual students to provide additional opportunities for mastery of the Oklahoma Student Standards based on specific needs. Additional time or varied methods may be needed to improve specific student outcomes. Individual instruction is often considered a tier one or tier two support. Although, if the individual student needs ongoing mental health support, a referral to a mental health counselor is made. Examples of individual instruction include:

- **Academic individual instruction** helps a student learn skills to manage a period of transition or adapt to changing situations and responsibilities.
- **Career individual instruction** supports individual students with career research or pursuit of postsecondary options.
- **Social and emotional individual instruction** helps students learn relationship skills when feeling isolated at school or learning steps for ethical decision-making and social responsibility.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

In addition to student instruction, school counselors will often provide informational sessions for their school, families, and community on topics such as mindfulness practices in schools, trauma-informed care, safe use of social media, bullying prevention, cultural sustaining education, or other needed topics. This could also include leading book studies with staff on topics such as cultural competence, self-care for educators, school culture, or leadership skills. Additionally, SB 21 requires that all Oklahoma schools must provide suicide prevention training to teachers and staff. The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse provides a [list of programs](#) that meet this requirement.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

Minute Meetings are brief one-to-one meetings that can be held with all students, PK-12th grade. Minute Meetings are structured, short response questionnaires perfect for supporting and providing data for your comprehensive school counseling program. Minute Meetings can serve as tier one screening tools to drive social and emotional, academic, or college and career school counseling interventions and goals.”

Leanne, PK-12 School Counselor
Osage County Interlocal Cooperative

DELIVER

School counseling curriculum for instruction: There are many school counseling curriculum resources that can provide direction for instruction:

- [AVID](#)
- [Connect with Kids Network](#)
- [Harmony SEL](#)
- [Hope Rising/My Best Me](#)
- [Learning to Breathe](#)
- [Lions Quest](#)
- [Merrell's Strong Kids](#)
- [MindUP](#)
- [Overcoming Obstacles](#)
- [QuaverSEL](#)
- [rethinkEd](#)
- [Ripple Effects](#)
- [RULER](#)
- [Second Step](#)
- [SPARK Mentoring Programs](#)
- [Student Success Skills](#)
- [Too Good Programs](#)
- [Tribes Learning Community](#)
- [Why Try](#)
- [The Zones of Regulation](#)

Overwhelmed by all the options for curriculum? Check out this [Program Guide from CASEL](#).

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Because teachers spend the majority of the school day working directly with students, social and emotional learning (SEL) is best integrated into the classroom by the teacher(s). Many of the SEL curriculums listed are designed to be teacher-led. However, the school counselor's leadership role is vital to the success of SEL implementation. School counselors advocate for schoolwide SEL programs; school counselors provide training and support to teachers and staff; school counselors collect and distribute data to demonstrate the value of SEL. The classroom instruction provided by the school counselor is meant to supplement teacher-led SEL and dive deeper into the Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success. The small group instruction and individual instruction provided by the school counselor is meant to provide targeted interventions for students who need additional support. (More information about schoolwide SEL competencies on [page 32](#)).

DELIVER

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Cultural sensitivity is a set of skills enabling one to know, understand and value the similarities and differences in people and modify one's behavior to be most effective and respectful of students and families, and to deliver programs that fit the needs of diverse learners. It is an educator's job to ensure that classroom instruction is culturally sensitive and addresses diversity. All students deserve a culturally responsive education that embodies their diversity and centers the true greatness of who they are. They deserve a quality, rigorous [public education that honors their cultures, backgrounds, and communities](#). Their education can connect academic learning to their lives, passions, and struggles outside of school.

School counselors can provide classroom instruction aligned with the Student Standards and inclusive of Oklahoma historical events. This can include [American Indian Education](#), including the Indian Removal Act, as well as Black Wall Street, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and Greenwood Rising.

“If the house is to be set in order, one cannot begin with the present, he must begin with the past.”

- John Hope Franklin, American historian and Oklahoman

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are “everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership” (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Microaggressions can be based on socio-economic status, disability, race, gender, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, or religion. These sound like:

- Failing to learn to pronounce or continuing to mispronounce the names of students
- Scheduling tests and project due dates on religious or cultural holidays
- Setting low expectations for students from particular groups, neighborhoods, or feeder patterns
- Complimenting non-white students on their use of “good English”
- Having students engage in required reading where the protagonists are always white

School counselors can raise awareness and sensitivity toward creating more inclusive and supportive school environments by eliminating microaggressions in classrooms, where students also learn ways to combat microaggressions (Turner, 2019).

USING STUDENT VOICE

Actively engaging students in their learning is a powerful way to impact student achievement. Defined as “student input in their education ranging from input into the instructional topics, the way students learn, the way schools are designed, and more,” student voice is powerful in all areas of instruction (The New Teacher Project, 2018).

When planning school counseling instruction, school counselors are encouraged to ask themselves:

- When will students collaborate to problem-solve, devise higher-order questions, contribute to the creation of a product, or otherwise actively grapple with a lesson’s meaning?
- How often are students offered the opportunity to speak at the front of the room, write on the board, or conduct demonstrations on the document camera?
- When are students writing for an audience beyond the classroom?
- Do students have choices regarding the work they are doing?
- If (and in what ways) are students prompted to connect what they’re learning in the classroom to their lives outside of school?

SCHOOL COUNSELING AND TECHNOLOGY

A technology disparity of experience often exists between adults who were introduced to technology later in life, known as digital immigrants, versus youth who were born after 1980, known as digital natives, who have never known a world without technology. Although many school counselors may identify as digital immigrants, they must remain open to increasing their repertoire of technical skills and online interventions in order to serve all students. Today, most school counselors use technology in many ways. If used correctly, technology can significantly enhance a comprehensive school counseling program. (Kingsley, 2020)

- **Asynchronous communication** such as email, messaging, websites, electronic newsletters, blogs, pre-recorded classroom instruction through Smore, YouTube, Google Voice, Google Classroom, Canvas, Remind, Padlet, Seesaw, Talking Points, Weebly, etc.
- **Synchronously** through live-streamed lessons or presentations such as Zoom, Google Meets, Screencastify, Loom, Nearpod, Powtoon, etc.
- **Enhancement** to classroom, small group, or individual instruction using engaging technology such as Google Slides, Prezi, Canva, Flipgrid, My Blueprint, Go Noodle, BrainPop, etc.
- **Quick data collection** through Google Forms, Poll Everywhere, Kahoot, Socrative, etc.
- **Social media networks** such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Tik Tok to engage with school stakeholders such as faculty, students, families, and the community and to communicate about the school counseling program

School counselors must be aware of the ethical and legal considerations associated with technology. The ASCA Ethical Standards A.14 provides specific guidelines for technical and digital citizenship. Additionally, always follow school and district rules regarding the use of technology to communicate with students.

DELIVER

Additional techniques to incorporate student voice in school counseling instruction include:

- Use student surveys to gain student feedback about classroom and school practices, and use the feedback to make classroom and schoolwide changes
- Create a student school board (and include students in your school counseling advisory council)
- Encourage involvement in student governments and student councils, and work to make the group more inclusive of all types of candidates
- Provide platforms for student journalism
- Implement student-led conferences during parent-teacher conferences
- Use democratic classroom practices for setting expectations and norms

(Pandolpho, 2020) (Benner et al., 2019)

EQUITY AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Dena Simmons, the Assistant Director of Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, is an expert on the intersection of equity and social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions. She explains that when SEL is taught without context, it can do more harm than good. Adults and students can learn effective conflict resolution by first addressing the true root of the conflict.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. These competencies seamlessly lend themselves to preventing violence and to building a more peaceful world. However, educators must be willing to engage in courageous conversations for SEL to be effective for all students. This requires shifting the focus away from “fixing kids” and toward addressing the adult beliefs and mindsets as well as school and district policies that create the learning environment ([The Education Trust, 2020](#)).

Strategies for courageously teaching SEL:

- Provide students opportunities to reflect on identity and equity to build **self-awareness**.
- Use current topics to foster **social awareness**.
- Explore different expectations for **self-management**.
- Enhance **relationship skills** through debate.
- Develop **responsible decision-making skills** through community-based projects.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

In 2014, William Mendoza, executive director of the [White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education](#), hosted a listening tour across the United States, stopping in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. The goal of the listening tour was to hear from students, schools and communities on ways to better meet the unique, culturally related academic needs of Native American students. Feedback from Oklahoma stakeholders showed that reenacting and celebrating the Land Run can be traumatizing and confusing for students, specifically Native American students. Additionally, the listening tour indicated a yearning among indigenous elders to teach indigenous history in our schools. School counselors are positioned to advocate for the inclusion of appropriate indigenous history and the exclusion of offensive mascots, school names, and performances.

EVIDENCE-BASED VS. RESEARCH-BASED VS. BEST PRACTICES

When considering a curriculum or intervention, it is important to consider the proven effectiveness. We often hear these terms interchangeably. However, they have very different meanings. When researching curriculums and programs, it is important to understand the difference between each term (Cottrill-Carlo, 2020).

- **Evidence-based** means the practice has been determined effective by the scientific method and typically includes multiple peer-reviewed studies. (For example: The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has created multiple **evidence-based** programs designed to promote student social and emotional development.)
- **Research-based** means the practice has elements that have been proven effective through research, but the specific practice has not yet been studied. (For example: A school counselor might implement a **research-based** intervention linked to the CASEL competencies such as an emotion identification activity that has not yet been studied.)
- **Best practices** can mean it is a theory-based practice backed by experts in the field, or it can be a phrase used by someone who personally experienced success with the practice. (For example: A school counselor might present at a staff meeting about **best practices** for classroom management and share many ideas, some that have been researched and some that have not but have worked in the school counselor's experience.)

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE

[The What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#) reviews the existing research on different programs, products, practices, and policies in education. WWC's goal is to provide educators with the information needed to make evidence-based decisions. WWC focuses on the results from high-quality research to answer the question "What works in education?" WWC includes evidence-based interventions (EBI) that use reliable and valid measures with research rigor such as randomized control trials or quasi-experimental studies.

EVIDENCE-BASED SCHOOL COUNSELING

Evidence-based school counseling (EBSC) is an integrated use of data, research, and evaluation of outcomes to make decisions about interventions and programs. EBSC emphasizes using data to make decisions, using evidence-based interventions where possible, and evaluating student outcomes (Zyromski et al., 2019). As school counselors **manage** and **deliver** school counseling services, it is vital to include evidence-based practices (EBP). EBPs are defined as strategies, interventions, and ways of working that have research evidence of efficacy (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). EBPs are used widely in education and social service professions (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

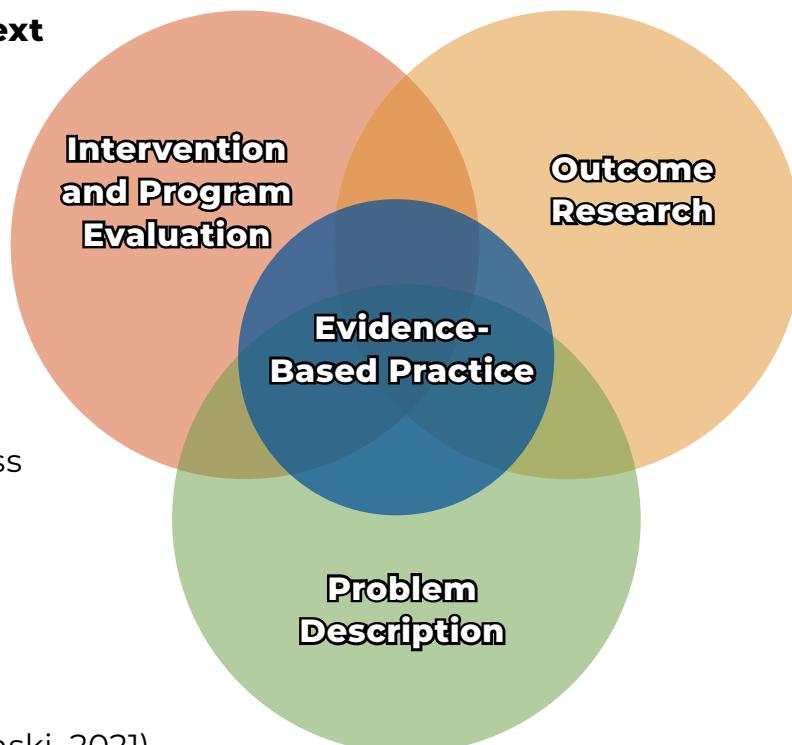
CONNECTION

It is a school counselor's ethical duty to use evidence-based practices to ensure that a comprehensive school counseling program supports positive student outcomes (Zyromski et al., 2019). The ASCA Ethical Standards (2016) mandates that school counselors use evidence-based practices.

EVIDENCE-BASED SCHOOL COUNSELING NOW

Ecological Context Factors

Schools
Peers
Family
Community
State
Political Climate
Country
Economy
Technology Access
Media
Covid 19
Etc.



Intersectional Social Identity Contexts

Age
Ability
Gender
SES and Resources
Race
Ethnicity
Nationality
Culture
Religion
Sexual Orientation
Gender Identity
Etc.

(Dimmitt & Zyromski, 2021)

SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN ACTION

Evidence-based school counseling is challenged with the task "to decrease inequality between high- and low-resourced communities and to ensure that all populations have access to the benefits that evidence-based school counseling provides" (Zyromski et al., 2019). It is not enough for some Oklahoma schools to utilize evidence-based school counseling. We must commit to all students having access to data-driven, evidence-based school counseling services.

CONNECTION

The [lesson plan template](#) asks school counselors to identify an evidence base for each lesson. By identifying the level of evidence available, the school counselor can anticipate the efficacy of the lesson. While not all lessons have to be evidence-based, it is important to work toward utilizing evidence-based lessons to ensure positive student outcomes.

APPRAISAL AND ADVISEMENT

Appraisal is the process where school counselors work with students to analyze and assess their abilities, interests, skills, and achievement. A common example of appraisal is the analysis of a completed interest inventory to inform the student's selection of a career pathway.

Advisement is the process through which school counselors make recommendations based on appraisal of tests, inventories, and other data to help students make decisions for their future. It serves to inspire students to realize their maximum potential.

APPRAISAL AND ADVISEMENT IN ACTION IN OKLAHOMA: ICAP

An [Individual Career Academic Plan \(ICAP\)](#) is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students to explore career, academic, and postsecondary opportunities. Beginning with the family and student involvement in the ICAP process and support from educators, students develop the awareness, knowledge, and skills to create their own meaningful pathways to be career and college ready.

The purpose of the ICAP process is to help students consider a career and help them design the way to get there. Students have an opportunity to determine their interests and passions and ways to explore and experience career opportunities. With increased knowledge, students, with family and educator support, can create their individual career pathway to success.

ICAP resources

Students, families, school counselors, educators, and school leaders can access two free online tools to help guide students on their ICAP journey. The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education offers the [OK Career Guide](#), and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education provides [OK College Start](#). The Oklahoma State Department of Education is working with these partners so that students can build a meaningful Individual Career Academic Plan. Additionally, to better support a seamless transition from high school to postsecondary pursuits, the [OSDE, in partnership with Parchment](#), will make electronic transcripts available to all districts at no cost.

ICAP AS A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

Oklahoma House Bill 2155 states that beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the 2019-20 school year, each student shall be required to complete the process of an ICAP to graduate from a public high school.

The ICAP shall include, but not be limited to:

- Career and college interest surveys
- Written postsecondary and workforce goals and information on progress toward these goals
- Intentional sequence of courses that reflect progress toward a postsecondary goal
- The student's academic progress, including courses taken, assessment scores, any remediation or credit recovery, and any AP, IB, concurrent, or dual enrollment credits earned and/or career certificates, certification, or endorsements
- Experience in service learning and/or work environment activities

The OSDE provides a robust website and an ICAP Implementation Toolkit for implementation guidance.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

A school counselor cannot be expected to be solely responsible for the ICAP process. If your school is relying on the school counselor for schoolwide implementation of the ICAP, advocacy is needed. The use of time tool ([page 52](#)) and other portions of this Framework can be used to discuss the need for shared responsibilities with your administration. School counselors believe in the importance of the ICAP process to allow students to explore career, academic, and postsecondary opportunities. However, school counselors must also provide other services to meet the diverse needs of all students through a comprehensive school counseling program.

DELIVER

The school counselor's role in ICAP

The ICAP process begins with developing an ICAP leadership team. The team is made up of representatives from key stakeholder groups, including:

- Student
- Parent/family/guardian
- Principal/administration
- School counselor
- Classroom teacher
- Special education teacher
- Career technology center teacher
- Member of the business community
- Tribal education liaison
- Any other school stakeholder

In the past, the majority of the responsibilities for career planning fell to the school counselor. However, that is no longer realistic or effective. Students will receive greater individualized attention and guidance if the entire school staff is involved in the career planning process. Research has found that students have more positive academic and college and career outcomes when they receive individualized support and care from educators. Questions to consider when implementing personnel duties:

- Who will oversee the ICAP process?
- Who will be responsible for delivering annual ICAP support?
- Is there a need for professional development for the staff?
- Who will provide support to staff assisting in the implementation of ICAP?
- Is there a need for reallocation of roles and responsibilities?

To achieve schoolwide success, **all** members of the school community must have buy-in and investment in the ICAP process. The ICAP leadership team develops a clear communication and messaging plan for each internal stakeholder group that reflects the reason for the ICAP process and the shared vision the team has established.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN ACTION

School counselors demonstrate an understanding of cultural, social, and environmental influences on student success and opportunities. It is recommended that the ICAP leadership team use these reflection questions to strengthen the process for all students:

- How are you supporting first-generation college students? Undocumented students?
- How are you collaborating with caregivers who have not had positive experiences in education?
- How are you supporting and honoring students from collectivist cultures that prioritize supporting each other and the community?
- How are you supporting families with fewer resources with FAFSA and other financial aid?
- How are you supporting students who are considering a gap year?
- How are you providing resources about historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)?

COUNSELING

Counseling is the professional assistance and support provided to a student or small group of students during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change, or other situations impeding student success. It is short-term and based on counseling theories and techniques that are effective in a school setting to promote academic, career, and social and emotional development.

MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS

While counseling is a direct student service that school counselors provide to students, there are times that a student needs ongoing, intensive mental health counseling. That is when the indirect student service of making a referral would be necessary. School counselors do not provide long-term mental health services to students.

Counseling case notes

School counselors often take case notes regarding counseling sessions with students. When taking notes, school counselors must consider the [ASCA Ethical Standards](#), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and school and district procedures. ASCA Ethical Standards A.2. and A.12. specifically address confidentiality and student records. Generally speaking, case notes need to be kept confidential (in a locked cabinet or a password-protected online document). Additionally, because caregivers have a federal right to see anything a school counselor writes down or records that refers to their child, it is best to keep notes in a way the school would be comfortable with a parent reading. School counselors are encouraged to consult with their administrators and district leadership for district-specific protocols regarding case notes.

CRISIS RESPONSE

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.

JOHN F. KENNEDY ON CRISIS

John F. Kennedy once said, “The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word ‘crisis.’ One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger -- but recognize the opportunity.” Although this quote has since been described as mistaken etymology and the true Chinese characters truly mean “danger” and “change point,” the message remains. A crisis is a dynamic situation with many elements at play and can either turn out for better or worse with proper preparation. (Mair, 2009)

The Oklahoma State Department of Education has created the “Suicide Resource Guide for Oklahoma Schools: Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention” and the “Oklahoma Comprehensive School Crisis Management Framework” to support specialized instructional support personnel and school-based mental health professionals.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

School counselors are not meant to address crisis response alone. Instead, the school counselor is a vital member of the crisis team. A crisis team is a multidisciplinary team of administrative staff, mental health professionals, safety professionals, and support staff whose primary focus is to address crisis preparedness, intervention, response and recovery. Crisis team members often include someone from the administrative leadership, school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, school nurses, resource police officers, and others including support staff and/or teachers. These professionals have been specifically trained in areas of crisis preparedness and take a leadership role in developing crisis plans, ensuring school staff can effectively execute various crisis protocols. They may provide mental health services for effective crisis interventions and recovery supports. Crisis team members who are mental health professionals may provide crisis intervention and services.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Trauma refers to an **event**, series of events, or circumstances **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or perceived as life-threatening; it can overwhelm the person's ability to cope and have lasting adverse **effects** (SAMHSA, 2014)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refers to traumatic events occurring in a person's life before the age of 18. Events are categorized by household challenges, abuse, or neglect.

Repeated exposure to traumatic stress

can affect the developing brain and nervous system. Childhood trauma and ACEs are toxic to the brain's building process and disrupt physiological and psychological development. This can lead to lasting health, behavioral, and potential life effects such as obesity, heart disease, smoking, depression, suicide attempts, alcoholism, substance use, and loss in academic or work achievements (CDC, 2019). **Oklahoma has one of the highest prevalence of children ages 0-17 experiencing two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences** (Health of Women and Children Report, 2019).

MASLOW BEFORE BLOOM

We must ensure that students' basic needs are met before learning can occur. If students are not well fed, rested, or do not feel safe, connected, and confident in the learning environment, they cannot learn.

DELIVER

“A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**.” (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 9). **These four R’s are key assumptions of a trauma-informed approach.**

The Oklahoma State Department of Education has created the “Oklahoma Framework for Trauma-Informed Schools Guidance for Developing Trauma-Informed School Systems” to address the needs of Oklahoma students, staff, families, and communities that have experienced trauma. A trauma-informed approach should be a systems framework and should not be initiated in isolation of existing evidence-based practices. School counselors can be a part of the leadership team that works to apply trauma-informed practices in a multi-tiered system of support consisting of schools or districts seeking knowledge on ACEs and trauma to become **trauma aware**; integrating **trauma-informed** principles into multi-tiered social and emotional behavioral supports; and maintaining a **trauma responsive** school system that engages in restorative practices, safe relationships, and builds resilience.

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' MINDSET

LEARNING BRAIN VS SURVIVAL BRAIN



Regualted

Neocortex, also known as the rational brain, is responsible for higher functions such as language, sensory perception, spatial reasoning and conscious thought.

Open to new information and comfortable with ambiguity. Is ready for learning, can be trained and strengthened.

The neocortex is flexible, malleable and has the capacity for infinite learning.



Dysregulated

Survival brain, also known as the limbic and reptilian/brain stem, controls emotions, memory, attention and basic life functions.

The survival brain is concerned with self-preservation, fear and the protective response of flight, fight or freeze. It doesn't like ambiguity.

Survival brain is soothed by safety, provision of basic needs and healthy connections.

Ham, J. 2017
“Help for Billy,” Forbes, H. 2012

TONI MORRISON ON UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD

Toni Morrison once shared an invaluable lesson with Oprah Winfrey by asking, “When your child enters the room, does your face light up?” Morrison went on to share, “Let your face speak what’s in your heart. When they walked in the room, I was glad to see them. It’s just as small as that, you see?” That unconditional positive regard can significantly impact a student, especially one who has experienced trauma.

DELIVER

The school counselor and trauma-informed practices

School counselors aspire to the ideals that schools are institutions of transformation, critical thinking and deep learning. School counselors recognize that schools do not always live up to these noble ideals and can actually cause trauma. In consultation with school leadership, school counselors need to be equipped to lead efforts to understand when school policies disadvantage racial, ethnic, and other student demographic groups. As advocates, school counselors understand how discipline policies in particular can target students that result in discriminatory actions that prevent student learning.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN ACTION

School counselors are called to address race-based stress and trauma. School counselors must acknowledge and address how current events can cause race-based stress and trauma in students' lives, discuss the realities of race-based stress and trauma, and identify next steps in creating culturally sensitive and competent school environments.

Trauma-informed language

The words educators use with students who have experienced trauma is more than semantics. Language can either shame a child, or language can give the child an opportunity to learn, grow, and change behavior. Additionally, **person-first language** emphasizes the individuality, equality and dignity of all people. Instead of describing a student as "disabled," describe them as "having a disability" or instead of describing a student as "traumatized" describe them as "having experienced trauma" or instead of describing a student as a "tier three student" describe them as "in need of tier three supports."

TRAUMA-INFORMED LANGUAGE

OUR WORDS MATTER

INSTEAD OF SAYING...	TRY SAYING...
THEY ARE BEHAVING BADLY.	THEY ARE HANDLING SOMETHING DIFFICULT.
WHAT IS WRONG WITH THEM?	WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
THEY ARE BAD KIDS.	THEY ARE DOING THE BEST THEY CAN.
THEY ARE ATTENTION-SEEKING.	THEY ARE CONNECTION-SEEKING.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative practices (also referred to as restorative justice) are a way to help students understand their role in a problem by holding students accountable for their actions and helping them to find positive solutions for the problems that they create. This technique helps students build empathy and positive relationships with students and adults. Proactive circles and restorative conference circles are restorative practices that can be easily integrated into a school counseling program. School counselors can implement circles, or school counselors can help educate and empower teachers to implement circles in their classroom. (Willard, 2018)

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“We have incorporated circles school-wide during our school day. This year, every child in the building is participating in a circle from 8:10-8:30. We have really enjoyed it. Teachers have enjoyed the relationships that have been built with students this year, and we are looking forward to comparing data on discipline as well. We have noticed a big change in behavior and attitudes this year.”

Robyn, Principal
Weatherford Public Schools

“My students love circles! We use a check-in system where students can share how they are feeling on a scale of 1-5. Some days, many of my students start the day at 2. When this happens, we do a ‘Circle of Feelings’ to discuss how we are feeling and ways we can show kindness to include others and help others feel better. Then, by the end of the day during our ‘Share and Shine Circle,’ most students are up to 5! I am so proud of them!”

Shannah, 4th-Grade Teacher
Elk City Public Schools

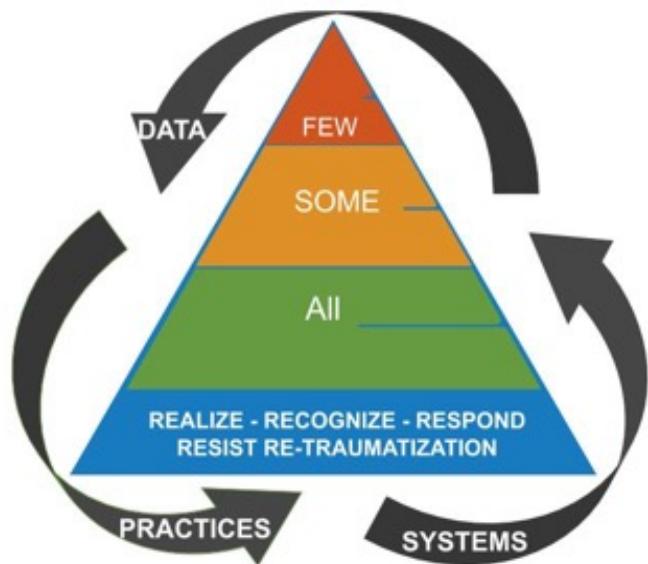
“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

-Alexander Den Heijer

DELIVER

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Multi-tiered system of support (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. MTSS is also proven to improve the overall school climate, student safety needs, and social and emotional behavior.



MTSS is often seen as an integration of Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). While RtI is focused on academics and PBIS is focused on behavior, MTSS comprehensively serves students across domains (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020).

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). The MTSS approach also more clearly defines the school counselor's role in providing mental health services. School counselors provide tier one support for all students, provide or coordinate tier two targeted intervention for identified students and primarily collaborate, consult, and refer for the tier three level of support.

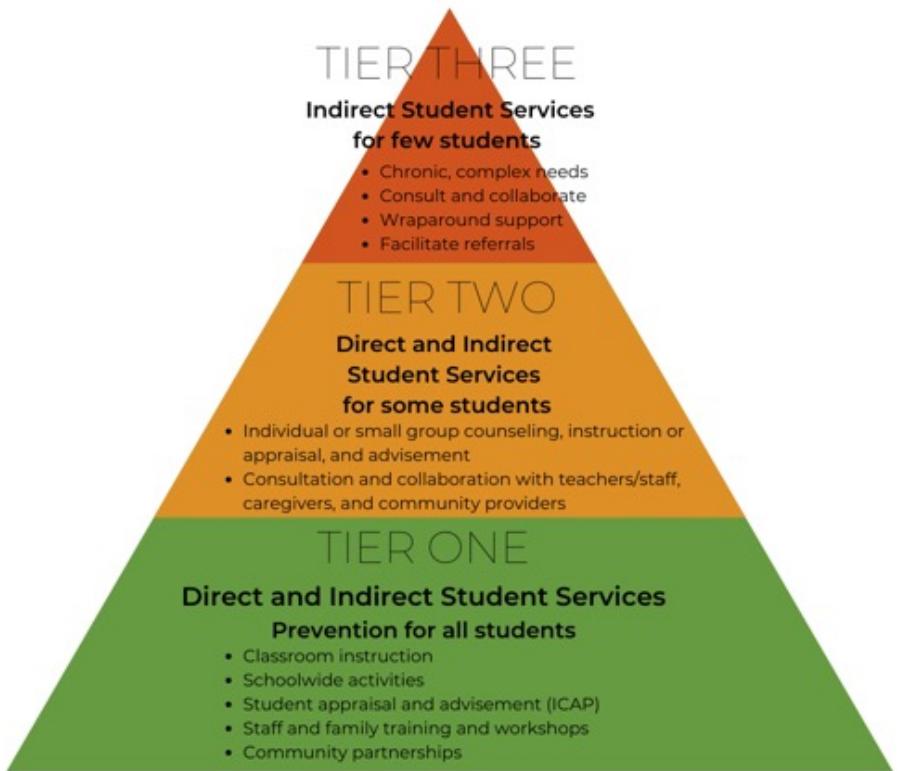
USING UNIVERSAL SCREENERS

First recommended by the Office of the Child Advocate in response to school shootings, universal screeners are used as a preventative, systematic, and standardized process of assessing every student's social and emotional or behavioral functioning with the goal of providing early identification and intervention to identified students. Universal screeners are recommended as a part of a MTSS framework. Universal screening is a commonly used tier one practice to identify students with tier two and three behavioral or mental health needs. The [School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System \(SHAPE\)](#) provides a searchable library of free or low-cost screening and assessment measures related to school mental health. (Albers & Kettler, 2014) (Donohue, et al., 2016)

DELIVER

The school counselor and MTSS

[School counselors implement a school counseling program addressing the needs of all students](#). Through the review of data, school counselors identify students in need and collaborate with other student services professionals, educators, and families to provide appropriate instruction and learning supports within MTSS. School counselors can serve as interveners and supporters on a MTSS team. Some school counselors might serve in a leadership role such as an internal coach on an MTSS team. However, a school counselor is not the sole leader of MTSS in a school building. Administrator support, leadership, and buy-in are essential for MTSS success. (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020) (Goodman-Scott et al., 2019)



Comprehensive School Counseling	Multi-Tiered System of Support
Preventative	Preventative
Data-informed and guided by evidence-based practices	Data-informed and utilizing evidence-based practices
Culturally sustaining	Culturally sustaining
Utilizing a system's approach	Utilizing a system's approach
Serving all students through direct and indirect student services	Serving all students through a tiered continuum of supports
Focusing on students' academic, college and career, and social and emotional development and the interconnectedness of these domains	Integrating academic and behavioral development and the interconnectedness of these domains
School counselors as advocates, collaborators, leaders, and systemic change agents	Schoolwide, collaborative

(Goodman-Scott & Ockerman, 2019)

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Many of the tiered supports provided by a school counseling program can utilize school staff and community members. School counselor leaders can coordinate and oversee activities and interventions such as: mentor programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, peer mentor programs, food and resource drives, Check-In/Check-Out, 2x10, and the implementation of calm-down corners. While the school counselor might organize the support, it is implemented by other school staff or community members. This allows the school counseling program to have a further reach.

PRIORITIZING STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Positive relationships are built on trust and listening. Agreed upon expectations, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathy provide a strong foundation for trust to be built. Additionally, trust increases when a school counselor shares a part of themselves with the student. Active listening is listening to what is said and not said, including nonverbals and body language, and is an important part of relationship building. Students can easily identify when a school counselor is distracted or thinking of what they are going to say next instead of genuinely listening to the student. Research shows that when children have strong relationships with caring adults, they are more likely to be engaged at school and more motivated to succeed academically. The same research found that meaningful relationships share five critical aspects that help students thrive: showing students adults care about them, challenging them to become their best selves while providing ongoing support, sharing power, showing respect, and expanding their sense of possibilities and opportunities (Search Institute, 2020). The bottom line is nothing has more impact in the life of a child than positive relationships, yet two-thirds of students don't feel like they have a supportive adult in their school (Brackett, 2019). For inspiration, [Josh Shipp](#) shares a powerful story on how every young person is one caring adult away from being a success story, and [Rita Pierson](#) shares the importance of every kid needing a champion. As psychologist Uriel Bronfenbrenner states, "every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her." School counselors are equipped to be that person.

CREATING A SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Creating a safe and accountable school environment must be a prerequisite to student learning. Research has shown that students' academic performance and attendance decreases, and risky behaviors increase if they do not feel safe at school. Yet just over half of students feel safe in school. Additionally, almost 40% of students report fights at school, and over 30% report feeling that they need to be prepared to fight to defend themselves at all times. Research shows that schools must work toward creating safe school environments. However, safety cannot be guaranteed, especially for marginalized students. Thus, school counselors must also work toward creating [accountable environments](#) where students, staff, and communities enter a space with the intention of being responsible for their words and actions. (YouthTruth, 2018) (Ahenkorah, 2020)

To help create a safe and accountable school environment, school counselors can:

- Have a constant and visible presence throughout the school. Make sure students know how to contact the school counselor. If a student knows the school counselor is available and willing to help, the student is more likely to share when there is a safety concern.
- Proactively reach out to students who are having difficulties. Use data to determine students with a high number of absences, behavior referrals, or a change in academic performance. Use observation data to identify students who appear socially isolated or have shown a change in mood or affect.
- Trust students' reports of unsafe behaviors. Over 40% of students state that educators do not try to stop bullying or harassment. When students feel as though their reports are not taken seriously, they stop making the report. This negatively impacts school climate, accountability, and safety.
- Work with administrators and school leadership or MTSS teams to foster a safe school environment that is tailored to the school's unique needs. This might include professional development, parent outreach, crisis intervention, collaboration and consultation, and referrals to community agencies.
- Give students and caregivers the opportunity to share (both anonymous or named) their experiences and their ideas to create a safer, more accountable school environment. (Bray, 2016)

Safe and accountable spaces for critical conversations

When school counselors provide student services, it is important that they provide both a safe and accountable space for open and accepting conversation and a literal safe space for students. Unconditional positive regard shows students that they are honored and respected for who they are. "We must commit to building conversational safe spaces, not merely declaring them" (Kay, 2018, p. 16). Within safe spaces, critical conversations emerge. Literal and conversational safe and accountable spaces value all.

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL SECURITY INSTITUTE (OSSI) TIP LINE

Students, educators, staff, caregivers, and the community can call, text, or fill out a form online to report suspicious activity or concerns. Reports can be made by calling (855) 337-8300, by texting “OKSThreat” to 226787, or by filling out a form at tipline.ok.gov. Texting a tip allows for anonymous, two-way communication, images and video to be sent 24 hours a day. Any incident that compromises the safety or security of an Oklahoma school or school-sanctioned event can be reported. School counselors ensure that all stakeholders are informed of the school security tip line by posting promotional materials and by sharing the numbers with students, staff, and caregivers.

SCHOOLWIDE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Often considered a tier one support, schools teach schoolwide, culturally sustaining behavioral expectations. Schoolwide expectations provide a common language for the behaviors expected, specifically in common areas such as the cafeteria, recess, restrooms, and hallways. Expectations represent the culture of the school and be applied in a culturally appropriate way. For example, school teams must work with students, caregivers, and the community to define expectations such as “respect” because it could look different from culture to culture. Expectations are often positively reinforced through acknowledgment.

Schoolwide expectations can be shared with caregivers at least once per year. If possible, schools provide expectations in the family’s home language. Schools can also create home expectations so that caregivers can utilize the common language at home as well.

In addition to student expectations, adult expectations can also be created to be used during professional development, meetings, and throughout the school. Utilizing adult behavioral expectations can help set meeting norms, create an environment where all opinions are valued, and model behavioral expectations to the students. (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020)

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“Some critics say MTSS is more effective at the elementary level. However, common procedures and practices are particularly important at the secondary level due to the large size of the school. Because the high school is so large, it is necessary that we have structures in place, across the board, that everyone buys into.”

- High School Counselor

Student behavior management

In addition to common behavior expectations, schools often utilize a behavior management referral process called a “t-chart” or “behavior flowchart.” This is a chart that defines student behaviors that are classroom managed versus office managed. The chart also includes the roles and responsibilities of involved staff members. A t-chart or behavior flowchart can increase equitable treatment of students by streamlining the discipline process.

Although school counselors should never be assigned to discipline processes, school counselors can advocate for the implementation and use of such a system. Additionally, school counselors support staff by helping them learn effective and equitable ways to manage challenging behaviors. When possible, schools can consider working with feeder schools to scaffold behavior management systems from elementary to high school. This increases consistency and allows students to have a clear understanding of behavior expectations. (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020)

PRIORITYZING PREVENTATIVE TIER ONE SUPPORTS

Schools spend ample time at the beginning of each school year and when returning from breaks to teach, re-teach, role play, and practice schoolwide expectations and the student behavior management process. Administrators can encourage teachers and school counselors to spend class time for behavioral instruction. By prioritizing a preventative approach on the front end, overall instructional time is increased because disruptive and inappropriate behaviors are decreased. (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020)

SCHOOL COUNSELOR AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Disruptive behavior is a significant challenge in the school environment. School counselors are uniquely qualified through specialized training to serve as a model, consultant, and student advocate in the prevention and de-escalation of student behaviors to create safe school environments. School counselors utilize their training to identify coping strategies and teach deescalation skills. By utilizing research-based strategies and philosophies such as [Trauma-Based Response and Intervention \(TBRI\)](#) and [Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports \(PBIS\)](#) school counselors can coordinate and facilitate wide intervention plans. It is not the school counselor’s role to penalize or dole out disciplinary actions or intervene in each occurrence of student behavior in schools. School counselors may provide positive support and prevention programs for students and work with staff to develop appropriate interventions and trauma-informed responses to minimize behavior escalation. Modeling relational interactions and interventions contributes to the success of a behavior intervention program.

DELIVER

Misbehavior is a caution sign pointing to skills children are missing. Punishing behavior does not stop it. The only thing that will change behavior is to teach a new skill to replace the troublesome behaviors.

-Conscious Discipline

Commonly used best practices, research-based, and evidence-based behavior interventions include but are not limited to:

- Mentor programs
- Peer mentor programs
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Check-In/Check-Out
- 2x10
- Calm-down corners
- Sensory tools
- Mindfulness activities
- Breathing and relaxation techniques
- Forced-choice reinforcement survey
- Token economy
- Social academic instructional groups
- Small groups focused on skill-building (many curriculums available such as Skills for Social and Academic Success, The Incredible Years, Why Try)
- Goal-setting/behavior contract
- Eliminating the audience
- Home and school communication/reinforcement
- Preferential seating
- Visual schedule
- Premack principle (If this, then that...)
- Role play
- Social stories
- Specific (genuine) praise
- Offer choices
- Restorative conferences
- [Zones of Regulation](#)
- [Mood Meter](#)
- [Coping Cat](#)
- [First Step Next](#)

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“The easiest tool you can use is to learn student’s names. Whether you have 150 or 700 students, when you use a student’s name, even if you don’t really know them, they feel important, and they feel seen. It is an instant climate booster!”

**- Kitrena, School Counseling Director
Mustang Public Schools**

DELIVER

INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

Indirect services are services provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselor's interactions with others. This includes:

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

CONSULTATION

Consultation is the process of providing information, opinions, and recommendations to individuals who can support a student's need or seeking information from an expert about student needs. School counselors both provide and seek consultation.

School counselors, as experts in academic achievement, college and career access, and social and emotional development, share strategies that support student success with families, teachers, other educators and community organizations through consultation. School counselors serve as student advocates to promote student success through consultation.

School counselors also use consultation to seek information on student needs and to identify strategies promoting improvement in achievement, attendance and discipline. School counselors may consult with educational, legal and mental health experts to inform decisions and design strategies to promote student success.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is the process in which multiple individuals work toward a common goal and share responsibility for the associated tasks. School counselors collaborate with families, administrators, teachers, school staff, businesses, and community organizations.

Collaborative student support

Many Oklahoma schools implement and utilize intervention teams, professional learning communities (PLC), child study teams (CST), or other similar teams of educators to track student progress towards academic and behavioral goals. School counselors often have an important role on these teams. As team members, school counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers, other school professionals, community agencies and families to meet the needs of the whole child. Additionally, school counselors can serve in roles of supporter and intervener. In the supporting role, the school counselor may provide indirect student service by presenting data or serving as a consultant to a student support team. In the intervener role, the school counselor may provide direct student services such as instruction, small group, or individual counseling.

Collaborative partnerships with the community

Establishing partnerships with community members and organizations strengthen the school, the school counseling program, and the community. Businesses in the community may partner with the school to provide mentorship opportunities, internships for students, facilitate skill development with specialized training opportunities or solidify community growth through school-to-work initiatives.

Collaborative partnerships with caregivers

School counselors are uniquely situated to collaborate with caregivers to help meet the individualized needs of the whole child. Typically students have a teacher for one year, yet the student may be with the same school counselor for many years. Because of this unique relationship, caregivers often place their trust in school counselors. Additionally, school counselors consider that many caregivers may have had negative experiences with an educational system. Because of this, it is the school's job to work to build positive relationships. This is likely to take time and patience, but it is imperative to student success. Caregiver collaboration is ongoing and includes communication about the school counseling program activities, providing support and resources, facilitating workshops, etc. [Research](#) has shown that school-family-community partnerships enhance academic achievement, improve attendance, promote career development, improve school climate and foster student resilience.

School-based mental health professionals

Federal law, according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Sec. 4102 defines a school-based mental health services provider as "a state-licensed or state-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or other state-licensed or certified mental health professional qualified under state law to provide mental health services to children and adolescents." School districts have differing access to a variety of school-based mental health professionals. It is imperative that school counselors collaborate with other school-based mental health professionals to meet the needs of all students. [See Appendix K](#) for more information.

Collaborative prevention services

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is invested in collaborating with schools to implement behavioral health strategies by using a multi-tiered system of support model to ensure school environments are nurturing and promote positive behavior and academic achievement along with the social and emotional development of young people. Learn more about the [school-based prevention services](#) offered by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION

Working in collaboration with other professionals in your school and community can maximize your effort to meet the needs of every student. This is especially true when addressing the mental health needs of students. Remembering that it's "*a program, not a person*" and collaborating with agencies to provide treatment, preventative programs, and other assistance programs maximize the impact of your school counseling program. It also increases the likelihood that students will have access to mental healthcare. Some school counselors with large caseloads or a high-needs population must triage what students they see first. Collaborative efforts to bring treatment providers into your school help to diminish potential barriers by expanding the student support you can offer and promoting equitable practices for all students in your building. It also gives students more opportunities to form supportive and safe relationships during their time at school.

- Missy Smith, OSCA President, 2020-2021

REFERRALS

Referrals occur when students' needs extend beyond the training and/or responsibilities of the school counseling role. When a student needs support beyond short-term services or counseling, it is a school counselors' ethical duty to refer students and parents to school or community resources for additional assistance or information.

CREATING A DIVERSITY-INFORMED REFERRAL & RESOURCE LIST

School counselors keep an up-to-date resources list that includes internal and external resources. Internal resources include professionals employed by the school, such as a school psychologist and interventionist. External resources include local mental health agencies, Department of Human Services, intensive care facilities, translation services, temporary housing, domestic violence shelters, community LGBTQ+ centers, food banks, pediatricians and other healthcare providers, financial assistance, parent education resources, and other community agencies available. (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020)

A referral and resource list is “diversity-informed” if it provides personal, local, and institutional resources that are relevant to individualized student needs. These resources are intended for traditionally underserved students such as students from racial/ethnic minorities, students with a disability, students who identify LGBTQ+, etc. (Achola, 2019).

If your community does not have access to diversity-informed external resources, it is recommended that the referral and resource list provide online resources as well as resources from the nearest city.

A.6 of the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016) states that school counselors provide a list of resources. However, school counselors do not endorse or give preference to a specific resource or practice.

ASCA recommends school counselors spend 80% or more of their time in **direct and indirect student services** to achieve the most effective delivery of the school counseling program. The remaining 20% of the time is for program management, school support services, and fair-share responsibilities. The use-of-time calculator can be used at least twice per year to track how school counselors spend their time.

CONNECTION

If school counselors are not spending 80% of their time in direct and indirect student services, ASCA Ethical Standard B.2.c (2016) states that they meet with their administrators to discuss ways to work toward a “school counseling program free of non- school-counseling assignments identified by ASCA as inappropriate to the school counselor’s role.”

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Often school counselors serve on school and district committees or boards to promote student success and generate schoolwide and district support for the school counseling program. This indirect student service promotes school counselor leadership and is helpful in the development of comprehensive school counseling programs.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL COUNSELING

The [ASCA Virtual School Counseling position statement](#) asserts that school counselors working in a virtual setting provide a school counseling program through the use of technology and distance (virtual/online/e-learning) counseling with the same standards and adherence to ethics as school counselors working in traditional school settings. School counselors work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure equity, access, and success of all students whether virtual school counseling is offered synchronously or asynchronously.

School counselors working with students in a virtual setting should:

- Adhere to the same ethical guidelines in a virtual setting as school counselors in a face-to-face setting
- Recognize and acknowledge the challenges and limitations of virtual school counseling
- Implement procedures for students to follow in both emergency and non-emergency situations when the school counselor is not available
- Recognize and mitigate the limitation of virtual school counselor confidentiality, which may include unintended viewers or recipients
- Inform both the student and caregiver of the benefits and limitations of virtual counseling
- Educate students on how to participate in the electronic school counseling relationship to minimize and prevent potential misunderstandings that could occur due to lack of verbal cues and inability to read body language or other visual cues that provide contextual meaning to the school counseling process and school counseling relationship
- Educate students about appropriate conduct in the online setting and using digital literacy as a tool
- Incorporate lessons that align with academic, career, and social and emotional domains

ASCA provides many [virtual school counseling resources](#) including toolkits for each level. Additionally, OSDE provides guidance for [distance school counseling](#) and [other resources](#) to support for school counseling in a virtual world.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“When the pandemic shut down in-person instruction, teachers and school counselors alike had to find creative ways to effectively engage with students. For me, this meant utilizing an online, FERPA and HIPPA-compliant platform (doxy.me) for small group and individual counseling opportunities. Seeing my students regularly, even if it was through a screen, was a priority for me. It is well-known that cases of abuse and neglect increase when students are not physically in school, so virtual meetings allowed me to lay eyes on my young scholars on a weekly basis. I encouraged students to utilize online check-in forms to facilitate communication and Sign Up Genius to schedule appointments with me. When we returned to school in August, I was able to seamlessly transition these practices for students who were attending school on a fully virtual or blended basis. It is critical that virtual students aren’t ‘out of sight, out of mind,’ and with the multitude of available ways to connect online, implementing a few simple processes enables me to reach all students!”

- Amy, Community Manager
Project AWARE at Woodward Public Schools

NON-SCHOOL COUNSELING DUTIES

Non-school counseling duties take away valuable time from implementing a school counseling program and should be avoided. Administrators are encouraged to eliminate or reassign inappropriate tasks, allowing school counselors to focus on the prevention and intervention needs of their program. The table on [page 107](#) illustrates a comparison between the two similar types of activities. It is highly encouraged that school counselors engage in only appropriate activities.

NON-SCHOOL COUNSELING TASKS

Duties or tasks outside the school counselor’s role impede the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- coordinating testing
- assigning discipline consequences/discipline investigations
- teaching classes when teachers are absent
- supervising classrooms or common areas
- providing long-term therapy or counseling to address psychological disorders
- coordinating schoolwide intervention teams, child study teams, or special education services
- serving as a data entry clerk

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

If school counselors notice that they are rarely spending 80% of the time providing direct and indirect services to students, it is recommended they advocate to help define their role:

- Communicate with administrator(s), district leaders, school board, and community members frequently. Begin these conversations early and continue them often. Share data. Be sure they are aware of the services school counselors provide and the larger impact school counselors could make if inappropriate activities are removed.
- Work with administrators to identify tasks that do not align with the appropriate duties of a school counselor. (Use data from the [use-of-time calculator](#).) Consider if the tasks really need to be completed and how else the tasks might be completed. Express a willingness to be a part of a plan for a successful transfer of the tasks to staff who have skills to complete the task, keeping in mind that other staff members may already have a large list of responsibilities as well.
- Reflect on the following questions: What are the most significant difficulties for reaching 80% of the time for direct and indirect student services? Which of those difficulties can most effectively be changed this year? What can be done this year to address that one challenge?

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“I plan my classroom instruction curriculum so that I see all students weekly or bi-weekly. I also spend time preventatively checking in with individual students who need additional support to access their learning environment and provide direct student services, including visuals, accountability reports, effort meters, small groups, etc. Being able to demonstrate student success through my school counseling program has been my biggest advocate. Rarely does my principal ask me to do non-school counseling duties because of my effectiveness in delivering direct student services.”

- Kelly, Elementary School Counselor
Union Public Schools

DELIVER

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Appropriate Activities for School Counselors	Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors
■ advisement and appraisal for academic planning	■ building the master schedule
■ orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students	■ coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students
■ interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests	■ coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs
■ providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent	■ signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
■ providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems	■ performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences
■ providing short-term individual and small- group counseling services to students	■ providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders
■ consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data	■ covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time
■ interpreting student records	■ maintaining student records
■ analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement	■ computing grade-point averages
■ consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success	■ supervising classrooms or common areas
■ protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations	■ keeping clerical records
■ consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems	■ assisting with duties in the principal's office
■ advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards, as necessary	■ coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards
■ analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data	■ serving as a data entry clerk

[American School Counselor Association](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)

ASSESS

To achieve the best results for students, school counselors regularly assess their program to determine its effectiveness. School counselors engage in assessment to inform potential improvements to school counseling program design and delivery and to show how students are different as a result of the school counseling program. The assess component includes two sections: **program assessment and school counselor assessment and appraisal**.

Note: The assess component includes many templates. All templates can be found [here](#).

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

A school counseling program is multifaceted and designed with continuous assessment and improvement in mind. School counselors regularly assess their progress toward the design and delivery of a comprehensive school counseling program and assess the impact on students as indicated by participation, Mindsets & Behaviors, and outcome data.

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY IN ACTION

By completing program assessments and taking action on areas needing improvement, school counselors demonstrate leadership through a commitment to continuous school counseling program improvement and advocacy for a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program.

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The [school counseling program assessment](#) is used to analyze progress toward full implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program and to identify program strengths and areas for improvement. Each section of the program assessment includes benchmarks for program implementation within each component of the ASCA National Model. After completing the assessment, school counselors analyze the responses to determine program strengths, areas for improvement, and short- and long-range plans for improvement.

ASSESSING SCHOOL SEL PRACTICES

[Panorama](#) is a social and emotional learning (SEL) tool that helps school districts measure and understand student and adult SEL with research-based surveys and actionable data reports. (Note: Panorama surveys require payment.)

ASSESS

ASSESSING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES

School teams can utilize tools such as the [Checklist for Analyzing Discipline Policies and Procedures for Equity \(CADPPE\)](#), the [5-Point Intervention Approach for Enhancing Equity in School Discipline](#), or the [PBIS Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide](#) to analyze the school's current level of equitable school discipline practices.

ANNUAL RESULTS REPORTS

Annual results reports are designed to ensure school counseling programs are assessed for effectiveness and to inform decisions related to program improvement. These reports are an essential component of a data-informed school counseling program. There are two types of annual results reports:

- [Classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors results reports](#)
- [Closing-the-gap results reports](#)

CONNECTION

Analyzing data from the results reports contributes to a more informed approach to addressing student needs and more focused and effective activities and interventions. The results reports align with the [action plans](#) typically created for the beginning of a school year and developed as part of the [Manage component](#) (beginning on page 35).

REPORTING RESULTS

School counselors share data from results reports to show how students benefit from a school counseling program. The school counseling program results can be used to educate stakeholders about the school counseling program's impact.

School counselors can share program results in numerous ways, such as:

- Websites
- Infographics
- Slideshow presentations to stakeholders
- One-page handouts
- Presentation to advisory council
- Inclusion in a schoolwide report to administrators and school board members
- Inclusion in school or district data materials

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

School counselors are not always comfortable promoting their school counseling program. However, it is vital that school counselors share the results of their school counseling programs. By advocating for comprehensive school counseling programs and reporting the results to all stakeholders, school counselors are better able to serve students. This is backed by empirical research studies that show that schools implementing comprehensive school counseling programs have higher achievement and attendance, and fewer disciplinary events.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

Data can be shared with various stakeholders including school staff, caregivers, students, the community, district-level leadership, school boards, etc.

“I share district data with our administrators during district meetings. I compare growth and challenges to create a picture of our students, where our needs are developing and what strategies are working.”

- Kitrena, School Counseling Director
Mustang Public Schools

SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSESSMENT AND APPRAISAL

Assessing and appraising school counselor performance is a multifaceted process. This process includes self-assessment, formal appraisal of school counselor performance by a qualified administrator, and individual reflection of the data that informs the assessment and appraisal.

ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & COMPETENCIES ASSESSMENT

The [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies assessment](#) is used to self-assess the school counselor's knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The assessment is a self-report of the acquisition of the mindsets and behaviors school counselors need to meet the school counseling profession's rigorous demands and PK-12 students' needs.

ASSESS

The first four mindsets included in the **ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies assessment** begin with “every student:”

- M 1. **Every student** can learn, and every student can succeed.
- M 2. **Every student** should have access to and opportunity for a high-quality education.
- M 3. **Every student** should graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities.
- M 4. **Every student** should have access to a school counseling program.

This challenges school counselors to implement a school counseling program rooted in the belief that every child is capable and deserves every opportunity to succeed.

Competent school counselors are in a constant state of learning, growth, and development. There are always ways school counselors can grow to serve **every student**. In addition to the self-assessment provided by the **ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies assessment**, it is recommended that school counselors seek personal self-assessment on cultural competency at least once per year. While this self-reflection can be challenging, it is necessary.

CONNECTION

The preamble to the **ASCA Ethical Standards (2016)** states that “all students have the right to be respected, be treated with dignity and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations. School counselors support students from all backgrounds and circumstances and consult when their competence level requires additional support.”

ASSESS

SCHOOL COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The [school counselor performance appraisal](#) is completed annually by a qualified administrator to evaluate the school counselor's overall performance. Appraisal documents are often developed in alignment with state or district guidelines selected by state and district leaders.

Because the school's evaluation model may not fit the role of a school counselor, **the school counselor performance appraisal** can be a valuable additional component of the evaluation.

TEACHER & LEADER EFFECTIVENESS (TLE) IN OKLAHOMA

TLE oversees Oklahoma's teacher/leader evaluation system used to inform instruction, create professional development opportunities, and promote the continuous improvement of the practice and art of teaching and leading. The evaluation models currently approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education and used in Oklahoma for evaluation are the Tulsa Model, McRel, Marzano Teacher, and Marzano Leader frameworks.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Essential components of the school counselor performance appraisal include evidence of:

- Design of a comprehensive school counseling program
- Data-informed annual goals with the measured impact of direct services delivery
- Data-informed classroom, small-group, and closing-the-gap activities and interventions
- Calendars reflecting appropriate use of time aligned with ASCA National Model recommendation of 80% of time in direct and indirect services to students
- Collection and analysis of results data from classroom, small-group, and closing-the-gap activities

Using this tool in combination with your school's evaluation model advocates for and emphasizes the importance of comprehensive school counseling to your administrator.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

"ASCA offers 'ASCA U' courses on various topics such as anxiety and stress management, school counseling data specialist, college admissions specialist, and many more. The self-paced, online professional development includes reading books and articles, listening to webinars and podcasts, and taking a series of quizzes on the material. I have taken many of the courses as a part of my professional learning focus to receive targeted school counseling training to fill gaps missing from my school counseling preparation program. The courses align well with our annual student outcome goals. Plus, the courses can count towards graduate credit, NBCC Continuing Education, and CEUs."

- Cherie, Elementary School Counselor
Oklahoma City Public Schools

MTSS AND SCHOOL COUNSELING ALIGNMENT ASSESSMENT

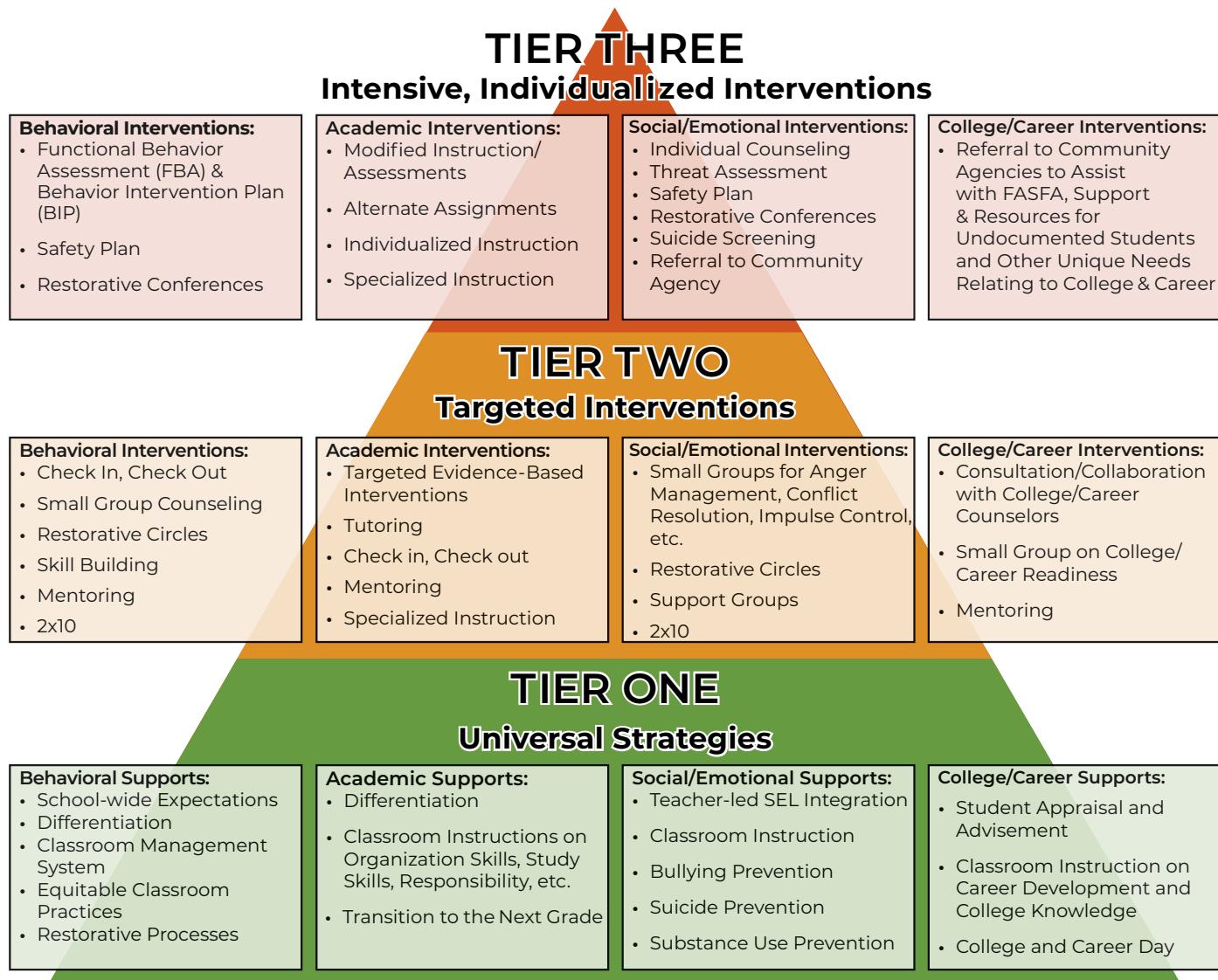
MTSS and school counseling programs can be aligned to address schoolwide goals and objectives. Aligning school counseling programs with MTSS helps school counselors "expand their circle of influence, identify systemic barriers in their schools, promote culturally sustaining, safe, and inclusive learning environments, and act as purposeful leaders and change agents" (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020, p. 177). While MTSS is a staff-implemented, systemic, prevention-focused framework that must have the support, leadership, and complete buy-in of the school administrator(s), school counselors can self-assess how their school counseling program aligns with an already established MTSS framework.

OKLAHOMA HOUSE BILL 1773

HB 1773 to requires all teacher candidates to study the philosophy, overarching framework, components, and implementation of MTSS.

ASSESS

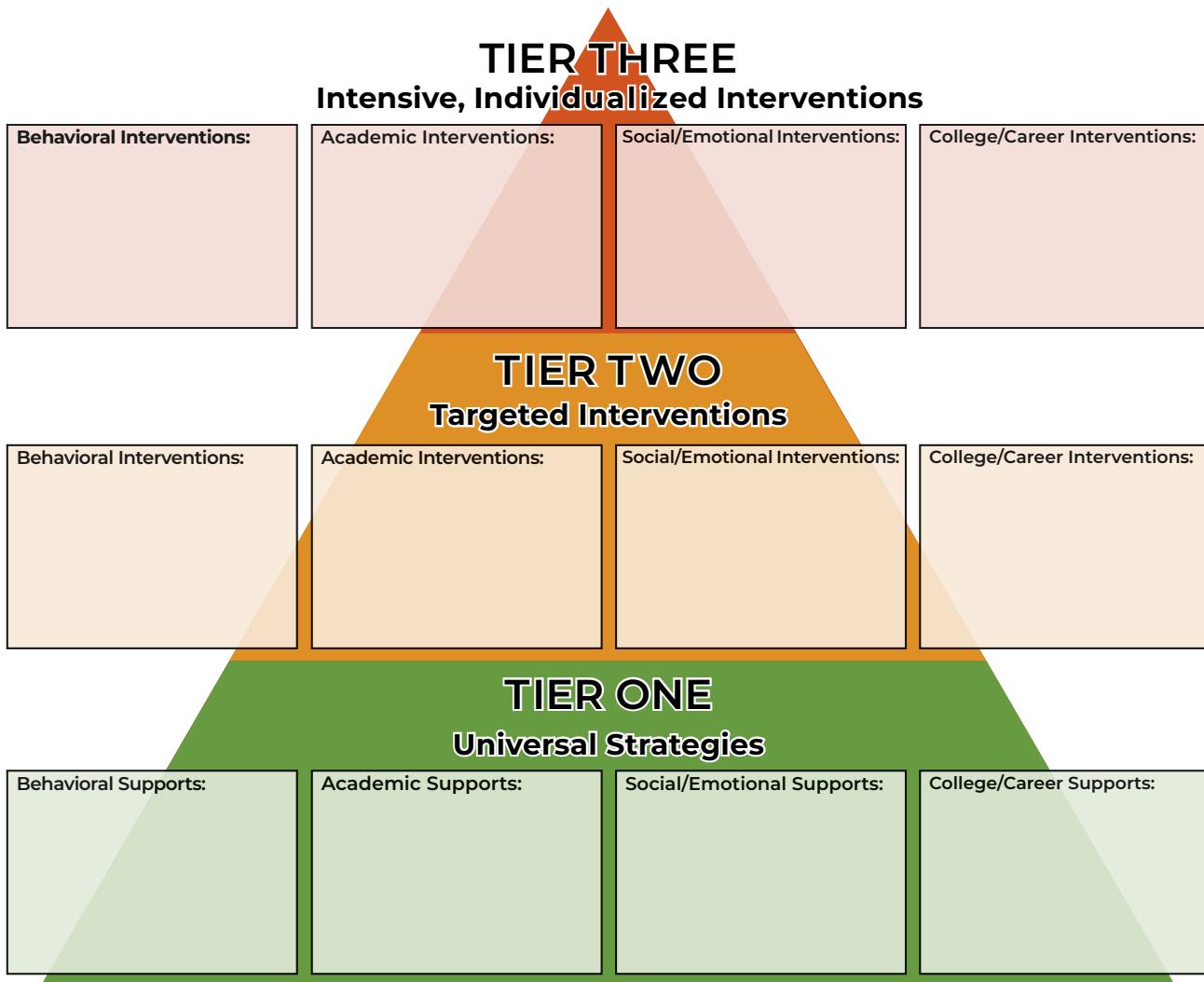
The MTSS triangle with supports and interventions filled in can be used as an example. It is not required that school counselors implement everything on the example MTSS triangle.



ASSESS

The MTSS triangle with supports and interventions filled in can be used as an example. The blank MTSS triangle (below) can be completed collaboratively by the school counselor and MTSS team to identify what supports and interventions are already in place. By identifying what is already working, school counselors can begin identifying and filling gaps. School counselors and MTSS teams can utilize an integrative approach to aligning programs.

For a fillable version, please visit [here](#).



SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-CARE

Self-care is defined by the World Health Organization as the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote, maintain health, prevent disease and to cope with illness with or without the support of a healthcare provider. Self-care is not selfish. Instead, self-care encompasses caring for one's hygiene, nutrition, lifestyle, environmental and socio-economic factors.

How to practice self-C.A.R.E

COMPASSION: Self-compassion is the ability to treat yourself with care and kindness. Actively practicing self-compassion helps you to feel happier, feel less stressed, and move beyond your mistakes to try again.

AWARE: Being mindful is one way to practice compassion and self-care. Incorporate these [8 Mindful Practices](#) into daily work and personal space. These are also easy to use with students.

RESPECT yourself: Use the OSDE [Self-Care Infographic](#) to create a holistic [My Self-Care Plan](#).

EMPATHY for self and others: Empathy heals us, and sympathy diminishes us. Empathy is the ability to stay present with another person's feelings. Sympathy is feeling pity or sorrow for someone's suffering. Empathy connects us, and sympathy drives separation ([Brown, 2013](#)).

Self-care is the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.

PHYSICAL STRATEGIES

- Eat Healthy
- Drink Water
- 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
- Engage in Daily Family Rituals
- 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 & Feel Free to Say "No"
- Laugh

WORK-BASED STRATEGIES

- Turn Off Your Email / Phone Outside of Work Hours
- Celebrate Your / Coworkers' Successes
- Ask for Help When Needed
- Take Frequent Breaks
- Engage in Regular Consultation with Colleagues
- Set Realistic Work Expectations

MAKE IT A PRIORITY TO BE A "HUMAN BEING RATHER THAN A HUMAN DOING."

While the media often emphasizes the importance of self-care, another important idea is “collective care.” Collective care urges the extension of care to others, including neighbors, community members, colleagues, family, and friends.

MASLOW BEFORE BLOOM FOR EDUCATORS TOO

“Maslow before Bloom applies to the grown-ups too! Educators are superheroes, warriors, and gladiators. We are also human -- we have feelings, we get tired, we get stressed, and sometimes we get overwhelmed and beaten down. We have to take care of the adults so they can take care of the kids. We have to make self-care a priority every day.” - Dr. Bryan Pearlman, author of *Maslow Before Bloom*

Burnout

Burnout is a type of work-related stress. It is a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity (Mayo Clinic, 2020).

A priest once told Brené Brown, “If you do not want to burn out, quit living like you are on fire.” School counselors are often on fire and putting out fires. The human stress response system is complex, and often, the biological stress cycle does not complete. When the cycle does not complete, the body is stuck in a difficult emotion, and exhaustion occurs. This is also when burnout occurs. Luckily, there are evidence-based ways to complete the stress cycle and prevent burnout: physical activity, deep breathing, positive social interactions, genuine laughter, giving and receiving affection, crying, and creative expression (Nagoski & Nagoski, 2020). So whatever it is, a long run, a full 10-second hug, or maybe following Carrie Fisher’s guidance and “take your broken heart and turn it into art,” it is vital to allow the completion of the stress cycle. Often it feels as though big hurdles could not possibly be solved by these small acts. However, these evidence-based practices have been proven effective.

STRONG BACK, SOFT FRONT, WILD HEART

Roshi Joan Halifax, an American Zen Buddhist teacher, believes that individuals must maintain a “strong back, soft front.” This describes the desire to have a strength within coupled with a compassionate, soft front. Often the opposite is a defensive front that is shielding a weak, fearful back. Brené Brown added “wild heart” to the phrase that results in a challenge to live with a “strong back, soft front, wild heart.” This type of living is courageous and vulnerable. This type of living is standing up for what is right despite the fear and criticism that might follow. This type of living stands up for beliefs, fights fitting in with others, and is never silenced. (Brown, 2020)

Research by Doris Santoro, author of “Demoralized: Why Teachers Leave the Profession They Love and How They Can Stay,” argues that the term burnout puts the blame on the educator suggesting that they need to build more resilience or to combat teacher dissatisfaction. Instead, she has found that demoralization happens when educators face persistent challenges to their professional values, often caused by high-stakes testing, punitive accountability systems, and other policies (Santoro, 2018). As leaders in schools, school counselors can be a part of “re-moralization” in schools working to change the conditions that lead to demoralization (Santoro, 2018). School counselors can use advocacy skills to be change agents in schools by encouraging administrators to invest in support services and promote the emotional well-being of educators. Approximately 16% of teachers in the United States change schools or leave the profession each year (Terada, 2018). In Oklahoma, that number is over 23% annually (OSDE, 2019). By reducing the risk of burnout and turnover, teacher satisfaction improves, and districts can save on average \$15,000 in teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). There are a variety of [social and emotional well-being quality assessments and screeners](#) that can be utilized to gauge adult well-being and support needs.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Child and human development expert Joseph Chilton Pearce stated, “What we **are** teaches the child more than what we say, so we must **be** what we want our children to become.” It is simply not enough to “talk the talk.” Educators must also be willing to “walk the walk.” Educators must show students that they prioritize their own well-being in addition to prioritizing their students’ well-being.

Adult Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Adult SEL is the process of helping educators build their expertise and skills to lead SEL initiatives. It also involves cultivating adults’ own SEL competencies. The Oklahoma SEL Competencies and Implementation Guide includes adult SEL.

Research shows that emotional intelligence is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes among children and adolescents, including improved cognitive and social functioning, psychological well-being, and higher academic performance. Additionally, emotional intelligence is also associated with less stress and burnout, and greater job satisfaction. As educators, developing a deeper understanding of our emotions can enable us to get our own needs met, to support all students, and create the best possible learning environment. In fact, a study from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence found that teachers who were mandated to teach SEL but did not cultivate their own SEL worsened their students’ SEL skills. However, teachers who developed their own SEL skills not only improved their own well-being but also improved the social, emotional, and academic development of their students.

Are you an emotionally intelligent educator?

The following questions are aligned with [RULER, a systemic approach to SEL](#). They are great for self-reflection, to be used with staff as a professional development tool or with students.

Recognizing emotion:

- How often do you pay attention to your own and your students' emotions?
- What do you do to teach your students to accurately recognize emotions in the face, body, & voice?

Understanding emotion:

- Are you aware of your emotional triggers?
- What makes you feel angry, worried, or joyful at school?
- How do you help your students understand the causes and consequences of their emotions?

Labeling emotion:

- How sophisticated is your emotion vocabulary?
- How do you infuse emotion vocabulary into your teaching?

Expressing emotion:

- Are you comfortable expressing the full range of emotions — including happiness, sadness, anger, and calmness — with your students?
- What do you do to ensure that your students learn about cultural differences in the display of emotions?

Regulating emotion:

- Which ineffective and effective strategies do you use to regulate your feelings?
- How often do you teach your students helpful strategies to regulate emotions such as stress so that they can achieve their goals?

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR EMOTIONS

To build greater emotional awareness, ask yourself these questions:

- **How do you feel in the morning as you enter your school? At the end of the day?**
- **What emotions do you experience throughout the day while counseling?**
- **Which students and colleagues evoke pleasant versus unpleasant emotions in you?**
- **What emotions do you experience when walking the hallways, when in the lunchroom, when with students, and when in the faculty room?**

This page has been adapted from Brackett and Simmons' article "[Emotions Matter](#)" (2015), Brackett's book "[Permission to Feel](#)," Panorama's "[A Comprehensive Guide to Adult SEL](#)" and CASEL's "[Benefits of SEL](#)."

STARTING AND IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

This document was adopted from the Oregon Department of Education.

When implementing the Oklahoma Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs, consider the steps below to help manage the transition to a comprehensive school counseling program.

Organize

1. Read or review the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework.
2. Communicate intent to implement a comprehensive counseling program with school and district administrators.
3. Use the program assessment to compare current program with Oklahoma's Framework.

Plan and Design

4. Identify areas of strength and areas to improve based on the results of the program assessment.
5. Review the school's academic, attendance, and behavioral data with a team of stakeholders, including administrators.
6. Prioritize and plan for areas for improvement based on school data with stakeholders.
7. Identify assessments and tools in the manage component that correspond to the areas to improve.

Implement

8. Identify collaborators needed for implementation.
9. Develop a one-to-three-year plan for implementation of the define, manage, deliver, and assess components, including a timeline and persons responsible for each item in the plan.
10. Develop a plan to create a school counseling advisory council.
11. Implement the plan, and collect data on program implementation using the tools in the manage component.

Evaluate

12. Analyze data collected to determine the results of the program following suggestions in the accountability component.
13. Share results with school, district staff, and school board.
14. Complete and analyze the program assessment each year to compare the school counseling program with the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework.
15. Consider completing the [Oklahoma School Counselor Accountability Report \(OSCAR\)](#).
16. Consider applying for the [Recognized ASCA Model Program \(RAMP\) designation](#) to show how the school counseling program makes a difference in student achievement and success.

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This document was adopted from the Tennessee Department of Education

This document will help teams develop a plan for fully implementing the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework. While this plan identifies specific steps for full implementation, the team is encouraged to continually review the program and make adjustments as needed.

For a fillable version, please visit [here](#).

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Resources or Materials Needed	Completion Date
Identify implementation team <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify the 3-5 member team that will assist with the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the school counseling program. Members include school counselors, administrators, and a district school counselor supervisor, if applicable.District implementation team includes supervisor of school counseling, school counselors, and school administrators.			
Complete program audit <ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete a program audit (page 124) to establish a baseline of program implementation.			
Define the program: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success to develop, implement, and assess school counseling programUse Ethical Standards and School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies to guide the school counselor			
Manage the program: Set program focus <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop beliefs, vision statement, and mission statement			
Manage the program: Set program expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none">Have an annual administrative conferenceReview roles and responsibilities of school counselor(s)Reassign roles and responsibilities as necessaryDetermine method and dates for tracking school counselor(s)' use of timePrepare budget aligned to student and school needs			

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Resources or Materials Needed	Completion Date
Manage the program: Set annual outcome goals <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Review student and school data■ Identify and prioritize needs■ Write school counseling program goals			
Manage the program: Complete action plans <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Classroom and group action plans■ Closing the gap action plan			
Manage the program: Create calendars <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Create a yearly calendar that highlights programs and activities of the school counseling program■ Create weekly calendars that provide a detailed plan of a school counselor's activities■ Identify strategies for sharing the calendars with stakeholders■ Track use of time at least twice yearly to ensure 80% or more of the school counselor's time is providing direct and indirect student services			
Managing the program: Create lesson plans <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Write lesson plans for classroom and small group activities			
Managing the program: Implement an advisory council <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Identify and invite potential advisory council members■ Conduct advisory council meetings			
Manage the program: Training on counseling program <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Create a presentation to stakeholders explaining the new school counseling program, processes for accessing services for students, and services available■ Deliver the presentation to faculty and staff■ Deliver the presentation to students and parents			
Deliver the program: Direct and indirect student services <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ School counselors should spend 80% or more of their time delivering direct and indirect student services such as instruction, appraisal and advisement, counseling, consultation, collaboration, and referrals			

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Resources or Materials Needed	Completion Date
<p>Assess the program: Program assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete the school counseling program assessment ■ Compile results of the assessment to determine program goals, action plans, and professional growth goals 			
<p>Assess the program: Program results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete the annual results reports ■ Review the program goal and professional growth goal to determine if they were met ■ Create and distribute a one-page summary of the results reports to show the impact of the counseling program to stakeholders 			
<p>Assess the program: School counselor professional standards & competencies assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete the school counselor professional standards & competencies assessment ■ Align results to prioritized student and school needs ■ Write a professional growth plan for an identified competency need 			
<p>Assess the program: School counselor performance appraisal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A qualified administrator completes the school counselor performance appraisal to evaluate the school counselor's performance 			

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM AUDIT

This document was adapted from the Tennessee Department of Education

For a fillable version, please visit [here](#).

DEFINE	Completed or Implemented	In Progress	Not Started	Evidence
Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success				
ASCA Ethical Standards				
ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies				

MANAGE	Completed or Implemented	In Progress	Not Started	Evidence
Beliefs				
Vision statement				
Mission statement				
School data summary				
Annual student outcome goals				
Classroom action plan(s)				
Small group action plan(s)				
Closing the gap action plan(s)				
Use of lesson plan template				
Annual administrative conference				
Use of time (twice per year)				
Annual calendar				
Weekly calendars				
Advisory council				

DELIVER	Completed or Implemented	In Progress	Not Started	Evidence
Classroom instruction				
Small group instruction				
Individual instruction				
Appraisal and advisement				
Counseling				
Consultation				
Collaboration				
Referrals				

ASSESS	Completed or Implemented	In Progress	Not Started	Evidence
School counseling program assessment				
Classroom results report(s)				
Small group results report(s)				
Closing the gap results report(s)				
ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment				
School counselor performance appraisal template				

MATERIALS AND FACILITIES

This document was adapted from the Oregon Department of Education

A robust comprehensive counseling program requires curriculum materials, counseling tools, and access to facilities and equipment to implement with complete fidelity.

Curriculum materials

Curricula ideally are evidence- or research-based and aligned to the Student Standards. These materials include books, assessment instruments, web-based subscriptions, or other instructional and planning tools defined as part of the program content. Access to technology is essential to delivering a comprehensive school counseling program that is engaging and student-centered.

Instructional materials

Students learn a range of academic, social and emotional, and career development skills within the content of a comprehensive school counseling program. In providing program materials, school districts can establish review guidelines to ensure that materials to be used meet standards of high quality, just as they would establish review guidelines for textbooks for other curriculum areas. Some examples of this content may include:

- 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
- Cybersafety
- 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

SCHOOL COUNSELING CENTER ESSENTIALS

- **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**

Facilities

The comprehensive school counseling program is an integral part of the school community. Creating a centralized space for resources and activities allows for better visibility and accessibility by students, teachers, and community members. A school counseling center may be used for individual student counseling as well as small- and large-group instruction.

FUNDING SOURCES

This document was adapted from the [Arizona Department of Education](#)

Because school counseling services are critical to the success of students, educators, and communities, many federal funding streams are already available to support the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. This document intends to expand awareness of the potential opportunities to fund the implementation of comprehensive school counseling and to open the door for further exploration.

The first box includes potential funding sources for school counselors. The second box includes potential funding sources for the implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL) activities. The federal programs and federal statutes are listed. Please reference the entire statute for a detailed understanding of allowable activities. The far-right column provides concrete examples of activities that were approved in previous grant applications. These examples can help bring the statute to life and help you envision potential activities supported by federal funding streams. It is important to note that this does not mean these examples have certain approval. Additionally, specific school needs must be identified.

Potential school counselor funding:

Federal Program	Federal Statute
Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged Part A Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs	ESSA Sec. 1114 ESSA Sec. 1115
Title I-D Subpart 2 Programs For Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk	ESSA Sec. 1424
Title IV Part A Student Support & Academic Enrichment	ESSA Sec. 4104 ESSA Sec. 4108
Title V Part B Rural Education Initiative	ESSA Sec. 5222

Potential social and emotional learning funding:

Federal Program	Allowable Activities	What SEL Looks Like
Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged Part A Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs	ESSA Sec. 1114 ESSA Sec. 1115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School counselors ■ Social workers ■ Restorative justice training or programs ■ SEL director or specialist ■ SEL curriculum ■ SEL student assemblies ■ Registration & travel for SEL conferences ■ Extra duty pay stipends for teachers to facilitate student peer support groups ■ Books for staff book study on building resilience ■ Student books on SEL competencies, resiliency, feelings, self-regulation, etc. ■ Workshops for employees on SEL topics
Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged Part C Education of Migratory Children	ESSA Sec. 1304	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent advisory council meetings ■ Community partnerships with local health-care clinics ■ Collaboration with CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) ■ Professional development
Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged Part D Programs For Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk	ESSA Sec. 1424	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School counselors ■ Social workers ■ Restorative justice training ■ SEL competency training for students or staff ■ Stipends for teachers to facilitate student peer support groups ■ SEL-informed classroom management strategies ■ Dropout prevention ■ Physical education ■ Mindfulness education ■ Yoga & wellness programs ■ Re-entry programs for justice-involved youth ■ Anti-bullying programs ■ Drug prevention ■ Healthy relationships programs ■ SEL curriculum ■ Therapies (animal, art, trauma, family) ■ Violence prevention ■ Support groups ■ Home visits ■ Family engagement outreach ■ Teen pregnant mom training and support ■ Suicide prevention & recovery ■ Human trafficking prevention & recovery ■ Substance abuse prevention

Federal Program	Allowable Activities	What SEL Looks Like
Title II Part A Preparing, Training, & Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals & School Leaders	ESSA Sec. 2103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SEL competency professional development ■ SEL/academic integration training ■ In-service in universal, Tier 1 explicit SEL ■ Mental health awareness training ■ Strengths-based behavior management training ■ Restorative justice training or programs ■ Mindfulness education ■ Peer coaching ■ Stipends for off-contract time teacher work groups to prepare SEL curriculum and SEL lessons, review survey data, create support tier groups, etc.
Title IV Part A Student Support & Academic Enrichment	ESSA Sec. 4104 ESSA Sec. 4108	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School counselors ■ Social workers ■ Physical education ■ Health educator ■ Yoga & wellness programs for students/families ■ Yoga mats & balls ■ Mindfulness curriculum, consultant, supplies ■ Sensory room ■ Gardening supplies ■ Restorative justice training or programs ■ SEL-informed classroom enhancement strategies ■ SEL competency training for students or staff ■ Dropout prevention ■ Positive behavior management ■ Re-entry programs for justice-involved youth ■ Anti-bullying programs ■ Drug prevention ■ Healthy relationships programs ■ SEL curriculum ■ Character education ■ SEL director/specialist ■ Mental health awareness student assemblies ■ Registration & travel for SEL conferences ■ Extra duty pay stipends for teachers to facilitate student support groups ■ Books for book study on building resilience ■ Student resources on resiliency, feelings, self-regulation, etc. ■ SEL workshops and professional development on SEL ■ Trauma-informed educational practices, including professional development for teachers, curriculum and guidance, and resources

Federal Program	Allowable Activities	What SEL Looks Like
Title IV Part B Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)	ESSA Sec. 4201 ESSA Sec. 4205	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Family engagement outreach professional ■ Restorative justice training ■ SEL curriculum ■ SEL professional development ■ SEL assemblies ■ Mentors ■ Counseling group sessions ■ Mindfulness activities
Title V Part B Rural Education Initiative	ESSA Sec. 5222	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Any activities listed under Title I, II, and IV
Title VI Native American and Alaska Native Education	ESSA Sec. 6115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teen pregnancy training and support ■ Suicide prevention & recovery ■ Human trafficking prevention & recovery ■ Substance abuse prevention ■ Native gardening, nutrition, and cooking ■ Overall wellness & traditional medicine ■ Exercise & well-being ■ Native ceremony and rites of passage ■ Traditional lifeways: regalia/ clothes making ■ Native language ■ STE(A)M programs – Indigenous knowledge for career pathways
Title VII Part B Impact Aid, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance	McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mental health co-pays ■ Prescriptions ■ Counseling ■ Transportation services ■ Peer support ■ Mentors ■ Teacher stipends ■ Violence prevention programs ■ SEL support groups ■ Home visits ■ Mindfulness activities ■ Family outreach programs ■ Family SEL training ■ Social workers in schools ■ SEL related software

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF SCHOOL COUNSELING

As we begin this third decade of the 21st century, we recognize that schools are central to the promise of the American creed-- that children from any ZIP code can achieve their potential. Although schools as institutions do not always live up to these high aspirations, these remain our North Star. School counselors essentially lead, plan, support, and counsel administrators, teachers, students, parents, and school staff on that journey to the North Star — in short, school counselors are the consciences in their buildings. With such a huge responsibility, no wonder the school counseling profession has been riddled with role confusion.

The school counseling profession began in the last century primarily as a list of duties assigned to a teacher that dealt with vocational counseling. In the 1920s through the 1940s, there was a shift that involved school counseling evolving into a position with a hybrid role of vocational planning with a mental health emphasis. The National Defense Act of 1958 created the funds to begin the profession of preparing school counselors for a role that emphasized vocational planning and mental health.

That ancillary role of the school counselor morphed into the concept of a program of services in the 1970s and 1980s. Still, this program of services was rather ill-defined. The accountability movement in the 1990s brought attention to academic achievement, and this was added on to the role of the school counselor. In 1997, the profession published the first school counseling standards that paved the way for curricular goals for school counseling. The passage of No Child Left Behind (2002) brought to light unconscionable achievement gaps among demographic groups, rich and poor students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. These “achievement gaps” or opportunity gaps became a central focus for school counselors. How could school counselors begin to address inequitable practices in schools that led to these gaps?

The publication of the first American School Counselor Association National Model in 2003 provided a framework to streamline all the duties and responsibilities with a programmatic emphasis around four themes: advocacy, collaboration, leadership, and systemic change. Through four editions, the model remains a unifying document for the profession and the best defense against role confusion.

We cannot predict the future, but we know that schools present complex challenges. In the last few years, Oklahoma educators are called to recognize and address the severe trauma that many students face. The ASCA model is flexible enough that school counselors can implement this framework to address national, state, and local concerns such as supporting trauma-informed schools. The school counseling profession can look ahead with optimism on both a national and state level. Oklahoma’s renewed commitment to comprehensive school counseling charts our course to the North Star.

This article was adapted from material by Dr. Norman C. Gysbers (2010).

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL COUNSELING PREPARATION PROGRAMS

School counselor preparation programs in Oklahoma are devoted to advancing the profession by preparing school counselor candidates to demonstrate a deep understanding of the practice under ethical standards and best practices models.

Effective school counselor preparation programs are driven by [ASCA Standards for School Counselor Preparation Programs](#) and [Ethical Standards for School Counselor Education Faculty](#) for training effective school counselors in professional practice and ethical behavior. The ASCA SPA Standards include seven standards:

1. Foundational Knowledge

Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the history of school counseling, and the structure and organization of the American education system. Candidates understand the development trajectories of diverse learners in the school environment.

2. Core Theories & Concepts

Candidates demonstrate knowledge of established and emerging counseling and educational theories and methods and evidence-based techniques and utilize relationship-building skills that are foundational to successful outcomes for students.

3. Instructional and School Counseling Interventions

Candidates use multiple data points to assess individual students' needs and identify a range of school counseling techniques to meet those needs. Candidates utilize digital literacy and technology tools to support the school counseling program and to track the academic, college and career, and social and emotional development of all students.

4. Student Learning Outcomes

Candidates create and implement data-informed school counseling programs that positively impact student outcomes and promote educational equity and access. Candidates use pedagogical skills, collaborative strategies, and referral systems to support student learning.

5. Designing, Implementing, and Assessing Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

Candidates use school data and school counseling program assessments to identify areas of strength and needed improvement for program activities and interventions.

6. Professional Practice

Candidates demonstrate the appropriate scope of school counseling practice in varied educational settings, understand their role as a leader, collaborator, advocate, and agent for systemic change, and engage in opportunities to support their professional growth and identity development.

7. Ethical Practice

Candidates demonstrate ethical and culturally responsive behavior, maintain the highest standard of professionalism and legal obligation, and use consultation and ongoing critical reflection to prevent ethical lapses.



APPENDIX C: SCHOOL COUNSELING CERTIFICATION IN OKLAHOMA

TO RECEIVE

Traditional School Counseling Certification:

- Master's degree in school counseling program
- Passing score on the required examination
 - Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in School Counseling
- Completion of background check

TO RECEIVE

Alternative School Counseling Certification:

Alternative Certification two-step process to determine eligibility:

- Must have one of the following:
 - Master's Degree in a school counseling-related field; **OR**
 - Two years of counseling experience
- And one of the following:
 - 30 or more counseling related credit hours; **OR**
 - 15 or more counseling related credit hours plus one year of counseling-related work experience; **OR**
 - Three or more years of counseling-related work experience
- Plus, passing score on the required examination
 - Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in School Counseling
- Completion of background check
- Participants in the Alternative Placement program must complete six credit hours of college credit courses on specific topics within three years of certification.

Note: This information is updated frequently. However, it is advised that all certification requirements are confirmed with your college/university and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

APPENDIX D: RESOURCES

Sometimes school counselors are given a budget to purchase resources. Listed below are recommended resources for any school counselor's resource library.

American School Counselor Association (2019). *The ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs* (4th ed.).

Auger, R. (2015). *The school counselor's mental health sourcebook: Strategies to help students succeed*. Skyhorse.

Brackett, M. (2019). *Permission to feel: Unlocking the power of emotions to help our kids, ourselves, and our society thrive*. Macmillan.

Burke Harris, N. (2018). *The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity*. Mariner Books.

Cervone, B & Cushman, K. (2015). *Belonging and becoming: The power of social and emotional learning in high schools*. Harvard Education Press.

Feinstein, S. G. (2009). *Secrets of the teenage brain*. Corwin.

Goodman-Scott, E., Betters-Bubon, J., Olsen, J., & Donohue, P. (2020). *Making MTSS work*. American School Counselor Association.

Grothaus, T., Johnson, K. F., & Edirmanasinghe, N. (2020). *Culturally sustaining school counseling*. American School Counselor Association.

Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2007). *School counseling to close the achievement gap: A social justice framework for success*. Corwin.

Maynard, N. & Weinstein, B. (2019). *Hacking school discipline: 9 ways to create a culture of empathy and responsibility using restorative justice*. Times 10 Publications.

Perry, B. D. (2017). *The boy who was raised as a dog: And other stories from a child psychiatrist's notebook-- What traumatized children can teach us about loss, love, and healing*. Basic Books.

Pranis, K. (2005). *The little book of circle processes : A new/old approach to peacemaking (The little books of justice and peacebuilding series)*. Good Books.

Singleton, G.E. (2014). *Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for achieving equity in schools*. Corwin.

Van Der Kolk, B.A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.

Young, A. & Kaffenberger, C. (2018) *Making data work*. American School Counselor Association.

APPENDIX E: AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Oklahoma School Counselor Accountability Report (OSCAR)

The [Oklahoma School Counselor Accountability Report \(OSCAR\)](#) is an ASCA National Model aligned recognition that will amplify your school counseling program by improving your data collection skills, improving your program evaluation capability, and serving as a step toward the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) recognition.

The OSCAR is a document designed for school counselors to show how their interventions through direct service and through consultation with administrators, teachers, and staff make a difference in the lives of their students. The Oklahoma School Counselor Association (OSCA) supports Oklahoma school counselors in gaining the skills and knowledge to create this document through the professional development the association offers throughout the year. Additionally, the OSCAR is included in the Tulsa Model TLE Observation and Evaluation Rubric for school counselors.

The OSCAR includes five of the RAMP components (RAMP includes ten components). Each of the components needed for the OSCAR are explained in the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework:

- Vision and mission statement ([pages 36-37](#))
- Annual student outcome goals ([pages 46-47](#))
- Annual administrative conference ([pages 51-52](#))
- Annual calendar ([page 55](#))
- Closing the gap action plan/results report ([page 48](#))



OKLAHOMA
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OSCA Emerging Leader Grant

The Oklahoma School Counselor Association (OSCA) gives the [Emerging Leader Grant](#) to a school counselor who possesses leadership skills to cover expenses to attend the annual ASCA National Conference in July. The recipient is announced each year during National School Counseling Week in February.

OSCA Graduate Scholarship

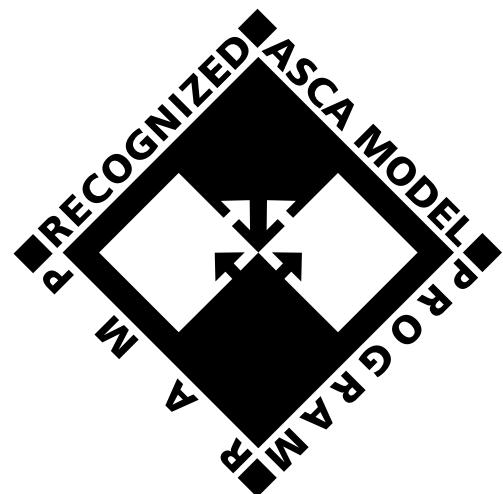
The Oklahoma School Counselor Association (OSCA) awards a \$500 [graduate scholarship](#) to an OSCA member in a counseling graduate program who plans to be a school counselor in Oklahoma. The recipient is recognized at OSCA's annual fall conference.

Oklahoma School Counselor of the Year

The [School Counselor of the Year award](#) honors distinguished school counseling professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates for the nation's students, helping them achieve success in school and in life. Each year, the Oklahoma School Counselor Association (OSCA) selects an Oklahoma school counselor who has developed and implemented an exemplary comprehensive school counseling program at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Oklahoma's winner is submitted to the national level. Oklahoma has had two national finalists: Ken Elliott of Edmond Public Schools (2012) and Sarah Kirk of Norman Public Schools (2019).

Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP)

The [Recognized ASCA Model Program \(RAMP\)](#) designation is awarded to schools that align with the criteria in the ASCA National Model, recognizing schools committed to delivering a data-informed school counseling program and an exemplary educational environment. OSCA offers a RAMP scholarship opportunity to cover the application fee. Oklahoma has had four RAMP recipients: Rebecca Barry of Shawnee Public Schools (2009, 2013, 2017, & 2021), Sarah Kirk of Norman Public Schools (2019), Missy Smith of Norman Public Schools (2020), and Alexis Robertson of Moore Public Schools (2021).



ASCA-Certified School Counselor

The [ASCA-Certified School Counselor \(ACSC\)](#) certification demonstrates school counselor knowledge in designing, implementing, and assessing a school counseling program. School counselors who hold the ACSC demonstrate their commitment to the highest levels of professionalism, ethical practice, and continuing professional development in their school counseling practice.

ASCA-Recognized School Counselor Preparation Program

College/university school counselor preparation programs may [seek national recognition](#) of their school counselor preparation program through the [ASCA Specialized Professional Association \(SPA\)](#) under the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). [The ASCA School Counselor Preparation Program Standards](#) are a unified set of principles guiding school counselor preparation programs in training effective future school counselors in areas of professional practice and ethical behavior.

Comprehensive School Counseling Templates:

Note: All templates can be found at [ASCA's Website](#) and [OSDE's website](#).

- **School data summary:** Guides school counselors' review of school data and helps establish annual school counseling priorities
- **Annual student outcome goal plan:** Statements that guide the implementation of school counseling activities and interventions
- **Lesson plan template:** Helps school counselors plan effective classroom instruction
- **Annual administrative conference:** A formal discussion between the school counselor(s) and administrator to agree on program priorities, implementation strategies, and the school counseling program organization
- **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
- **Weekly calendar:** Includes all school counselor activities such as classroom instruction, group and individual counseling, special events, collaboration/consultation, data analysis, and committee and fair-share responsibilities
- **Annual calendar:** Includes all school counseling program activities such as classroom instruction, open house nights, college and career activities and events, evening activities provided through the school and the community, and cultural events
- **Advisory council agenda:** A specific agenda and goals to be accomplished in an advisory council meeting
- **Advisory council minutes:** Specific and detailed notes from an advisory council meeting
- **School counseling program assessment:** Used to analyze progress toward full implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program and to identify program strengths and areas for improvement
- **ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment:** Used to self-assess the school counselor's knowledge, attitudes, and skills
- **School counselor performance appraisal:** Completed annually by a qualified administrator to evaluate the school counselor's overall performance

APPENDIX G: ACTION PLANS AND RESULTS REPORTS TEMPLATES

Action Plans and Results Reports Templates:

Note: All templates can be found at [ASCA's Website](#) and [OSDE's website](#).

- **Classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors action plan:** Used to provide an overview of the delivery of direct services in classroom and small group settings
- **Classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors results report:** Used to ensure school counseling programs are assessed for effectiveness and to inform decisions related to program improvement
- **Closing-the-gap action plan and results report:** Used to address academic, attendance, or disciplinary discrepancies existing between student groups; school counselors develop detailed action plans indicating activities and resources leveraged to close the gaps

APPENDIX H: SCHOOL COUNSELOR POSITION STATEMENTS

ASCA has officially adopted position statements on the following topics:

- Academic Development
- Annual Performance Appraisal
- Anti-Racist Practices
- Career and Technical Education
- Career Development
- Character Education
- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
- Children Experiencing Homelessness
- College Access Professionals
- Confidentiality
- Corporal Punishment
- Credentialing and Licensure
- Cultural Diversity
- Discipline
- Equity for All Students
- Gender Equity
- Gifted and Talented Student Programs
- Group Counseling
- High-Stakes Testing
- Identification, Prevention and Intervention of Behaviors That Are Harmful and Place Students At Risk
- Individual Student Planning for Postsecondary Preparation
- Letters of Recommendation
- LGBTQ Youth
- Multi-Tiered System of Support
- Peer Support Programs
- Prevention of School-Related Gun Violence
- Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Promotion of Safe Schools Through Conflict Resolution and Bullying/ Harassment Prevention
- Retention, Social Promotion and Age- Appropriate Placement
- Safe Schools and Crisis Response
- School Counseling Preparation Programs
- School Counseling Programs
- School Counselor Supervision
- School-Family-Community Partnerships
- Social and Emotional Development
- Student Mental Health
- Student Postsecondary Recruitment
- Student Safety and the Use of Technology
- Students With Disabilities
- Suicide Prevention/Awareness
- Suicide Risk Assessment
- Supporting Students in Foster Care
- Test Preparation Programs
- Transgender/Gender-Nonconforming Youth
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Use of Non-School-Counseling- Credentialled Personnel
- Use of Support Staff in School Counseling Programs
- Virtual School Counseling
- Working With Students Experiencing Issues Surrounding Undocumented Status

ASCA position statements are backed by research supporting the appropriate role of the school counselor. They can be used to advocate for the role of school counselors and to educate stakeholders about comprehensive school counseling programs. A PDF containing the text of all [ASCA position statements can be found here.](#)

APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE SCHOOL COUNSELING JOB DESCRIPTION AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This document is an exemplar adapted from the Kentucky Department of Education for districts considering adopting or adapting their current job description. By no means should this document be considered a requirement or mandate from the Oklahoma State Department of Education to school districts.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: School Counselor

Scope of Responsibilities: The job functions of an Oklahoma school counselor include maintaining a professional identity, supporting all PK-12 students in their social and emotional, academic, and career development, and being an active school leader who is reflective about his/her comprehensive school counseling program. The school counselor will provide data-informed, universal, and targeted learning experiences to develop the whole child in a diverse society. School counselors will align actions to the mission and vision of the district and their school.

A school counselor exemplifies a professional identity by:

- Using human development theories to have an impact on developmental issues affecting student success
- Using learning theory to support student achievement and success, including students with diverse learning needs
- Using established and emerging evidence-based counseling theories and techniques that are effective in a school setting to promote academic, career, and social and emotional development
- Using career development theories and align them with career and technical education when possible to promote and support postsecondary planning
- Using the principles of a multi-tiered system of support within the context of a comprehensive school counseling program to provide instruction and interventions matched to student need
- Using systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- Applying legal and ethical principles of the school counseling professional identity
- Following the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards to demonstrate high standards of integrity, leadership, and professionalism
- Following the legal aspects of the role of the school counselor
- Adhering to the unique legal and ethical principles of working with students in a school setting
- Adhering to the ethical and statutory limits of confidentiality
- Consulting with other education, counseling, and legal professionals as needed when ethical and legal questions arise

- Conducting and analyzing self-appraisal and assessment data
- Collaborating with administrators, teachers, and other staff in the school and district to ensure culturally responsive curricula and student-centered instruction

A school counselor is an active school leader who is reflective about their program by:

- Identifying factors that enhance and impede students' academic, career, and social and emotional development
- Focusing on the academic, career, and social and emotional development of all students
- Delivering culturally appropriate direct and indirect services
- Developing measurable outcomes for school counseling activities, interventions, and experiences
- Collaborating to create ongoing, regular assessments to measure the effectiveness of the school counseling program
- Articulating the distinction between direct and indirect student services and advocate for a school counseling program free of non-school-counseling duties
- Assessing use of time in direct and indirect student services and program management and school support to determine how much time is spent on each school counseling program component
- Demonstrating effective management and vision of the comprehensive school counselor program and collaboration with all stakeholders
- Providing equitable practices that embrace the diversity of the school community
- Contributing to a caring, positive school culture

A school counselor incorporates a comprehensive school counseling program by:

- Using student, school, and district data to identify achievement, attendance, and discipline issues to be addressed through instruction
- Evaluating cultural and social trends when developing and choosing curricula for school counseling lessons
- Identifying appropriate evidence-based curricula aligned to the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework
- Conducting assessments of student needs to contribute to program planning
- Maintaining a list of current referral resources, consistent with school and district policies, for students, staff, and families to effectively address academic, career, and social and emotional issues
- Using personal reflection, consultation, and supervision to promote professional growth and development
- Using objectives within the school's comprehensive school counseling program that reflect current knowledge and skills as provided in the Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework

- Adhering to ASCA's School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies and ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- Using Oklahoma's Student Standards for all school counseling program planning
- Using data to inform student outcome goals, action plans, and lesson plans
- Reaching agreement with the administrator(s) on school counseling program priorities and activities.
- Adhering to national recommendations for use of time
- Leading school counseling advisory council
- Providing direct and indirect student services to promote student achievement, career development, and social and emotional development
- Assessing student and program results to inform school counseling program implementation and enhancement

Minimum Qualifications:

- Master's degree in school counseling or related field
- Certification in school counseling by the Oklahoma State Department of Education

Desirable Qualifications:

- Successful experience in schools
- Knowledge of comprehensive school counseling and the ASCA National Model
- Knowledge of school counselor's professional identity
- Knowledge of individual and group counseling techniques, specifically group dynamics
- Strong communication skills
- Demonstrated technology skills

Physical Demands:

- Wide range of physical movement, including bending, squatting, reaching, with the ability to lift, carry, push or pull light weights as well as use of hands for simple grasping and fine manipulations
- Use of speech, vision, hearing
- Sitting or standing for extended periods of time
- Indoor and outdoor activity

(Note: It is recommended that any additional non-school-counseling duties that are expected of the school counselor be listed in the job description so that the candidate is aware of the expectations of the position.)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

([more questions available here](#))

- Describe your ideal school counseling program. Include some specific examples of what it will include.
- What influenced you to be a school counselor? What's your journey to becoming a school counselor?
- How does the ASCA National Model support all students?
- How is the ASCA National Model defined, delivered, managed or assessed at an elementary/middle/high school?
- How do you develop a plan to deliver the student standards in classroom lessons or group sessions?
- How do you use data in a school counseling program? How does school data inform the school counseling program?
- What type of activities would you deliver in a school counseling program to address an achievement gap, opportunity gap or attainment gap?
- How would you divide your time between meeting the immediate needs of the students and keeping up with the paperwork? How is your use-of-time spent to address the needs of all students? How will you effectively plan and manage your time as a school counselor?
- How is your professional development plan a part of the school counseling program? How will you determine your own professional development needs? How will your professional development plan improve the school counseling program?
- How would you cultivate an environment that works to dismantle inequities for marginalized populations?
- Describe a time when you provided leadership around a specific need/issue/situation?
- What is advocacy? How do school counselors advocate for systemic change?
- What is the school counselor's role in relation to teachers, parents, administrators and other school counselors?
- What makes you want to work at _____ School?

APPENDIX J: ACCREDITATION

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF OKLAHOMA SCHOOLS

STANDARD VI STUDENT SERVICES

OAC 210:35-3-106. Guidance and counseling services

- a. The counseling staff, parents, administrators, and others shall provide guidance and counseling program direction through involvement in assessment and identification of student needs.
- b. The school shall develop a written description of a guidance and counseling program with special provisions for at-risk students. The program shall address assessed needs of all students, including those who are identified as at-risk, and shall establish program goals, objectives, and an evaluation.
- c. Each school shall provide an organized program of guidance and counseling services.
 1. Counseling services shall be provided to students, in group or individual settings, that facilitate understanding of self and environment.
 2. The counseling services shall provide a planned sequential program of group guidance activities that enhance student self-esteem and promote the development of student competence in the academic, personal/social, and career/vocational areas.
 3. The provider of counseling services shall consult with staff members, parents, and community resources and make appropriate referrals to other specialized persons, clinics, or agencies in the community.
 4. Counseling and guidance services shall be coordinated and shall work cooperatively with other school staff, community resources, and other educational entities.
- d. Each counselor shall follow a planned calendar of activities based on established program goals and provide direct and indirect services to students, teachers, and/or parents. (92)

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

OAC 210:35-5-44. Counselor staffing

The school shall provide for guidance services. Such services may be provided by a guidance counselor or other personnel specially trained in the area of guidance. (92)

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS

OAC 210:35-7-43. Counselor staffing

All students will receive counseling and guidance services from certified school counselors. The guidance program shall provide one counselor for a maximum of 450 students, with no school district having less than one half-time counselor, with one exception: districts with fewer than 225 students may prorate the number of hours per week a certified school counselor is required by dividing the number of students enrolled by 450 and multiplying the quotient by 30. (06)

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

OAC 210:35-9-43. Counselor staffing

All students will receive counseling and guidance services from certified school counselors. The guidance program shall provide one counselor for a maximum of 450 students, with no school district having less than one half-time counselor, with one exception: districts with fewer than 225 students may prorate the number of hours per week a certified school counselor is required by dividing the number of students enrolled by 450 and multiplying the quotient by 30. (06)

Accreditation and Comprehensive School Counseling Alignment

Accreditation Standard:	Component of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program aligned with the standard:
Standard VI-a. The counseling staff, parents, administrators, and others shall provide guidance and counseling program direction through involvement in assessment and identification of student needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ School Data Summary■ Annual Administrative Conference■ Advisory Council■ Oklahoma Student Standards■ School Counseling Program Assessment
Standard VI-b. The school shall develop a written description of a guidance and counseling program with special provisions for at-risk students. The program shall address assessed needs of all students, including those who are identified as at-risk, and shall establish program goals, objectives, and an evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors■ School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies■ Beliefs, Mission Statement, Vision Statement■ Annual Student Outcome Goals■ Classroom and Group Action Plans■ Closing the Gap Action Plans■ Annual Results Reports■ ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies Assessment■ School Counselor Performance Appraisal Template

Accreditation Standard:	Component of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program aligned with the standard:
Standard VI.c.1. Counseling services shall be provided to students, in group or individual settings, that facilitate understanding of self and environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual and Small Group Instruction ■ Counseling
Standard VI.c.2. The counseling services shall provide a planned sequential program of group guidance activities that enhance student self-esteem and promote the development of student competence in the academic, personal/social, and career/vocational areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lesson Plans ■ Classroom Instruction ■ Appraisal and Advisement
Standard VI.c.3. The provider of counseling services shall consult with staff members, parents, and community resources and make appropriate referrals to other specialized persons, clinics, or agencies in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultation ■ Referrals
Standard VI.c.4. Counseling and guidance services shall be coordinated and shall work cooperatively with other school staff, community resources, and other educational entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaboration
Standard VI.d. Each counselor shall follow a planned calendar of activities based on established program goals and provide direct and indirect services to students, teachers, and/or parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Annual Calendar ■ Weekly Calendars ■ Use of Time

Note: The Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework does not advise the use of the term “[guidance](#).”

APPENDIX K: SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Federal law according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Sec. 4102 defines a school-based mental health services provider as “*a state-licensed or state-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or other state-licensed or certified mental health professional qualified under state law to provide mental health services to children and adolescents.*”

[School-based mental health professionals](#) assist and strengthen schools and districts by providing comprehensive supports. These professionals work collaboratively to meet the many needs of students and staff with their unique skills, training, and expertise through a team-based approach. Collaboration, consultation, and direct services are provided within multi-tiered systems of support, which emphasize evidence-based interventions, data-based problem-solving practices, connecting families with resources, and student equity.

Overview of School-Based Mental Health Providers in Oklahoma



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should I change to implement comprehensive school counseling? I have always done school counseling the same way.

Research supports comprehensive school counseling programs as the best way to deliver services to students. It is within a school counselor's ethical standards to deliver comprehensive services to all students. It is also within a school counselor's ethical standards to engage in professional development and personal growth throughout their careers.

Should I be able to do all of this in one year?

As Voltaire famously said, "Perfect is the enemy of good." It is best to avoid perfection and instead remember that change is incremental. You are not expected to do everything proposed in this framework all at once. Schools might have components of this framework already in place. The goal is to target areas of improvement by setting annual goals and evaluating progress toward those goals. Each step taken towards implementing comprehensive school counseling will better serve students.

Why do I need to collect data?

Data validates the work a school counselor does. Data collection can find evidence of positive change or can reveal that certain interventions and activities are not making the impact school counselors had hoped to achieve. Either way, data drives the direction of comprehensive school counseling programs. When school counselors fail to look at data, they risk missing vital information about the students they serve.

But what if my duties as a school counselor cannot be measured?

The impact of school counselors may seem intangible, particularly in the way they are instrumental in improving school climate and student behaviors, but this work can be measured. Participation data (who?), Mindsets & Behaviors data (what?), and outcome data (why?) each play an important part in determining if strategies, interventions and activities are effective. "This is how we have always done it" is not the most effective way to build a comprehensive school counseling program that serves all students.

I live in a small, rural community, have my LPC and run a private practice after school hours. Does it create a dual relationship if I see current or previous students in my private practice?

The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) state that school counselors "ensure there is not a conflict of interest in providing referral resources. School counselors do not refer or accept a referral to counsel a student from their school if they also work in a private counseling practice." [\(Question and answer from ASCA, for more ethical and legal FAQs, click here.\)](#)

I am worried about keeping notes about students. What if I receive a subpoena for my testimony or case notes?

It is possible that during a school counselor's career, notes could be subpoenaed. The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) provides an exception to the definition of education records being open to disclosure. Records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker of the records are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the records. Further, you may have a legal exemption from disclosure. However, if you do receive the subpoena, work with your principal to contact your district legal team for advice on how to proceed. If advised by legal counsel, work with the district legal team to comply with the subpoena or to get the subpoena quashed. If compelled to testify, provide only facts and omit any subjective information that may make room for doubt. [\(Question and answer from ASCA, for more ethical and legal FAQs, click here.\)](#)

Am I required to tell parents or caregivers everything a student tells me if they are under 18 years old?

No. ASCA Ethical Standard (2016) A.2.e states that school counselors "keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed or a breach is required to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to the student." This means that if a student shares confidential information that does not cause harm or legal ramifications, a school counselor should not break confidentiality even if a school counselor thinks that the caregivers should be aware. However, at times, sharing information with parents or caregivers is important when a student's safety is in question. This may include sexual behaviors, self-harm, drug use, or threats to self or others. Ultimately, open communication with parents/guardians is important and will help with overall programming in the school. [Review the ASCA Ethical Standards on confidentiality for more information.](#)

What if I am asked to teach a class or substitute for a class?

Classroom instruction is part of the ASCA National Model; however, teaching a course is not. Reference your school or district's job description for school counselors to determine if this is addressed. School counselors can discuss with administration the student needs that may not be met or addressed as a result of teaching. Share data about the impact of your school counseling work. Ask what would be the contingency plan if you needed to deal with a school emergency. That said, at the end of the day, if a district wants to require this and there is no policy, you must comply. [\(Question and answer from ASCA, for more ethical and legal FAQs, click here.\)](#)

I am an alternatively certified school counselor and do not know where to begin. Help!

It can seem overwhelming; however, this framework will help. Start by reading through the framework and highlighting/flagging pieces that stand out. Membership in professional school counseling associations can also be beneficial. The resources provided will aid in your development as a school counselor tremendously. Also, if you can find a mentor who is well-versed in comprehensive school counseling, reach out. Do not forget that OSDE is here to help. Do not hesitate to reach out with questions about comprehensive school counseling.

I am at a high school and spend all of my time completing indirect student services and non-school-counseling duties. If I were to implement a comprehensive school counseling program, I would have to work evenings and weekends too. How can I do it all?

You cannot be expected to “do it all,” and you are certainly not expected to work nights and weekends. However, a high school counselor who does not provide substantial direct student services is missing out on opportunities to impact students. The high school years are full of growth, promise, excitement, frustration, disappointment, and hope. It is the time when students begin to discover what the future holds for them. High school counselors have an impact on these years by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program and collaborating with school staff, parents, and the community to create a safe and respectful learning environment. High school counselors enhance the learning process and promote academic, career, and social and emotional development. High school counseling programs are essential for students to achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set informed career goals and realize their full academic potential to become productive, contributing members of the world community. Remember that this is not meant to be implemented in one year. Begin with a few components such as the annual administrative conference to get buy-in. The use-of-time tool is also a good place to start. Form connections with other school counselor leaders to garner support. Leadership and advocacy can be used to work toward a true comprehensive school counseling program. It will take hard work, but it will be worth it in the end.

I am thinking about becoming a school counselor. What is a typical day like?

Although each school counselor may answer this question differently, most school counselors would say rarely are two days ever alike. Many people may think of a school counselor as being in an office all day waiting for students to drop by. That is often not the case. Instead, school counselors see their role as very proactive and preventative. School counselors engage in classroom instruction, lead small groups, and provide other social and emotional, academic, and college and career development activities. A school counselor’s days are busy but rewarding!



I am looking into school counseling graduate programs. What should I look for?

First, carefully consider what is important to you. School counseling graduate programs range from 33 credit hours to 60+ credit hours. Some have 600+ hour internship requirements. Potential school counseling students can determine if the programs they are interested in are accredited through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) or the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). CACREP and CAEP are both nationally recognized specialized accreditors. The primary difference is their respective focuses. CAEP accredits educator preparation providers—reviewing departments, schools, and colleges that prepare teachers or other educators within an institution of higher education. CACREP accredits counseling programs at the master's and doctoral degree levels. Oklahoma does not require an accredited program.

What is a piece of advice for a new school counselor?

It is important to know that you will not know it all when you begin. Becoming a strong school counselor is a process that takes continued professional development and lifelong learning. Continue to grow as a school counselor as you grow your school counseling program.

Why did Oklahoma implement ICAP?

Research suggests that the benefits of the ICAP process increases student motivation, engagement, school connection and awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses. Students utilizing ICAP also improve their understanding of post-secondary options, better connect their goals to educational coursework and career goal activities and engage in longterm planning for life after high-school graduation. With the elimination of 7 state EOI and OCCTs, Oklahoma was able to create the ICAP in order to measure college and career readiness. For details related to HB 3218, [click here](#).

I am a high school counselor and have questions about graduation and transcripts. Where can I find resources to help?

The [high school graduation resources page](#) provides FAQs, graduation checklists, transcript guidance, subject codes, testing resources, financial aid information and more.

On several student IEPs, the special education director has noted that weekly counseling will be provided. This prevents me from fully implementing a comprehensive program. What do I do?

School counselors serve all students in their charge; it is unethical and professionally questionable when others define school counselors' role as acting outside their scope of practice and serving a small percentage of their population to the exclusion of hundreds of other students in their caseload. You can support regular education and special education students in brief group counseling or behavior management programs, but a long-term approach is an inappropriate use of school counselors' time.

GLOSSARY

Achievement gap: Disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between groups of students

Advisement: Process through which school counselors and students explore educational opportunities and demands within the institution and make decisions about future plans based on academic, career, and social and emotional data

Advisory council: Representative group of stakeholders selected to review and provide feedback on the school counseling program implementation

Advocacy: Speaking, writing, or acting to promote the well-being of students, parents/guardians, and the school counseling profession. School counselors advocate to close the information, opportunity, intervention, and attainment gaps for all students.

Annual administrative conference: Yearly meeting between the school counselor and administrator in charge of the school counseling program designed to discuss and reach agreement upon the school counseling program's organization and focus

Annual calendar: A schedule of school counseling program activities maintained by the school counseling staff and distributed to administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, and families

Annual student outcome goals: Measurable statements defining how the vision and mission will be accomplished and guiding the development of classroom, group, and closing-the-gap action plans

Appraisal: Process through which school counselors work with students to analyze and assess their abilities, interests, skills, and achievement

ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors: Statements of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the highest standard of integrity, leadership, and professionalism

ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies: Statements of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes school counselors need to meet the profession's rigorous demands

ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment: A self-report instrument used to measure a school counselor's knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to the school counseling profession

ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: Research-based statements of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness, and social and emotional development

Assess: To determine 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

Beliefs: Ideas, values, philosophies, viewpoints regarding a particular topic or concept

Best practice: Professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective (www.oxforddictionaries.com)

Collaboration: The act of working together with other people or organizations to create or achieve a common goal (www.dictionary.cambridge.org)

Competencies: Specific, measurable expectations that are attained while making progress toward a standard

Consultation: The process of seeking or providing additional information, opinions, and recommendation with an expert

Counseling: Professional assistance, support, and instruction provided to an individual utilizing a variety of techniques provided by a specifically trained professional

Crisis response: The immediate and follow-up intervention necessary to meet urgent needs and prevent situations from becoming more severe

Data-informed: Decisions concerning future action that are based on information, survey reports, assessments, statistics, or other forms of data

Define: To delineate school counseling professional practice using standards and competencies unique to the profession

Deliver: To organize and implement components of the ASCA National Model, particularly direct student services and indirect student services

Disaggregated data: Data separated into component parts by specific variables such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status

Domains: Broad areas of knowledge base (academic, career, and social and emotional) that promote and enhance the learning process

Equity: Treated fairly; educational equity occurs when educators provide all students with the high-quality instruction and support they need to reach and exceed a common standard. (www.achievementnetwork.org)

Evidence-based: Any concept or strategy derived from or informed by objective evidence, most commonly, educational research or metrics of school, teacher, and student performance (www.edglossary.org/evidence-based/)

Fair-share responsibilities: The routine running of school responsibilities that all members of the school staff take equal turns doing to ensure the school's smooth operation (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012)

ICAP: Individual Career Academic Planning (ICAP) is a collaboratively developed, student-driven process where students cultivate their own informed decisions for post-secondary success based on their interests, skills and future goals.



Instruction: The delivery of information to students with the intent to foster positive change in student knowledge, attitudes, and skills

Leadership: Capacity or ability to guide others; school counselors use leadership skills to design, implement and assess a school counseling program

Manage: To organize and allocate resources to best address the goals, strategies, and activities of the school counseling program

Mindsets & Behaviors data: Information that shows what progress students have made toward attaining the ASCA Student Standards

Mission statement: Provides school counseling program focus and direction and aligns with the school's mission

Multi-tiered: Refers to the process of providing interventions that vary in focus and intensity aligned with individual students' needs

Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS): A culturally responsive, evidence-based framework implemented in K-12 schools using data-based problem solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention at tiered intensities to improve the learning and social and emotional functioning of all students (Sink, 2016)

Non-school-counseling activity: Any activity or duty not related to the design, implementation, or assessment of the school counseling program

Outcome data: Information related to achievement, attendance, and discipline that shows how students are measurably different as a result of the school counseling program

Performance appraisal: Annual review of school counselor performance that evaluates personal and professional performance and contributions to the design, implementation, and assessment of the school counseling program; may be used for contract status recommendations and indicates summative evaluation of school counselor effectiveness

Participation data: Information showing which students were involved in which school counseling activities

Referrals: Recommendations made by school counselors to guide students and parents to school or community resources for additional assistance or information

Research-informed: A concept or strategy informed by relevant research but not yet subjected to rigorous analysis to be deemed evidence-based

Results report: Written presentation of the outcomes of school counseling program activities; contains participation, Mindsets & Behaviors, and outcome data

School counseling curriculum: K-12 course of study presented systematically through structured, developmental classroom, group, and individual activities designed to assist students in attaining the ASCA Student Standards

School counseling program assessment: Measurement of the school counseling program on the components of the ASCA National Model to guide future action within the program and to improve future results for students

SMART goal: A well-established format used to plan and achieve a goal, which stands for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound

Social and emotional development: Maximizing each student's individual growth and social maturity in the areas of personal management and social interaction

Student success: A broad term for accomplishment in student achievement, attendance, and discipline

Systemic change: Change affecting the entire system; transformational; change affecting more than an individual or series of individuals; focused upon the dynamic of the environment, not the individual

Use of data: The process of analyzing and acting upon data to improve student achievement, attendance, and discipline and the school counseling program; essential to ensuring all students receive the benefits of a school counseling program

Use-of-time calculator: Tool designed to help school counselors determine how much time is spent in the design, implementation, and assessment of the school counseling program rather than non-school-counseling activities

Vision statement: A succinct, agreed-upon assertion of what school counselors hope to see for students five to 15 years in the future

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