



# SCHOOL COUNSELING, A BEST PRACTICES REPORT

Prepared for Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education

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In the following report, Hanover Research and ULEAD provide an overview of school counseling models and roles of school counselors across school levels. More specifically, the report highlights the American School Counselor Association's National School Counseling Model. The report also includes a discussion of school counselors' roles in providing mental health and social-emotional services, grade-level specific roles, and strategies for time and caseload management. Findings from this report can assist Utah's districts and schools in evaluating and improving their school counseling programs.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

To provide high-quality support and services to its districts and constituents, Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education (ULEAD) is interested in understanding best practices in school counseling in K-12 schools. To support this effort, Hanover Research (Hanover) reviewed literature and best practice guidelines related to school counseling models, roles of school counselors across school levels, and strategies for managing caseloads. This report includes two sections:

- **Section I: School Counseling Models** presents school counseling models including the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) National Model, the International Model for School Counseling Programs, and several state- specific school counseling models.
- **Section II: Roles of School Counselors** reviews the general and grade-level specific roles of school counselors. Specifically, Hanover discusses counselors’ roles in providing college and career readiness support, mental health care, social-emotional support, suicide prevention, and trauma-informed care. Hanover also presents best practices for time and caseload management.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

District leaders could consider:



Aligning their school counseling practices and services to the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) National Model.



Providing professional development to help school counselors support students’ social-emotional development and mental health.



Releasing school counselors from administrative and other non-counseling duties so they have more time to dedicate to serving students.

## KEY FINDINGS



### SCHOOL COUNSELING MODELS

- **The American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) National Model is a common and effective model for school counseling programs.** Several state counseling models are based on the ASCA National Model. The states profiled in this report typically adopt the entirety of the ASCA National Model and may incorporate additional components (e.g., Oregon added an equity lens). Additionally, the International Model for School Counseling Programs adds a *Global Perspective* domain to the ASCA National Model and modifies the language and standards to reflect the unique needs of students outside the United States.
- **The ASCA National Model consists of four components: a foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability system.**
  - The **foundation** of the model defines the program’s focus through mission statements and a set of value principles. This component also outlines student learning standards in the domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development. Finally, the ASCA outlines professional competencies and ethical standards for school counselors in this component.
  - The **delivery system** includes direct and indirect services. *Direct services* are the school counseling curriculum, individual student planning, and responsive services. *Indirect services* include consultation and collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, and community organizations).
  - The **management system** outlines assessments and tools that districts can use to evaluate the organizational efficacy of the school counseling program. Examples of these assessments and tools include use-of-time assessments; curriculum, small-group, and closing-the-gap action plans; and school counselor competency and school counseling program assessments.
  - The **accountability system** involves collecting data and information to measure and evaluate the impact of the school counseling program. As an example, Utah’s accountability system for school counseling programs includes an analysis of results reports, a review of the school counseling program’s alignment with state standards, and a review of school counselors’ performance.



## ROLES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

- **School counselors' primary roles increasingly involve meeting students' social-emotional and mental health needs using proactive rather than reactive approaches.** Research finds that promoting social-emotional development and mental health among students at all grade levels reduces school violence and prevents student suicide.
  - School counselors can support students' **social-emotional development** by providing direct instruction of the school counseling core curriculum; facilitating targeted, individual interventions; and evaluating social-emotional programming.
  - To provide **suicide prevention and intervention services**, school counselors typically provide services in a tiered framework of student supports. School counselors are also part of crisis response teams that coordinate school-based services for students at risk of suicide.
  - School counselors also play a critical role in fostering **trauma-informed school environments**. That is, school counselors are equipped to identify students impacted by traumatic events and provide trauma-informed practices through the school counseling curriculum.
- **School counselors work within a continuum of mental health services.** This service model also includes school-employed mental health professionals, such as school psychologists, and community service providers. Within the continuum, school counselors are typically responsible for providing school-based, universal mental health supports.
- **Additionally, school counselors are often tasked with guiding students to college and career readiness.** Research suggests that students of all grade levels benefit from college and career readiness counseling. Experts suggest that school counselors cover college and career readiness topics that are developmentally appropriate for a given grade level. For example, the college admissions process and the transition from high school to college or career are topics most appropriate for the high school level.
  - The Utah State Board of Education recommends that school counselors support students' college and career planning through transitions planning, individual and small group planning sessions, and parent-student meetings.
- **Experts recommend that school counselors differentiate services by grade level.**
  - **Elementary school** counseling programs should be developmentally-appropriate and focus on basic academic learning skills and social-emotional competencies. Further, experts encourage school counselors to dedicate most of their time to administering the school counseling curriculum and individual student planning.
  - At the **middle school** level, school counselors play a key role in encouraging students to explore their self-identity and maximize their personal and academic potential. Like elementary school counselors, experts recommend that middle school counselors spend most of their time on the school counseling curriculum and individual student planning.

- Experts recommend that **high school** counselors support students in creating college and career goals while also meeting their academic potential. Additionally, experts suggest that high school counselors dedicate slightly more time to individual student planning and responsive services than other tasks.
- **The ASCA recommends a maximum student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1.** However, across the country, the average ratio across all school levels is 482 students to one counselor (as of the 2014-2015 school year). In Utah, the average student-to-counselor ratio is 684:1. Research finds that lower student-to-counselor ratios improve college and career outcomes for students; for example, one study found that hiring an additional counselor increased the percentage of students who enrolled in a four-year college by ten percentage points.
- **The ASCA also recommends that school counselors spend at least 80 percent of their time providing direct and indirect services to students.** This recommendation corresponds with empirical research that suggests that postsecondary outcomes improve when school counselors spend more time on college counseling activities. However, research finds that school counselors are often tasked with activities unrelated to counseling (e.g., academic testing) and may be unable to meet ASCA's standard due to an unsuitable assignment of responsibilities.

## SECTION I: SCHOOL COUNSELING MODELS

In this section, Hanover presents school counseling models including the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) National Model, the International Model for School Counseling Programs, and several state-specific school counseling models.

### ASCA NATIONAL MODEL FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed the ASCA National Model to help districts develop a comprehensive, data-driven, and effective school counseling program.<sup>1</sup> Several research studies find that implementation of the model increases “academic achievement, career development, parent satisfaction, school climate, and attendance.”<sup>2</sup> The ASCA National Model:<sup>3</sup>

- Ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students;
- Identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K-12 comprehensive school counseling program;
- Is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion;
- Is based on data-driven decision making; and
- Is provided by a state-credentialed school counselor.

Schools implementing the ASCA National Model can apply to be designated as a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP).<sup>4</sup> The ASCA uses a [Scoring Rubric](#) to determine if schools meet the criteria for a RAMP designation. The rubric is organized into 12 sections: vision statement, mission statement, school counseling program goals, ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success, annual agreement, advisory council, calendars, school counseling core curriculum action plan and lesson plans, school counseling core curriculum results report, small-group responsive services, closing-the-gap results report, and the program evaluation reflection. Schools are assigned points in each section depending on the degree to which they meet the criteria outlined for each.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [1] “ASCA National Model.” American School Counselor Association. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/asca-national-model> [2] “The ASCA National Model.” Deer Park Independent School District. p. 1. [https://www.dpsid.org/cms/lib4/TX01001079/Centricity/Domain/152/asca\\_national\\_model.pdf](https://www.dpsid.org/cms/lib4/TX01001079/Centricity/Domain/152/asca_national_model.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> “The ASCA National Model,” Op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim with minor modification from “ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs.” American School Counselor Association. p. 1. <https://schoolcounselor.org/ascanationalmodel/media/anm-templates/anmexecsumm.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Wilkerson, K., R. Perusse, and A. Hughes. “Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and Student Achievement Outcomes: A Comparative Analysis of RAMP versus Non-RAMP Schools.” *Professional School Counseling*, 16:3. pp. 173–174. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/RAMP/Wilkenson-RAMP-article.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> “Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) Scoring Rubric.” American School Counselor Association, July 2017. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/RAMP/Rubric.pdf>

The ASCA National Model includes four components: **foundation, delivery, management, and accountability**. The remainder of this subsection discusses each of these components in detail.

## FOUNDATION

As the foundation of the ASCA National Model, school counselors must clarify the program’s focus, set student standards, and meet professional competencies. Figure 1.1 describes each of these components.

**Figure 1.1: Components of the ASCA National Model Foundation**

<p><b>PROGRAM FOCUS</b></p>	<p>To establish program focus, school counselors identify personal beliefs that address how all students benefit from the school counseling program. Building on these beliefs, school counselors create a vision statement defining what the future will look like in terms of student outcomes. In addition, school counselors create a mission statement aligned with their school’s mission and develop program goals defining how the vision and mission will be measured.</p>
<p><b>STUDENT STANDARDS</b></p>	<p>Enhancing the learning process for all students, the “<a href="#">ASCA Mindsets &amp; Behaviors for Student Success: College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student</a>” guide the development of effective school counseling programs around three domains: academic, career and social/emotional development. View the <a href="#">ASCA Mindsets &amp; Behaviors Planning Tool</a>. School counselors also consider how other student standards important to state and district initiatives complement and inform their school counseling program.</p>
<p><b>PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES</b></p>	<p>The <a href="#">ASCA School Counselor Competencies</a> outline the knowledge, attitudes and skills that ensure school counselors are equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the profession. The <a href="#">ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors</a> 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 to standardize professional practice to protect both students and school counselors.</p>

Source: American School Counselor Association<sup>6</sup>

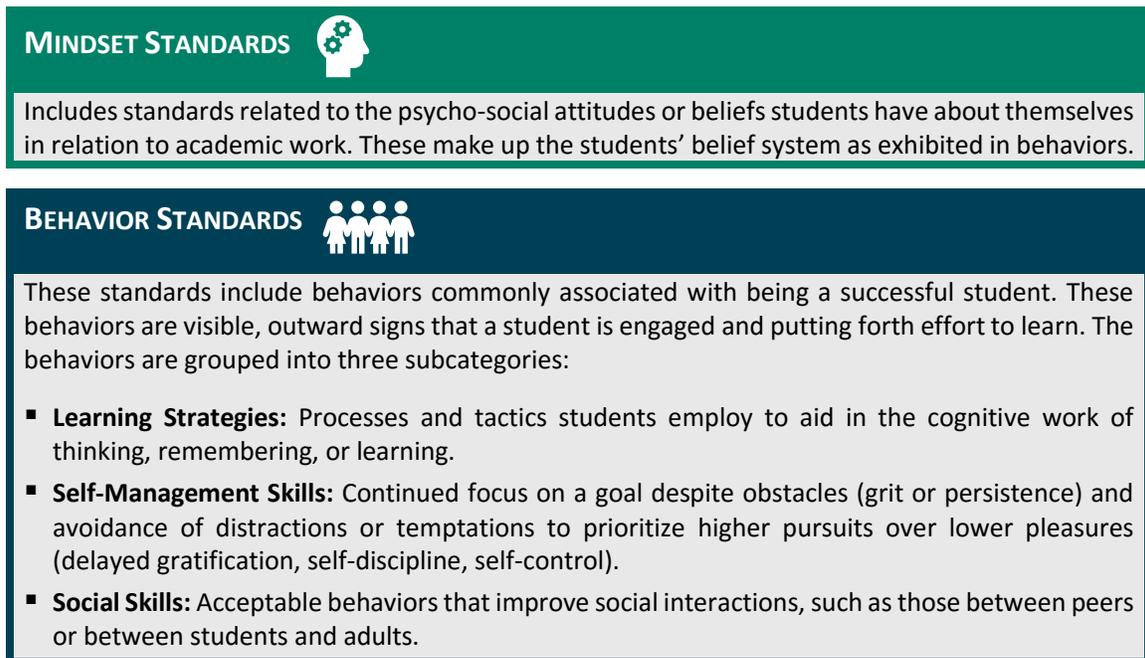
The [ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success](#) contains 35 standards that describe the “knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness, and social-emotional development.”<sup>7</sup> The standards, all of which apply to academic, career, or social-emotional development, are organized into two domains: mindset and behavior (see Figure 1.2 on the following page).<sup>8</sup> The ASCA provides a [Planning Tool](#) to help school counselors develop a school counseling curriculum that will support students in meeting the mindset and behavior standards.

<sup>6</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from “ASCA National Model Foundation.” American School Counselor Association. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/asca-national-model/foundation>

<sup>7</sup> “ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student.” American School Counselor Association, September 2014. p. 1. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–2.

**Figure 1.2: ASCA Mindset and Behavior Standards for Students**



Source: American School Counselor Association<sup>9</sup>

The [ASCA School Counselor Competencies](#) outline the knowledge, abilities and skills, and attitudes school counselors should possess to facilitate an effective school counseling program. The competencies are organized into a checklist and separated into the following areas: school counseling programs, foundations, delivery, management, and accountability.<sup>10</sup> Figure 1.3 presents the competencies and provides an example of a checklist item associated with each competency.

**Figure 1.3: Examples of ASCA School Counselor Competencies**

CATEGORY	COMPETENCY	SAMPLE CHECKLIST ITEM
<b>School Counseling Programs</b>	Knowledge	Barriers to student learning and use of advocacy and data-driven school counseling practices to close the achievement/opportunity gap
	Abilities and Skills	Plans, organizes, implements and evaluates a school counseling program aligning with the ASCA National Model
	Attitudes	Every student can learn, and every student can succeed
<b>Foundations</b>	Knowledge	Human development theories and developmental issues affecting student success
	Abilities and Skills	Demonstrates knowledge of a school’s particular educational vision and mission
	Attitudes	Has an impact on every student rather than a series of services provided only to students in need
<b>Delivery</b>	Knowledge	The concept of a school counseling core curriculum

<sup>9</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “ASCA School Counselor Competencies.” American School Counselor Association, 2012. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/SCCompetencies.pdf>

CATEGORY	COMPETENCY	SAMPLE CHECKLIST ITEM
Delivery	Abilities and Skills	Facilitates individual student planning
	Attitudes	School counselors engage in developmental counseling and short-term responsive counseling
Management	Knowledge	Data-driven decision making
	Abilities and Skills	Conducts a school counseling program assessment
	Attitudes	A school counseling program/department must be managed like other programs and departments in a school
Accountability	Knowledge	Use of data to evaluate program effectiveness and to determine program needs
	Abilities and Skills	Analyzes and interprets process, perception and outcome data
	Attitudes	School counseling programs should achieve demonstrable results

Source: American School Counselor Competencies<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, the ASCA provides [Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) to guide counselors in understanding the profession’s expectations around the ethical treatment of various stakeholder groups. The ethical standards help counselors self-assess their ethical behavior, as well as make stakeholders aware of the ethical practices they should expect from school counselors.<sup>12</sup>

## DELIVERY

The ASCA recommends that counselors deliver three types of direct and three types of indirect services to students, as shown in Figure 1.4. The three direct services are the counseling core curriculum, individual planning for students, and responsive services. Indirect services, on the other hand, are consultation with school personnel, parents, and the community; collaboration with school personnel, parents, and the community; and referrals to outside services.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 1.4: ASCA’s Recommended Student Services**

DIRECT SERVICES	
<b>THE SCHOOL COUNSELING CORE CURRICULUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured activities designed to support desired learning outcomes</li> <li>Integrated into the school’s core curriculum and delivered by counselors in collaboration with other school staff</li> </ul>
<b>INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities to help students develop personal goals and postsecondary plans</li> </ul>
<b>RESPONSIVE SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities in response to specific student needs</li> <li>May include individual counseling, group activities, or referral to other resources</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors.” American School Counselor Association, 2016. p. 1. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Ethics/EthicalStandards2016.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> “ASCA National Model: Delivery.” American School Counselor Association. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/asca-national-model/delivery>

INDIRECT SERVICES	
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share strategies supporting student achievement with parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations</li> </ul>
<b>COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with other educators, parents and the community to support student achievement</li> </ul>
<b>REFERRALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for students and families to school or community resources for additional assistance and information</li> </ul>

Source: American School Counselor Association<sup>14</sup>

## MANAGEMENT

As part of the ASCA National Model, school counselors are encouraged to use assessments and other tools to evaluate the organizational efficacy of the school counseling program. Specifically, the ASCA recommends that school counselors use assessments that are “concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school’s needs.”<sup>15</sup> Examples of such assessments and tools include:<sup>16</sup>



**School counselor competency and school counseling program assessments** to self-evaluate areas of strength and improvement for individual skills and program activities;



**Use-of-time assessments** to determine the amount of time spent toward the recommended 80 percent or more of the school counselor’s time to direct and indirect services with students;



**Annual agreements** developed with and approved by administrators at the beginning of the school year addressing how the school counseling program is organized and what goals will be accomplished;



**Advisory councils** made up of students, parents, teachers, school counselors, administrators and community members to review and make recommendations about school counseling program activities and results;



**Use of data** to measure the results of the program as well as to promote systemic change within the school system so every student graduates college- and career-ready;



**Curriculum, small-group, and closing-the-gap action plans** including developmental, prevention and intervention activities and services that measure the desired student competencies and the impact on achievement, behavior and attendance; and

<sup>14</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from [1] “The Role of the School Counselor.” American School Counselor Association. p. 2. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Careers-Roles/RoleStatement.pdf> [2] “The Essential Role of High School Counselors.” American School Counselor Association, 2017. p. 2. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Careers-Roles/WhyHighSchool.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> “ASCA National Model: Management.” American School Counselor Association. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/asca-national-model/management>

<sup>16</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Ibid.



**Annual and weekly calendars** to keep students, parents, teachers and administrators informed and to encourage active participation in the school counseling program.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

**The ASCA encourages school counselors to collect data to measure and evaluate the impact of the school counseling program.** That is, the ASCA recommends that school counselors should be continuously “analyzing school and school counseling program data to determine how students are different as a result of the school counseling program.”<sup>17</sup> Using these data, school counselors can demonstrate the impact of the program. Additionally, school counselors can identify areas in which modifications can be made to further improve students’ outcomes in the areas of academic achievement, attendance, and behavior.<sup>18</sup>

## STATE SCHOOL COUNSELING MODELS

Many state’s school counseling models are largely based on the ASCA National Model. In the remainder of this section, Hanover summarizes how five states have adapted the ASCA National Model.

### CONNECTICUT MODEL

The [Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program](#) is based on the ASCA National Model.<sup>19</sup> The Connecticut Model, like the ASCA National Model, consists of a program foundation, delivery system, program management system, and program accountability system. Further, the Connecticut Model focuses on three domains that are intended to promote “achievement and success for all students:” academic, career, and personal/social.<sup>20</sup> These three domains, described in Figure 1.5 on the following page, are the core of the Connecticut Model.

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<sup>17</sup> “ASCA National Model: Accountability.” American School Counselor Association.

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/asca-national-model/accountability>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> McQuillan, M.K. et al. “Comprehensive School Counseling.” Connecticut State Board of Education, 2008. p. v.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/counseling.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

**Figure 1.5: Core Domains of the Connecticut School Counseling Model**

<p><b>ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p>		<p>Includes acquiring skills, attitudes and knowledge that contribute to effective learning in school; employing strategies to achieve success in school; and understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community. Academic goals support the premise that all students should meet or exceed the local, state and national goals.</p>
<p><b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT</b></p>		<p>These goals guide the school counseling program to provide the foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work and from job to job across the life span. Career development goals and competencies ensure that students develop career goals as a result of their participation in a comprehensive plan of career awareness, exploration and preparation activities.</p>
<p><b>PERSONAL/SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b></p>		<p>These goals guide the school counseling program to provide the foundation for personal and social growth as students progress through school and into adulthood. Personal/social development contributes to academic and career success by helping students understand and respect themselves and others, acquire effective interpersonal skills, understand safety and survival skills and develop into contributing members of society.</p>

Source: Connecticut State Board of Education<sup>21</sup>

School counselors in Connecticut deliver services related to the three domains described above in Figure 1.5 through the program delivery system. Like the ASCA National Model, the school counseling program consists of the counseling curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and collaboration within and outside the school community.<sup>22</sup> The Connecticut State Board of Education recommends that high school counselors dedicate slightly more time to individual student planning and responsive services than the other two components. At the elementary and middle school levels, school counselors are encouraged to dedicated most of their time to providing responsive services and administering the school counseling curriculum.<sup>23</sup> The Connecticut State Board of Education provides a Monthly Report template for school counselors to track the time they have dedicated to the four program components as well as non-guidance activities.<sup>24</sup>

**To guide implementation of the school counseling curriculum, the Connecticut State Board of Education provides learning standards for Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12.** The learning standards are organized under nine overarching standards that cover the academic, career, and personal/social domains.<sup>25</sup> Figure 1.6 presents a sample of these learning standards.

<sup>21</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 14–15, 21–29.

**Figure 1.6: Sample Standards of the Connecticut School Counseling Model**

	BY GRADE 2, STUDENTS WILL:	BY GRADE 4, STUDENTS WILL:	BY GRADE 6 STUDENTS WILL:	BY GRADE 8, STUDENTS WILL:	BY GRADE 10, STUDENTS WILL:	BY GRADE 12, STUDENTS WILL:
ACADEMIC	State reasons for learning	Describe the rights and responsibilities of self and others	Demonstrate competence and confidence as a learner	Implement effective organizational study and test-taking skills	Demonstrate organizational and study skills needed for high school success	Demonstrate responsibility for academic achievement
CAREER	Identify personal likes and dislikes	Recognize that people differ in likes, interests, and talents	Explore the concept of career clusters and learn about jobs in those clusters	Take a career interest inventory	Develop skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career information	Assess strengths and weaknesses based on high school performance
PERSONAL/ SOCIAL	Identify and express feelings	Demonstrate skills for getting along with others	Learn what actions and words communicate about them	Summarize the factors influencing positive friendships	Recognize the impact of change and transition on their personal development	Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities

Source: Connecticut State Board of Education<sup>26</sup>

**Under the Connecticut Model, school counseling programs use the MEASURE process for accountability purposes.** The process “moves school counselors from a ‘counting tasks’ system to aligning the school counseling program with standards-based reform.”<sup>27</sup> MEASURE relies on data such as “retention rates, test scores, and postsecondary going rates” to evaluate and improve school counseling programs.<sup>28</sup> Figure 1.7 describes each step of the process.

**Figure 1.7: Accountability System of the Connecticut School Counseling Model**

<b>MISSION</b>	Connect the comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program to the mission of the school and to the goals of the annual school improvement plan
<b>ELEMENTS</b>	Identify the critical data elements that are important to the internal and external stakeholders
<b>ANALYZE</b>	Discuss carefully which elements need to be aggregated or disaggregated and why
<b>STAKEHOLDERS – UNITE</b>	Determine which stakeholders need to be involved in addressing these school-improvement issues and unite to develop strategies
<b>RESULTS</b>	Assess your results to see if you met your goal and compare it to your baseline data
<b>EDUCATE</b>	Show the positive impact the school-counseling program has had on student achievement and on the goals of the school improvement plan

Source: Connecticut State Board of Education<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., pp. 21–29.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid.

## OREGON MODEL

[Oregon’s Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs](#), like the ASCA National Model, includes a program foundation, management system, delivery system, and accountability system.<sup>30</sup> The features of each of these components are the same as those of the ASCA National Model. For example, the delivery system in the Oregon Model consists of direct and indirect student services. Direct services are the counseling core curriculum, individual student planning, and responsive services. Indirect services, on the other hand, are those that involve “consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers, other educators, and community organizations.”<sup>31</sup>

In terms of program management, the Oregon Department of Education recommends that districts use all the assessments and tools outlined in the ASCA National Model to “develop, implement, and evaluate their school counseling program.”<sup>32</sup> Regarding the accountability system, the Oregon Model calls for districts to analyze school data profiles and conduct use-of-time assessment analyses to determine how school counselors allocate their time.<sup>33</sup> The Oregon Department of Education also encourages districts to evaluate program results through an examination of curriculum, small-group, and closing-the-gap results reports.<sup>34</sup> Further, districts in Oregon should use these data to evaluate the efficacy of the school counseling program and school counselors’ performance, as well as make improvements where necessary.<sup>35</sup>

**Oregon adds an equity lens to its counseling model.** Under the Oregon Model, “educational leaders, including school counselors, actively initiate and lead conversations about equity, collecting and analyzing data, continually learning and sharing data with stakeholders to identify disparities.”<sup>36</sup> School counselors in Oregon may also work with “culturally-specific and linguistically-diverse groups” in the community to promote student outcomes.<sup>37</sup>

To assist districts in implementing school counseling models according to Oregon’s framework, the Oregon Department of Education provides an Implementation Checklist. The checklist is divided into several categories: district policy, professional staff, staff development, instructional materials, facilities, and management systems. Figure 1.8 presents a sampling of checklist items for each category.

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<sup>30</sup> “Oregon’s Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.” Oregon Department of Education. pp. 4, 9–10. [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/guidance\\_counseling/Documents/2018%20Framework%20for%20CSC%20Programs.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/guidance_counseling/Documents/2018%20Framework%20for%20CSC%20Programs.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53–54.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55–57.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 1.8: Excerpt of Oregon Department of Education’s Implementation Checklist for School Counseling Programs**

DISTRICT POLICY INDICATORS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The school district’s board has recognized the comprehensive counseling program and the student standards as an essential and integral part of the entire educational program as reflected in appropriate policy documents and directives.
PROFESSIONAL STAFF INDICATORS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Licensed school counselors are part of the team that plans and coordinates the district and building comprehensive school counseling program, based upon student outcome data utilizing continuous improvement processes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student to counselor ratios are reasonable and reflect state and national professional standards.
STAFF DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The school district’s position descriptions reflect comprehensive counseling program duties for all staff members, particularly those who have specific, assigned program roles and responsibilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance standards for each position reflect relevant professional standards.
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS INDICATORS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	All curriculum materials and tools used in the comprehensive counseling program meet district and state standards for quality.
FACILITIES INDICATORS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential space for individual and group counseling activities is available in each building when needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate and protected storage space is provided for program materials and student work, such as career portfolios.
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INDICATORS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The school district has developed a counseling program budget that covers the cost of delivering the content described in its comprehensive program plan.

Source: Oregon Department of Education<sup>38</sup>

### *SOUTH DAKOTA MODEL*

Like other state models, the [South Dakota Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model](#) is also based on the ASCA National Model.<sup>39</sup> According to the South Dakota School Counselor Association, the model allows districts to:<sup>40</sup>

- Develop a vision of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a standards-based counseling program.
- Use results of data and program analysis to develop and implement activities, strategies, and services.
- Demonstrate the impact of school counseling programs on student achievement and success.

<sup>38</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>39</sup> “South Dakota Comprehensive School Counseling Model.” South Dakota School Counselor Association. <http://www.sdschoolcounselors.com/comprehensive-school-counseling-model.html>

<sup>40</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Ibid.

The South Dakota Model is also organized around a foundation, management system, delivery system, and accountability system. Like the ASCA National Model, the South Dakota Model also covers the domains of academic, career, and social-emotional development.<sup>41</sup> **As part of the program focus element of the foundation component, the South Dakota Department of Education encourages districts to set SMART goals (see Figure 1.9).** That is, goals for school counseling programs should be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 1.9: School Counseling Program SMART Goals, South Dakota Model**

<b>SPECIFIC ISSUE</b>	What is the specific issue based on our school’s data?
<b>MEASURABLE</b>	How will we measure the effectiveness of our interventions?
<b>ATTAINABLE</b>	What outcome would stretch us but it still attainable?
<b>RESULTS-ORIENTED</b>	Is the goal reported in results-oriented data (process, perception, and outcome)?
<b>TIME-BOUND</b>	When will our goal be accomplished?

Source: South Dakota Department of Education<sup>43</sup>

The South Dakota Model incorporates a variety of assessments, tools, and strategies into the management system component. The assessments and tools included in the model are those that the ASCA recommends as part of the National Model.<sup>44</sup> The delivery system of the South Dakota Model includes a school counseling curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services, like the ASCA National Model.<sup>45</sup> The South Dakota Model’s school counseling curriculum consists of classroom activities, group activities, and individual activities.<sup>46</sup> Individual planning services include individual appraisal and advisement. Responsive services include individual and small group counseling as well as crisis response.<sup>47</sup> The South Dakota Model also includes indirect services, which are the same as those included in the ASCA National Model.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, the South Dakota Model accountability system includes an analysis of the school data profile and use-of-time assessments. The South Dakota Department of Education recommends that districts share program evaluation results and use school counselor competencies assessments and school counseling program assessments to evaluate and improve school counseling programs.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Bardhoshi, G. “South Dakota Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model: Fourth Edition.” South Dakota Department of Education, 2016. pp. 9–10. <http://www.sdschoolcounselors.com/uploads/1/2/0/0/12000575/16-schoolcounselorsmodel.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 15–20.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–28.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 31–34.

## UTAH MODEL

The [Utah Model for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance: K-12 Programs](#) is organized into a foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability system.<sup>50</sup> The Utah Model, like the ASCA National Model, is designed to be preventative rather than responsive and to fit students' developmental needs.<sup>51</sup> Further, the Utah Model is built upon the same themes as the ASCA National Model: leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change.<sup>52</sup>

The four components of the Utah Model contain largely the same features as the ASCA National Model. For example, the foundation of the Utah Model consists of a set of beliefs, a mission statement, student outcomes, and the domains of academic, career, and personal/social development. The Utah Model's delivery system includes a curriculum component, individual student planning, responsive services, and systems support. Systems support encompasses the indirect services of the ASCA National Model (e.g., consultation and collaboration).<sup>53</sup> The school counseling curriculum includes classroom instruction, group activities, and parent workshops. The model emphasizes the school guidance curriculum as a vehicle to drive the delivery of activities with students in a way that reflects the core counseling goals in a school. Moreover, individual student planning consists of individual or small-group appraisal and advisement. Responsive services include individual and small-group counseling, crisis counseling, and peer facilitation.<sup>54</sup>

**As part of the Utah Model's management system, the Utah State Board of Education encourages districts to use a management agreement tool, advisory council, and to analyze data related to student progress and closing the gap.** Districts can also develop guidance curriculum and closing-the-gap action plans, conduct use-of-time assessments, and develop weekly and monthly calendars to ensure that all stakeholders know what activities are scheduled.<sup>55</sup> The Utah State Board of Education provides a sample guidance curriculum action plan, as shown in Figure 1.10 on the following page.

The accountability system of the Utah Model encompasses an analysis of results reports, a review of the school counseling program's alignment with state standards, and a review of school counselors' performance.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "Utah Model for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance: K-12 Programs." Utah State Board of Education. pp. 32–34. [http://www.suusuccesscounseling.org/docs/Utah\\_Model\\_for\\_Comprehensive\\_Counseling\\_and\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.suusuccesscounseling.org/docs/Utah_Model_for_Comprehensive_Counseling_and_Guidance.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 21–22.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 35–36.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 32–33.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 48–51.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 33–34.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

**Figure 1.10: Utah Sample Guidance Curriculum Action Plan**

GRADE LEVEL	GUIDANCE LESSON CONTENT	UTAH STUDENT COMPETENCY DOMAIN/STANDARD	CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS	PROJECT DATES	PROJECTED NUMBER OF STUDENTS AFFECTED	LESSON WILL BE PRESENTED IN WHICH CLASS/SUBJECT?	EVALUATION METHODS
Grade 6	Violence Prevention	Personal/Social C	XYZ Violence Lesson	11/18 to 2/19	450	Social Studies	Pre-post tests; number of violent incidents
	Promotion and Retention Criteria	Academic/Learning ABC	PowerPoint District Policy	2/18 to 4/18	450	Language Arts	Pre-post tests; number of students retained
	Organizational Study and Test-Taking Skills	Academic/Learning ABC	XYZ Study Skills Curriculum	9/18 to 11/18	450	Language Arts	Pre-post tests; scores on tests

Source: Utah State Board of Education<sup>57</sup>

The Utah State Board of Education recommends a five-step process for districts beginning to adopt the Utah Model for school counseling programs. Figure 1.11 presents a summary of the process which includes the steps of planning, building the foundation, designing the delivery system, implementing the program, and making the program accountable.<sup>58</sup> See the [document](#) describing the Utah Model for the full list of implementation steps.

**Figure 1.11: Selected Steps to Implement the Utah Model**

<b>PLAN THE PROGRAM</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Secure commitment from stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Create a program development team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a timeline for program development</li> <li>▪ Assess the current program</li> </ul>
<b>BUILD THE FOUNDATION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess the needs of the school and district</li> <li>▪ Commit to the program by writing the program philosophy and program mission statement</li> </ul>	
<b>DESIGN THE DELIVERY SYSTEM</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify specific counseling elements for each program components</li> <li>▪ Develop action plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify the curriculum to be used</li> <li>▪ Determine data to collect when implementing the program</li> </ul>

<sup>57</sup> Figure was reproduced with minor modifications from Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 83–86.

<b>IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a budget for the program</li> <li>Complete the management agreement forms</li> <li>Develop a master planning calendar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine school counselor target time allocations</li> <li>Conduct professional development activities</li> <li>Promote the school counseling program through brochures and websites</li> </ul>
<b>MAKE THE PROGRAM ACCOUNTABLE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor program results</li> <li>Monitor counselors' growth and performance</li> <li>Monitor students' progress</li> </ul>	

Source: Utah State Board of Education<sup>59</sup>

*WISCONSIN MODEL*

The **Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model** incorporates elements from the ASCA National Model, an earlier version of the Wisconsin Model, the National Framework for State Programs of Guidance and Counseling, the Education Trust School Counseling Initiative, and Wisconsin's Quality Educator Initiative. The Wisconsin Model, like the ASCA National Model, encompasses a school counseling curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support services. Further, the Wisconsin Model is based on nine learning standards which cover the domains of academic, career, and personal/social development. Figure 1.12 presents these standards, which mirror those that are part of the ASCA National Model.<sup>60</sup>

**Figure 1.12: Wisconsin Model School Counseling Student Standards**

ACADEMIC DOMAIN	PERSONAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN	CAREER DOMAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to successful learning in school and across the life span.</li> <li>Students will develop the academic skills and attitudes necessary to make effective transitions from elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, and from high school to a wide range of postsecondary options.</li> <li>Students will understand how their academic experiences prepare them to be successful in the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to understand themselves and appreciate the diverse backgrounds and experiences of others.</li> <li>Students will demonstrate effective decision-making, problem-solving, and goal-setting skills.</li> <li>Students will understand and use safety and wellness skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will acquire the self-knowledge necessary to make informed career decisions.</li> <li>Students will understand the relationship between educational achievement and career development.</li> <li>Students will employ career management strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.</li> </ul>

<sup>59</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim with modifications from Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> "Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model (WCSCM)." Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pupil-services/school-counseling/models/state>

ACADEMIC DOMAIN	PERSONAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN	CAREER DOMAIN
of work, in their interpersonal relationships, and in the community.		

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction<sup>61</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL MODEL FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

Two school counseling experts developed the International Model for School Counseling Programs, a model that is endorsed by the Association of American Schools in South America and the U.S. Department of State – Office of Overseas Schools. Notably, “over 300 international school counselors, organizations, and interested parties have participated in the development of the International Model.”<sup>62</sup> The model is largely based on the ASCA National Model with adaptations that make the model meet the needs of students outside the United States. More specifically, the International Model accounts for the “unique needs of international school students [including]...frequent transitions and distinctive challenges with identity formation.”<sup>63</sup> The four adaptations are:<sup>64</sup>

- Language used in the Model reflects the international context in which overseas counselors work.
- The Model includes information about the elements of a counseling program that accurately represents the environment and factors of school counseling in a foreign country. Often, these responsibilities exceed the expectations placed upon counselors who work in public and state schools in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Western Europe.
- The new fourth domain—Global Perspective—offers content standards that focus on encouraging mindful cross-cultural interaction and intercultural communication for school counselors and students.
- Academic, Career, Personal/Social and Global Perspective content standards reflect the needs of third culture kids (and host country nationals) in international schools.

Like the ASCA National Model, the International Model consists of a foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability system. Generally, the features of these components are the same as those in the ASCA National Model.<sup>65</sup> The most substantial addition to the International Model is the **Global Perspective** domain. As such, the International Model seeks to develop students’ global view in addition to their academic,

<sup>61</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> “The Model.” International School Counselor Association. <https://iscainfo.com/The-Model>

<sup>63</sup> Fezler, W.B. and C. Brown. “The International Model for School Counseling Programs.” Association of American Schools in South America and the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, July 2011. p. 9. <https://iscainfo.com/resources/Documents/International-Model-for-School-Counseling-Programs-Aug-2011-First-Edition.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 17–20.

career, social-emotional skills.<sup>66</sup> Under the Global Perspective domain, students are expected to:<sup>67</sup>

- Develop an understanding of culture as a social construct;
- Acquire an awareness of their family culture and own cultural identity;
- Understand their host country and home(s) country's cultures;
- Develop a personal practice for applying intercultural competence and bridging successfully across cultural difference; and
- Acquire knowledge and attitudes to manage transition effectively.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 12–13.

<sup>67</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 13.

## SECTION II: ROLES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

In this section, Hanover reviews the general and grade-level specific roles of school counselors. Specifically, Hanover discusses counselors’ roles in providing college and career readiness support, mental health care, social-emotional support, suicide prevention, and trauma-informed care. Hanover also presents best practices for time and caseload management.

### GENERAL ROLES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

**An increasingly important aspect of school counselors’ roles in schools is meeting students’ social-emotional and mental health needs using proactive rather than reactive approaches.**<sup>68</sup> Integrating social-emotional supports into schools at all grade levels is important for reducing school violence and preventing student suicide.<sup>69</sup> As a result, school counselors no longer only play a role in course selection and the college admissions process. Rather, they are now also involved in school-based mental health care, social-emotional learning curricula, suicide prevention, and trauma-informed care.

A 2012 book titled *Professional School Counseling* provides a summary of a school counselor’s role. The author describes counselors’ responsibilities as falling into four categories of a counseling program: guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support (see Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1: Summary of School Counselors’ Roles**

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	TOPICS/ACTIVITIES	COUNSELOR’S ROLE
GUIDANCE CURRICULUM	Provides guidance content in a systematic way to all students K–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career awareness</li> <li>▪ Conflict resolution</li> <li>▪ Decision-making skills</li> <li>▪ Substance abuse prevention</li> <li>▪ Study skills</li> <li>▪ Job preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structured groups</li> <li>▪ Classroom presentations</li> <li>▪ Schoolwide workshops for teachers, students, and families</li> </ul>

<sup>68</sup> [1] Levesque, K. “A School Counselor Puts Social-Emotional Learning First.” *Social-Emotional Learning in Action*, 14:4, October 4, 2018. <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol14/num04/A-School-Counselor-Puts-Social-Emotional-Learning-First.aspx> [2] Paolini, A. “School Shootings and Student Mental Health: Role of the School Counselor in Mitigating Violence.” American Counseling Association Knowledge Center, 2015. <https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/school-shootings-and-student-mental-health.p>

<sup>69</sup> [1] Buchesky, S. “The Answer to School Violence Is Social-Emotional Learning.” *Real Clear Education*, June 12, 2018. [https://www.realcleareducation.com/articles/2018/06/12/the\\_answer\\_to\\_school\\_violence\\_is\\_social-emotional\\_learning\\_110283.html](https://www.realcleareducation.com/articles/2018/06/12/the_answer_to_school_violence_is_social-emotional_learning_110283.html) [2] Vollandt, L. “Social-Emotional Learning & Upstream Approaches to Suicide Prevention in Schools.” GoGuardian Blog, September 20, 2018. <https://blog.goguardian.com/social-emotional-learning-in-schools> [3] Paolini, Op. cit., p. 7.

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	TOPICS/ACTIVITIES	COUNSELOR'S ROLE
<b>INDIVIDUAL PLANNING</b>	Assists students in planning, monitoring, and managing their academic, personal/social, and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course selection</li> <li>▪ Transitioning</li> <li>▪ Career shadowing</li> <li>▪ Setting personal goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appraisal</li> <li>▪ Career planning</li> <li>▪ Transitions</li> <li>▪ Schoolwide workshops for teachers, students, and families</li> </ul>
<b>RESPONSIVE SERVICES</b>	Addresses the immediate needs and concerns of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic concerns</li> <li>▪ Relationship concerns</li> <li>▪ Substance abuse</li> <li>▪ Family issues</li> <li>▪ Sexuality issues</li> <li>▪ Physical/sexual/emotional abuse</li> <li>▪ Suicide prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual and small-group counseling</li> <li>▪ Consultation</li> <li>▪ Referral</li> <li>▪ Crisis intervention and management</li> <li>▪ Schoolwide workshops for teachers, students, and families</li> </ul>
<b>SYSTEM SUPPORT</b>	Includes program, staff, and school support activities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive guidance counseling program</li> <li>▪ School counselor professional development</li> <li>▪ Advisory committee</li> <li>▪ Program planning and development</li> <li>▪ Documentation</li> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> <li>▪ Community outreach</li> <li>▪ Public relations</li> <li>▪ Parent/guardian involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program management</li> <li>▪ Professional development</li> <li>▪ Staff and community relations</li> <li>▪ Consultation</li> <li>▪ Committee participation</li> <li>▪ Community outreach</li> <li>▪ Evaluation</li> <li>▪ Self-care</li> </ul>

Source: *Professional School Counseling*<sup>70</sup>

In the remainder of this section, Hanover discusses more specific roles of school counselors related to college and career readiness as well as mental health care services.

<sup>70</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Thompson, R.A. "Professional School Counseling: Best Practices for Working in the Schools - Third Edition." *Professional School Counseling*, 2012. pp. 52–53. <http://tandfbis.s3.amazonaws.com/rt-media/pp/common/sample-chapters/9780415998499.pdf>

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Research suggests that all students benefit from access to college and career readiness counseling.<sup>71</sup>

The College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) identifies the core elements of college and career counseling, shown in Figure 2.2 below. Counselors can consider covering these components in the school counseling curriculum. At the elementary and middle school levels, the NOSCA recommends that counselors cover all the topics listed in Figure 2.2, except the college and career admission process and the transition from high school to college enrollment. These two topics are more appropriate for counselors to review at the high school level than at the elementary or middle school levels.<sup>72</sup> Later in this section, Hanover describes grade-level specific practices for promoting college and career readiness in greater detail.

Click the link below to access resources provided by the Utah State Board of Education that school counselors can use to support students in college and career readiness.

[School Counselor Toolkit: College and Career Readiness](#)

**Figure 2.2: Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling**

<b>COLLEGE ASPIRATIONS</b>	<b>K-12</b>	Build a college-going culture based on early college awareness by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college and the resilience to overcome challenges along the way. Maintain high expectations by providing adequate supports, building social capital and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college.
<b>ACADEMIC PLANNING FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS</b>	<b>K-12</b>	Advance students’ planning, preparation, participation and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals.
<b>ENRICHMENT AND EXTRACURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>K-12</b>	Ensure equitable exposure to a wide range of extracurricular and enrichment opportunities that build leadership, nurture talents and interests, and increase engagement with school.
<b>COLLEGE AND CAREER EXPLORATION AND SELECTION PROCESS</b>	<b>K-12</b>	Provide early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college or career that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations.
<b>COLLEGE AND CAREER ASSESSMENTS</b>	<b>K-12</b>	Promote preparation, participation and performance in college and career assessments by all students.

<sup>71</sup> Curry, J. and A. Milsom. *Career and College Readiness Counseling in P-12 Schools: Second Edition*. Springer publishing company, 2017. p. 56. [http://lghhttp.48653.nexcesscdn.net/80223CF/springer-static/media/samplechapters/9780826136145/9780826136145\\_chapter.pdf](http://lghhttp.48653.nexcesscdn.net/80223CF/springer-static/media/samplechapters/9780826136145/9780826136145_chapter.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> “Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling.” The College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy. p. 4. [https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/nosca/11b\\_4416\\_8\\_Components\\_WEB\\_111107.pdf](https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/nosca/11b_4416_8_Components_WEB_111107.pdf)

<b>COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY PLANNING</b>	<b>K-12</b>	Provide students and families with comprehensive information about college costs, options for paying for college, and the financial aid and scholarship processes and eligibility requirements, so they are able to plan for and afford a college education.
<b>COLLEGE AND CAREER ADMISSIONS PROCESSES</b>	<b>9-12</b>	Ensure that students and families have an early and ongoing understanding of the college and career application and admission processes so they can find the postsecondary options that are the best fit with their aspirations and interests.
<b>TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TO COLLEGE ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>9-12</b>	Connect students to school and community resources to help the students overcome barriers and ensure the successful transition from high school to college.

Source: College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy<sup>73</sup>

The Utah State Board of Education recommends that school counselors support students’ college and career planning through transitions planning, individual and small group planning sessions, and parent-student meetings.<sup>74</sup> The Utah State Board of Education provides two rubrics that districts can use to evaluate their **new** and **existing** college and career readiness school counseling programs. The evaluation criteria were developed to ensure the college and career readiness of all students and to be consistent with the modern needs of students related to changes in technology usage, college admissions and curriculum, and the needs of the workforce.<sup>75</sup>

### MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SERVICES

In addition to college and career counseling, school counselors are responsible for contributing to the positive development of students’ mental health and social-emotional competencies. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), school counselors typically work within a continuum of mental health services that also includes school psychologists, social workers, and community service providers. Within the continuum, school counselors typically provide school-based, universal mental supports to all students. School counselors can also refer students requiring more intense interventions to school-employed mental health professionals such as school psychologists or community providers.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> “College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Model: Second Edition.” Utah State Board of Education, 2016. p. 26. [https://www.uen.org/ccr/counselor-toolkit/documents/CCRpmBOOK5\\_10\\_ADA\\_version.pdf](https://www.uen.org/ccr/counselor-toolkit/documents/CCRpmBOOK5_10_ADA_version.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> “Utah College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program: On-Site Review Performance Self-Evaluation for Existing Programs.” Utah State Board of Education. p. 2. <https://resources.finalseite.net/images/v1524846386/davisk12utus/a9wh4a1wcplxcb8jvfr7/UtahCCRSchoolCounseling-ReviewBooklet.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> Cowan, K.C. et al. “A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools.” National Association of School Psychologists, 2013. pp. 7, 10–11. [https://www.nasp.org/sites/default/files/Framework%20for%20Safe%20and%20Successful%20School%20Environments\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://www.nasp.org/sites/default/files/Framework%20for%20Safe%20and%20Successful%20School%20Environments_FINAL_0.pdf)

**According to the ASCA, school counselors are in a unique position to provide social-emotional and mental health services to students.** School counselors have training in meeting students’ social-emotional needs and are often the first person to identify and provide services to students in need of social-emotional or mental health supports given that they provide universal services. School counselors support students’ social-emotional and mental health needs through the counseling core curriculum, small-group counseling, and individual counseling.<sup>77</sup> Figure 2.3 presents a list of other ways school counselors play a role in developing students social-emotional skills.

**Figure 2.3: School Counselors’ Roles in Social-Emotional Development**

- ❖ Provide direct instruction, team-teach or assist in teaching the school counseling core curriculum, learning activities or units in classrooms aimed at social/emotional development;
- ❖ Understand the nature and range of human characteristics specific to child and adolescent development;
- ❖ Identify and employ appropriate appraisal methods for individual and group interventions that support K–12 students’ social/emotional development;
- ❖ Know and utilize counseling theories to inform both direct and indirect services providing support to K–12 students’ social/emotional development;
- ❖ Use evaluation in the context of appropriate statistics and research methodology, follow-up evaluation and measurement methods to implement appropriate program planning for social/emotional development; and
- ❖ Select and implement technology in a comprehensive school counseling program to facilitate K–12 students’ social/emotional development.

Source: American School Counselor Association<sup>78</sup>

**As part of the Utah State Board of Education’s College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Model, school counselors are encouraged to incorporate social-emotional supports into a systemic approach to dropout prevention.** This “approach to dropout prevention in the school counseling program consists of activities to meet student needs and concerns,” and activities can include counseling, consultation, and referral.<sup>79</sup> School-based services that school counselors may provide include individual and group counseling, crisis management, and suicide prevention. The Utah State Board of Education notes that common models Utah school counselors use to provide social-emotional supports are tiered interventions, advisory/flex programs, student support teams, and Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (SWPBIS)/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).<sup>80</sup> Figure 2.4 on the following page describes these four models.

<sup>77</sup> “The School Counselor and Social/Emotional Development.” American School Counselor Association, 2017. p. 1. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/2017PublicComment/SocialEmotional-DRAFT.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> “College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Model: Second Edition,” Op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–29.

**Figure 2.4: Common Prevention and Intervention Models for Social-Emotional Issues in Utah Schools**

**TIERED INTERVENTION**

Response to Intervention is a three-tiered approach to student success and support. Students experience supports based on their behavioral responsiveness to interventions. The primary tier of intervention is a school- or class-wide system for all students. The secondary tier of intervention includes specialized groups and systems for students with at-risk behavior. The tertiary tier of intervention is specialized individualized and specific for students with high-risk behavior. A three-tiered prevention logic requires that all students receive supports at the universal or primary tier. If the behavior of some students is not responsive, more intensive behavioral supports are provided, in the form of a group contingency (selected or secondary tier) or a highly individualized plan (intensive or tertiary tier).

**ADVISORY/FLEX PROGRAM**

The purpose of an advisory/flex program is to make a large school smaller by allowing a small group of students the opportunity to interact regularly with an adult in an individual and/or small group setting. Students are best served when school counselors consult with administration, faculty, staff, parents, and community partners in delivering appropriate prevention, intervention and responsive services and dropout prevention.

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM**

A Student Support Team ensures students who struggle receive targeted intervention until a resolution is reached. The purpose of a Student Support Team is to review the academic and/or behavioral interventions documented by the school counselor and teachers that have not proven successful, and to brainstorm other interventions that would support the student and help him/her experience success. This team is comprised of administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and special education representatives.

**SWPBIS/MTSS**

Improving student academic and behavior outcomes is about ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. SWPBIS provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes. More importantly, SWPBIS is not a curriculum, intervention, or practice, but is a decision-making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. In general, Schoolwide PBIS emphasizes four integrated elements: (a) data for decision making, (b) measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by data, (c) practices with evidence that these outcomes are achievable, and (d) systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices.

Source: Utah State Board of Education<sup>81</sup>

**Further, school counselors can play a critical role in creating safe, positive school climates and reducing school violence.** Research suggests that school counselors can reduce gun violence in schools by facilitating counseling groups to address topics that perpetrators often face. Such topics include grief, bullying, depression, anger management, and low self-esteem. By addressing these topics early and often, school counselors can have a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to school violence. Experts also note that this approach is “cost-effective and could be potentially lifesaving.”<sup>82</sup>

In addition to general mental health and social-emotional service provision, school counselors can provide targeted services to meet students’ needs. Two types of targeted services include suicide prevention and trauma-informed care. Hanover discusses these services in the remainder of this subsection.

<sup>81</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., pp. 28–29.

<sup>82</sup> Paolini, Op. cit., p. 7.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Counselors can provide suicide prevention and related intervention services within multi-tiered frameworks of student supports.** As schools have taken an increasingly central role in addressing student mental health problems, the integration of suicide prevention services within a broader school mental health program has become more common. As with broader mental health programs, youth suicide prevention efforts should focus on early identification, prevention, and intervention.<sup>83</sup> Consequently, the NASP notes that suicide prevention “should be an integral component of a multi-tiered system of mental health and safety supports.”<sup>84</sup>

**Experts recommend that districts establish a dedicated district-level coordinator to oversee the creation and implementation of policies related to suicide prevention.** The ASCA, the NASP, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention advise district superintendents to designate an existing or a new staff member as the district’s suicide prevention coordinator, who may also serve as the point of contact for school suicide prevention coordinators (e.g., the “point person” described in Figure 2.5 on the following page). A district-level suicide prevention coordinator may also facilitate professional development for staff across schools “on risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, postvention, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.”<sup>85</sup> The district may also take a role in integrating universal youth suicide prevention programming into the curriculum of all K-12 health classes. The ASCA, the NASP, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention note that the curriculum content can include:<sup>86</sup>

- The importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies;
- How to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others; and
- Help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.

**Experts also recommend that schools establish a safety and crisis response team to coordinate school-based supports and interventions for students at risk of suicide.** The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the NASP both recommend that schools rely on a dedicated crisis response team to lead school-based suicide

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<sup>83</sup> Schmidt, R. et al. “Integrating a Suicide Prevention Program into a School Mental Health System: A Case Example from a Rural School District.” *Children & Schools*, 37:1, 2015. pp. 1–2.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282469647\\_Integrating\\_a\\_Suicide\\_Prevention\\_Program\\_into\\_a\\_School\\_Mental\\_Health\\_System\\_A\\_Case\\_Example\\_from\\_a\\_Rural\\_School\\_District](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282469647_Integrating_a_Suicide_Prevention_Program_into_a_School_Mental_Health_System_A_Case_Example_from_a_Rural_School_District)

<sup>84</sup> “Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams.” National Association of School Psychologists.  
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/preventing-suicide-guidelines-for-administrators-and-crisis-teams>

<sup>85</sup> “Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention.” The Trevor Project, American School Counselor Association, National Association of School Psychologists, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. pp. 3–4.  
[https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy\\_FINAL.pdf](https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 5.

prevention efforts.<sup>87</sup> At a minimum, the crisis response team should include a school administrator, school-employed mental health professional (such as a school counselor), school security personnel, and a local law enforcement representative.<sup>88</sup> Figure 2.5 outlines the responsibilities of a school-based crisis response team related to suicide prevention delivery and coordination.

**Figure 2.5: School-Based Crisis Response Team Roles in Suicide Prevention**

<b>DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>	A school-based crisis response team should develop and implement policies and procedures related to suicide risk assessment, intervention, and post-intervention response. A district-level crisis response team may also develop policies for use across schools.
<b>DESIGNATE A POINT PERSON</b>	All school-based crisis response teams should designate a team member that is also a school-employed mental health professional as the designated reporter. This team member receives all reports from teachers, staff, students, and community members concerning students who may be at-risk of suicide and then initiates the appropriate response.
<b>ENSURE ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS RECEIVE ANNUAL TRAINING</b>	The NASP recommends that all staff receive annual training “on the on the warning signs referral procedures for students who display signs of suicidal thinking and behavior.” In addition, students should also receive information on risk factors, warning signs, and how to seek help for themselves or a friend. Schools may integrate information into existing curricula or provide a separate comprehensive suicide prevention program.
<b>CAREGIVER NOTIFICATION</b>	As soon as schools observe suicidal behaviors or indicators, a crisis response team member should contact the student’s caregivers, or, if child abuse is suspected, child services. Caregivers can provide information related to a student’s risk of suicide and collaborate with school staff and community-based services to support and protect the student. Schools may ask caregivers to sign a form indicating that they have received contact from the school.
<b>COMMUNITY COORDINATION</b>	Crisis response teams should provide referral options to a 24-hour community-based suicide prevention service for support outside of school hours. Teams need take steps to facilitate information sharing between the school and community agencies.

Source: National Association of School Psychologists<sup>89</sup>

### TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

**Psychological trauma is usually the result of experiencing painful, stressful, shocking, life-altering, and life-threatening events.**<sup>90</sup> Traumatic experiences differ from daily life events, as they fall outside of familiar experiences, threaten or harm an individual’s mental or physical

<sup>87</sup> [1] “Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams,” Op. cit. [2] “Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools.” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012. p. 19.

[http://preventsuicide.lacoe.edu/assets/files/toolkit/preventingsuicide\\_toolkit\\_hs.pdf](http://preventsuicide.lacoe.edu/assets/files/toolkit/preventingsuicide_toolkit_hs.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> “Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams,” Op. cit.

<sup>89</sup> Figure contents were adapted from Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> “Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters: What Community Members Can Do.” National Institute of Mental Health. p. 2. [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-community-members/helpingchildren-communitymembers-508\\_150143.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-community-members/helpingchildren-communitymembers-508_150143.pdf)

well-being, and trigger intense emotions such as fear, despair, and powerlessness.<sup>91</sup> Trauma is an experience that traverses age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.<sup>92</sup>

**Trauma-informed care is a universal vehicle for assisting trauma survivors that requires “an organization-wide commitment to translating principles into practice.”**<sup>93</sup> Services and supports that are trauma-informed ground themselves in research-based evidence and encourage engagement, empowerment, and collaboration.<sup>94</sup> A trauma-informed approach may be integrated into any framework of treatment, and should:<sup>95</sup>

- Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery;
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and
- Respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seek to actively resist re-traumatization.

**The ASCA suggests that school counselors can play a critical role in developing a “trauma-sensitive environment at their school.”**<sup>96</sup> That is, school counselors can identify students impacted by traumatic events and provide trauma-informed services within the school counseling program.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, the Utah State Board of Education recommends that school counselors incorporate trauma-informed practices into the school counseling program to promote students’ resiliency.<sup>98</sup> The ASCA also advises school counselors to promote trauma-sensitive environments by engaging in the actions described in Figure 2.6.

**Figure 2.6: School Counselors’ Roles in Providing Trauma-Informed Care**

- ❖ Recognize the signs of trauma in students;
- ❖ Understand trauma need not predict individual failure if sufficient focus on resilience and strengths is present;
- ❖ Avoid practices that may re-traumatize students;
- ❖ Create connected communities and positive school climates that are trauma-sensitive to keep students healthy and in school and involved in positive social networks;

<sup>91</sup> DeCandia, C.J. and K. Guarino. “Trauma-Informed Care: An Ecological Response.” *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 2015. p. 7. <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Trauma-Informed-Care-An-Ecological-Response-Guarino-2015.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> “SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach.” SAMHSA’s Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, July 2014. p. 2. <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/SAMHSA%20TIC.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> DeCandia and Guarino, Op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>94</sup> “SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach,” Op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> Bullet points were adapted from Ibid., pp. 9–10.

<sup>96</sup> “The School Counselor and Trauma-Informed Practice.” American School Counselor Association, 2016. p. 1. [https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS\\_TraumaInformed.pdf](https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_TraumaInformed.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> “College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Model: Second Edition,” Op. cit., pp. 29–30.

- ❖ Implement effective academic and behavioral practices, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports and social and emotional learning;
- ❖ Promote safe, stable and nurturing relationships. Research shows this is critical in helping students succeed even in the face of deprivation and adversity;
- ❖ Provide community resource information to students and families dealing with trauma;
- ❖ Educate staff on the effects of trauma and how to refer students to the school counselor;
- ❖ Collaborate with community resources to provide support for students;
- ❖ Promote a trauma-sensitive framework for policies, procedures and behaviors to entire staff; and
- ❖ Recognize the role technology can play in magnifying trauma incidents for students.

Source: American School Counselor Association<sup>99</sup>

## GRADE-LEVEL SPECIFIC ROLES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**The ASCA recommends that an elementary school counseling program should be developmentally-appropriate and focus on learning skills and social-emotional competencies such as self-management and social skills.** The program should also teach “knowledge, attitudes, and skills students need to acquire in academic, career, and social-emotional development, which serve as the foundation for future success.”<sup>100</sup> Further, elementary school counselors work with “teachers and parents on early identification and intervention of children’s academic and social-emotional needs.”<sup>101</sup> They also collaborate with other school staff, school administration, and the community to deliver the school counseling program.<sup>102</sup>

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

**At the middle school level, the ASCA recommends that counseling programs should support students in the transition from childhood to adolescence.** Middle school students are beginning to develop a self-identity and become curious about their world. As such, middle school counselors should develop a school counseling program that fosters a “safe, respectful learning environment whereby young adolescents can maximize personal and academic achievement.”<sup>103</sup> Middle school counseling programs can focus on integrating academic, career, and social-emotional development to help students obtain the skills they need to succeed in school, set career goals, and develop positive social skills.<sup>104</sup> Importantly, experts suggest that middle school counseling programs should be integrated into the educational curriculum rather than provided in isolation.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from “The School Counselor and Trauma-Informed Practice,” Op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> “The Essential Role of Elementary School Counselors.” American School Counselor Association, 2017. p. 1.  
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Careers-Roles/WhyElem.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> “The Essential Role of Middle School Counselors.” American School Counselor Association, 2017. p. 2.  
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Careers-Roles/WhyMiddle.pdf>

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

In Utah, Grade 7 students work with their parents and school staff to develop a Plan for College and Career Readiness. As part of this plan, students must participate in one individual and one group meeting related to college and career readiness across Grades 7 and 8.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, the National Career Development Association (NCDA) recommends that career counseling in Grades 7 to 9 extend the counseling curriculum implemented in Grades K through 6, which focuses on general career awareness and work ethic, but not specific occupational areas.<sup>107</sup> The NCDA recommends encouraging students in Grades 7 through 9 to gain work experience through volunteer activities and beginning to prepare students for work-based learning opportunities such as internships. However, the NCDA recommends that career development programs delay actual participation in work-based learning until Grades 10 to 12. The NCDA also “opposes educational programs designed to force youth to choose in Grades 7 to 9 whether or not they are ‘college-bound.’”<sup>108</sup>

In some school districts, high school guidance counselors begin conducting outreach to students in middle school. For example, counselors at Annandale High School in Virginia partner with feeder middle schools to align curricula and identify students who need additional literacy support. High school counselors also work directly with middle school students to discuss career exploration and the various high school diploma options in Virginia.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, counselors at Sammamish Senior High School in Washington visit feeder middle schools during the spring semester of each school year to discuss college readiness with Grade 8 students.<sup>110</sup>

## HIGH SCHOOL

**The ASCA recommends that high school counseling programs should support students in the transition to postsecondary life.** More specifically, high school counselors should develop a comprehensive school counseling program that focuses on academic, career, and social-emotional development and supports students in realizing their academic potential and creating career goals. Importantly, experts recommend that high school students provide guidance while also supporting students’ independence in developing academic and career goals. Like elementary and middle school-level counseling programs, high school-level counseling programs should be integrated into the educational program. High school counselors should also involve other school staff, parents, and the community in the counseling program.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> “Utah College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program: On-Site Review Performance Self-Evaluation for New Programs.” Utah State Board of Education. p. 11. <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/c76eb6b9-ad7f-43a6-b3c7-0f0ba5831b19>

<sup>107</sup> “Career Development Policy Statement.” National Career Development Association. pp. 2–3. <https://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/guidelines>

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> “Creating College Readiness: Profiles of 38 Schools That Know How.” College Ready, Educational Policy Improvement Center, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, February 21, 2009. p. 50. <https://www.inflexion.org/creating-college-readiness/>

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>111</sup> “The Essential Role of High School Counselors,” *Op. cit.*, pp. 1–2.

**College counseling is a large part of a high school counselor’s role.** A 2017-2018 national survey of high school counselors conducted by the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) finds that, on average, high school counselors spend the most time on postsecondary admission counseling, personal needs counseling, and scheduling courses. Specifically, counselors spend the following amount of time on various tasks:<sup>112</sup>

- 30 percent on postsecondary admission counseling;
- 22 percent on personal needs counseling;
- 20 percent on choice and scheduling of high school courses;
- 12 percent on academic testing;
- 6 percent on occupational counseling and job placement;
- 6 percent on teaching; and
- 5 percent on other non-guidance activities.

**At the high school level, college counseling curricula vary by grade level.** Figure 2.7 shows future planning activities included in the College Board’s advisory curriculum for Grades 9 through 12. This curriculum progresses from a general awareness of postsecondary options and test preparation in Grade 9 to specific information about the college application and financial aid process and skills for success in college in Grade 12.<sup>113</sup>

**Figure 2.7: College Board Advisory Curriculum Future Planning Activities**

<b>GRADE 9</b>	This section contains sessions on preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT, exploring different types of colleges, and going on a virtual college field trip.
<b>GRADE 10</b>	This section contains seven sessions — two cover AP Edge and the others focus on the college search. Students will learn about online college search tools and major and career search tools. Other sessions explain college admission criteria and encourage students to think about what they want in a college.
<b>GRADE 11</b>	The 13 sessions in this section include “Preparing for a College Visit,” “Extracurricular Résumé,” “Money Talks: Increasing Your Financial Aid Savvy” and “Your Roadmap for Navigating the SAT.”
<b>GRADE 12</b>	Sessions include tips on writing a college application essay, learning about the FAFSA and financial aid, accessing college support systems, and interacting with professors.

Source: The College Board<sup>114</sup>

**Research suggests that schools should begin the college counseling process by Grade 10.** A 2011 *Journal of Counseling and Development* article finds that students who reported

<sup>112</sup> Bullet points were taken verbatim from Clinedinst, M. and P. Patel. “State of College Admission.” National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2018. p. 24.  
[https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/research/2018\\_soca/soca18.pdf](https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/research/2018_soca/soca18.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> “A Peek Inside the College Board Schools Advisory Session Guides.” College Board.  
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/educator-resource-center/a-peek-inside-the-college-board-schools-advisory-session-guides>

<sup>114</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid.

contacting a counselor regarding college by Grade 10 were significantly more likely to apply to at least one college than students who first contacted a counselor regarding college between Grade 10 and Grade 12 or who never contacted a counselor.<sup>115</sup> In Grades 10 to 12, the NCDA recommends that career development “centers around helping youth make quality decisions regarding their educational/career plans at the post-secondary level.”<sup>116</sup> For students planning to enroll in a bachelor’s degree program after completing high school, the NCDA recommends that career development programs emphasize the connection between specific educational choices and career outcomes.<sup>117</sup>

**Some high schools mandate participation in college counseling activities or integrate these activities into the general education curriculum.** In Utah, as part of students’ Plan for College and Career Readiness, students in Grades 9 and 10 must attend at least one individual and one group conference across the two years. In Grades 11 and 12, students must also attend at least one individual and one group conference, as well as other meetings as needed.<sup>118</sup> As another example, Cherry Creek High School in Colorado requires all students to meet with a counselor at least once per year to discuss their academic course sequence and requires Grade 12 students to meet with counselors to discuss college applications. Counselors also present more general information during group assemblies and work with classroom teachers to incorporate postsecondary knowledge into the academic curriculum.<sup>119</sup>

## CASELOAD MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

### STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS

**The ASCA’s standards for comprehensive school counseling programs recommend a maximum student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1.**<sup>120</sup> The 2017-2018 NACAC survey finds that high schools across the country meet the recommendation, with an average of 243 students to one counselor.<sup>121</sup> However, a joint report by the NACAC and ASCA finds that the national average student-to-counselor ratio across all school levels was much higher than the ASCA

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<sup>115</sup> Bryan, J. et al. “School Counselors as Social Capital: The Effects of High School College Counseling on College Application Rates.” *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 89, 2011. p. 194.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263616900\\_School\\_Counselors\\_as\\_Social\\_Capital\\_The\\_Effects\\_of\\_High\\_School\\_College\\_Counseling\\_on\\_College\\_Application\\_Rates](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263616900_School_Counselors_as_Social_Capital_The_Effects_of_High_School_College_Counseling_on_College_Application_Rates)

<sup>116</sup> “Career Development Policy Statement,” Op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> “Utah College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program: On-Site Review Performance Self-Evaluation for New Programs,” Op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>119</sup> “Creating College Readiness: Profiles of 38 Schools That Know How,” Op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>120</sup> “ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” Op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Clinedinst and Patel, Op. cit., p. 25.

standard at 482:1 in the 2014-2015 school year.<sup>122</sup> In Utah, the average student-to-counselor ratio was 684:1 in the same school year.<sup>123</sup>

**The 250:1 standard reflects empirical research suggesting that decreasing the student to counselor ratio improves college and career outcomes for students.** A 2013 study published by the College Board examines the impact of counseling ratios on matriculation at four-year colleges using data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) in states which mandate a minimum student to counselor ratio.<sup>124</sup> This study finds that when schools hire an additional counselor due to minimum student to counselor ratios, the percentage of students enrolling in a four-year college increases by around ten percentage points.<sup>125</sup> Likewise, a statewide survey of school counselors in Utah finds a significant correlation between student to counselor ratios and both the percentage of students taking the ACT assessments and the average ACT score for the school.<sup>126</sup> Further, a 2011 study published in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, which uses data from the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002, finds a positive correlation between the number of counselors working in a school and the likeliness of students applying to more than one college.<sup>127</sup>

The relationship between counselor caseloads and postsecondary outcomes may reflect increased attention provided by counselors to individual students. A 2017 article published in the *Journal of Counseling and Development* reports on a survey of 881 graduating Grade 12 students conducted in 2012. This study finds a positive correlation between the frequency with which students met with counselors to discuss the college admissions process during high school and their grade point averages during their freshman year of college.<sup>128</sup>

**The 2017-2018 NACAC survey finds that the distribution of counselor activities varies by the ratio of students to counselors,** as shown in Figure 2.8 on the following page. Most notably, the percent of counselors' time devoted to postsecondary admissions counseling declines from an average of 35.4 percent of all time in schools with 100 or fewer students per counselor to an average of 25 percent of all time in schools with over 500 students per

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<sup>122</sup> [1] "State-by-State Student-to-Counselor Ratio Report: 10-Year Trends." The National Association for College Admission Counseling and the American School Counselor Association. p. 6.  
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ratioreport.pdf> [2] Gewertz, C. "School Counselors Responsible for 482 Students on Average, Report Finds." Education Week, February 8, 2018.  
[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/high\\_school\\_and\\_beyond/2018/02/school\\_counselors\\_responsible\\_for\\_482\\_students\\_on\\_average.html?cmp=SOC-SHR-FB](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/high_school_and_beyond/2018/02/school_counselors_responsible_for_482_students_on_average.html?cmp=SOC-SHR-FB)

<sup>123</sup> "State-by-State Student-to-Counselor Ratio Report: 10-Year Trends," Op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>124</sup> Hurwitz, M. and J. Howell. "Measuring the Impact of High School Counselors on College Enrollment." *College Board Advocacy & Policy Center Research Brief*, February 2013. p. 2.  
<http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/policycenter/research-brief-measuring-impact-high-school-counselors-college-enrollment.pdf>

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

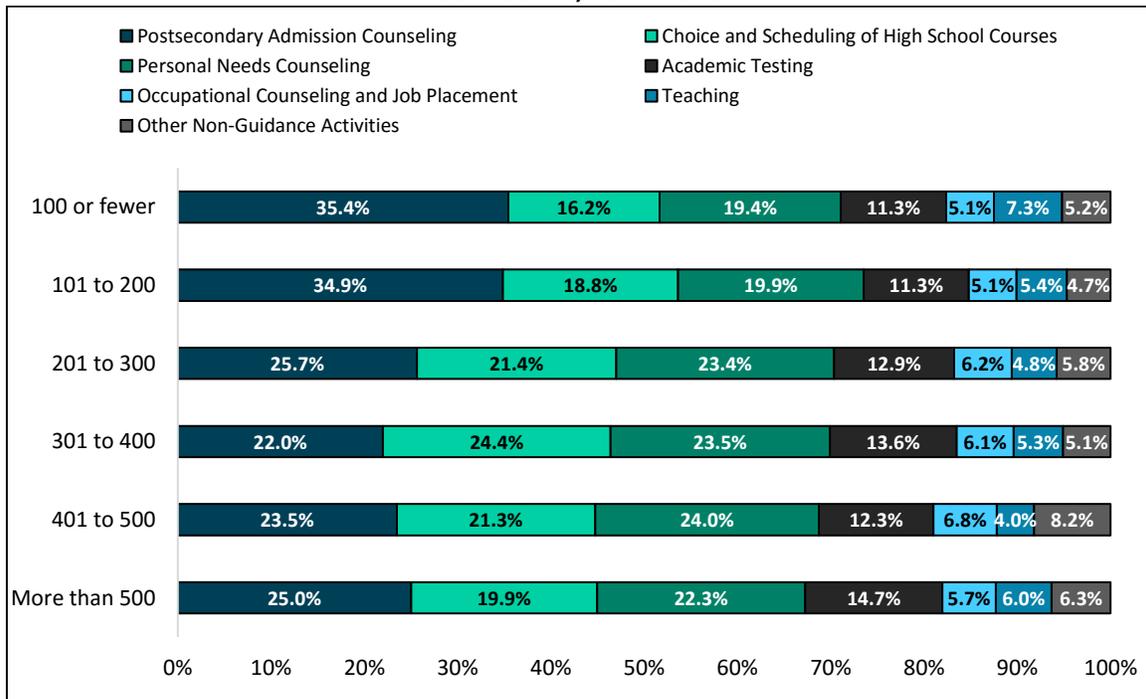
<sup>126</sup> Carey, J. et al. "A Statewide Evaluation of the Outcomes of the Implementation of ASCA National Model School Counseling Programs in Utah High Schools." *Professional School Counseling*, 16:2, 2012. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

<sup>127</sup> Bryan et al., Op. cit.

<sup>128</sup> Lapan, R.T. et al. "College and Career Readiness Counseling Support Scales." *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 95:1, 2017. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

counselor. Time dedicated to personal needs counseling remains relatively stable regardless of the number of students per counselor, ranging from 19.4 to 24 percent of all time.<sup>129</sup>

**Figure 2.8: Distribution of High School Counselor Activities by Ratio of Students to Counselors, 2017-2018**



Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling<sup>130</sup>

### STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING COUNSELOR CASELOADS

The ASCA’s standards for comprehensive school counseling programs recommend that counselors spend at least 80 percent of their working time providing direct (i.e., in-person counseling and planning with students) and indirect (provided on behalf of students) services to students.<sup>131</sup> A 2014 study published in *Research in Higher Education* finds that students in high schools whose counselors report spending more than 50 percent of their time on college counseling activities are significantly more likely to enroll in four-year college than students whose counselors report spending less than 20 percent of their time on college counseling activities.<sup>132</sup> A 2012 book titled *Professional School Counseling* suggests that counselors allocate their time across four components of counseling programs, as presented in Figure 2.9 on the following page. The four components are guidance curriculum (e.g., career, personal/social, and academic development), individual planning (e.g., course

<sup>129</sup> Clinedinst and Patel, Op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>130</sup> Data for figure were obtained from Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> “ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” Op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Engberg, M.E. and A. Gilbert. “The Counseling Opportunity Structure: Examining Correlates of Four-Year College-Going Rates.” *Research in Higher Education*, 55:3, 2014. p. 232. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

selection), responsive services (e.g., academic and relationship concerns), and system support (e.g., data analysis and advisory committees).<sup>133</sup>

**Figure 2.9: Recommended Time Allocations for School Counselors**

SCHOOL LEVEL	GUIDANCE CURRICULUM	INDIVIDUAL PLANNING	RESPONSIVE SERVICES	SYSTEM SUPPORT
Elementary	35% to 40%	30% to 40%	5% to 10%	10% to 15%
Middle	25% to 35%	30% to 40%	15% to 25%	10% to 15%
High	15% to 25%	25% to 35%	25% to 35%	15% to 20%

Source: *Professional School Counseling*<sup>134</sup>

The Utah State Board of Education also suggests that counselors allocate their time across four components of counseling programs, as presented in Figure 2.10. These guidelines align with those in *Professional School Counseling* for curricular instruction and system support/administrative duties.

**Figure 2.10: Recommended Time Allocations for School Counselors in Utah**

SCHOOL LEVEL	PLAN FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS	COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION	SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO DROPOUT PREVENTION	ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM AND NON-SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES
Elementary	5% to 10%	35% to 45%	30% to 40%	10% to 15%
Middle	35% to 45%	25% to 35%	25% to 30%	10% to 15%
High	45% to 55%	15% to 25%	25% to 30%	10% to 15%

Source: Utah State Board of Education<sup>135</sup>

**Accordingly, experts note that counselors’ time should be distributed between activities equally or with slightly more emphasis on individual planning and responsive services, with any remaining time spent performing system support activities.**<sup>136</sup> However, other duties commonly assigned to school counselors may interfere with their primary roles. This interference may reduce the effectiveness of school counseling even when the ratio of students to counselors is appropriate. *Professional School Counseling* notes that the reach of school counselors is often limited by the assignment of inappropriate duties, such as clerical work, supervising assessments, and monitoring students.<sup>137</sup> For instance, the 2017-2018 NACAC survey finds that counselors in public schools spend an average of 13.2 percent of their time supporting academic testing and 5.6 percent of their time engaged in other non-guidance activities, suggesting that counselors in many schools are unable to meet the ASCA’s standard for student services due to inappropriate duties.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Thompson, Op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>134</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>135</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from “Utah College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program: On-Site Review Performance Self-Evaluation for Existing Programs,” Op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>136</sup> Thompson, Op. cit., pp. 53–54.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>138</sup> Clinedinst and Patel, Op. cit., p. 26.

Figure 2.11 shows “appropriate” and “inappropriate” activities for school counselors identified by the ASCA. Experts recommend that districts can maximize the effectiveness of their counselors by prioritizing the recommended “appropriate” activities listed below.

**Figure 2.11: Appropriate and Inappropriate Duties of School Counselors**

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES	INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Individual student academic program planning</li> <li>✓ Interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests</li> <li>✓ Providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent</li> <li>✓ Providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems</li> <li>✓ Providing counseling to students as to appropriate school dress</li> <li>✓ Collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum lessons</li> <li>✓ Analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement</li> <li>✓ Interpreting student records</li> <li>✓ Providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management</li> <li>✓ Ensuring student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations</li> <li>✓ Helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems</li> <li>✓ Providing individual and small-group counseling services to students</li> <li>✓ Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards</li> <li>✓ Analyzing disaggregated data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students</li> <li>✗ Coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs</li> <li>✗ Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent</li> <li>✗ Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences</li> <li>✗ Sending students home who are not appropriately dressed</li> <li>✗ Teaching classes when teachers are absent</li> <li>✗ Computing grade point averages</li> <li>✗ Maintaining student records</li> <li>✗ Supervising classrooms and common areas</li> <li>✗ Keeping clerical records</li> <li>✗ Assisting with duties in the principal’s office</li> <li>✗ Providing therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders</li> <li>✗ Coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards</li> <li>✗ Serving as a data entry clerk</li> </ul>

Source: American School Counselors Association<sup>139</sup>

When prioritizing activities, *Professional School Counseling* suggests reassigning clerical duties to more appropriate personnel such as administrators or support staff and distributing other responsibilities among all staff. The author also notes that professional counselor certification does not qualify counselors to administer individual psychological testing and suggests that school psychologists or psychological examiners administer these tests.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Figure contents were taken verbatim from “ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” Op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> Thompson, Op. cit., pp. 46–47.

To ensure that counselors meet the recommended amount of time devoted to student services, the ASCA recommends that counselors conduct use-of-time assessments.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, the Pennsylvania Department of Education recommends that all counselors in a district or school participate in a time analysis. The implementation protocol recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Education includes a list of activities performed by each counselor throughout the school year and a detailed analysis of the time spent on specific activities by each counselor over 30 days divided into the categories shown in Figure 2.12.

**Figure 2.12: Sample Time Analysis Tool for School Counselors**

TIME	GUIDANCE CURRICULUM	INDIVIDUAL PLANNING	RESPONSIVE SERVICES	LEADERSHIP	SYSTEM SUPPORT	NON-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	COUNSELOR ROLES L – LEADERSHIP A – ADVOCATES C – COLLABORATOR SS – SYSTEM SUPPORT
7:00 – 7:30 a.m.							
7:30 – 8:00 a.m.							
8:00 – 8:30 a.m.							
--							
4:00 – 4:30 p.m.							
Number of Blocks							
Daily Percentage							

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup> “ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” Op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Figure was reproduced with minor modifications from “Tools for Developing a Comprehensive K-12 Guidance & Counseling Plan.” Pennsylvania Department of Education, March 2011. p. 4.  
<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Career%20and%20Technical%20Education/Guidance%20Counselor%20Resources/Tools%20for%20Developing%20a%20Comprehensive%20K-12%20Guidance%20and%20Counseling%20Plan.pdf>

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