

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of the *Comprehensive School Counseling Program: The School District Perspective* is to provide updated guidance, information, and resources to support districts with developing their district comprehensive school counseling program. The district comprehensive school counseling program sets the foundation for the school counseling services, programs, and plans delivered across the school district to all students.

Section 100.2(j)(2) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education requires each school district to have a comprehensive developmental school counseling/guidance program for all students in kindergarten through grade 12 and access to a certified school counselor.

In Fall 2023, the New York State Education Department (the Department) in partnership with the New York State School Counselor Association (NYSSCA) reviewed the 115 school districts’ websites to locate their Comprehensive School Counseling Program in accordance with Section 100.2(j)(2) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The Department and NYSSCA found 42% of the districts’ websites that were reviewed had a comprehensive program, and only approximately 25% of those with a program were updated for the 2023-2024 school year.

COMPONENTS OF A DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

- District School Counseling Vision and Mission Statements
- Professional Ethics and Standards & Competencies
- Standards Driven School Counseling
- Data Driven School Counseling
- Advisory Council
- Description of the Elementary, Middle, and High School Program
- Link to Schools’ Counseling Plans

DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM VISION & MISSION STATEMENTS

Many school districts have existing vision and mission statements. When developing the district’s comprehensive school counseling program, districts will want to include their vision and mission statements, specifically the school counseling vision and mission statements. Districts may find it helpful to review ASCA’s presentation on [Vision and Mission](#).



PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS & COMPETENCIES

A high-quality district comprehensive school counseling program references and endorses the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) [Ethical Standards for School Counselor](#), as well as the [School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies](#). The Ethical Standards are designed to ensure the well-being and protection of students, promote professional integrity, and maintain confidentiality, while the Professional Standards outline the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of school counselors. These standards provide a framework

for the practice of school counseling and guide school counselors in their efforts to promote student success and well-being.

STANDARDS DRIVEN SCHOOL COUNSELING

School counseling is described as “standards-based, student-focused.” School counselors use standards to guide their school counseling core curriculum and group counseling services. The district’s comprehensive school counseling program will want to set an expectation of the standards the counseling plans will incorporate.

The [ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#) were developed to outline the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should acquire to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The ASCA Student Standards empower students to thrive across the three school counseling domains – academics, career, and social-emotional development. Such a framework allows school counselors and educators to support the holistic development of students and create a positive inclusive school environment. Integrating the Student Standards into the school counseling curriculum, services, and activities, as well as the school culture can help students develop the necessary mindsets and behaviors to be successful in school and beyond.

The [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Learning Standards](#) provide a framework to prepare students for career readiness and success in the workplace. The CDOS Standards focus on career development, integrated learning, universal foundation skills, and career majors. Career exploration can begin in preschool and continue through high school graduation. School counselors are the primary professionals to support and guide students over the course of their academic tenure with career activities. Integrating the CDOS standards in the school counseling curriculum and activities will ensure students are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences for a successful transition to postsecondary opportunities.



There are opportunities for school counselors to work across disciplines with their teacher colleagues to co-plan and coteach the school counseling curriculum as part of the general education curriculum. Suggested opportunities for collaboration are:

- [Elementary Social Studies](#)
- [Middle School Family and Consumer Science](#)
- [High School Health Education](#) and [Career and Technical Education](#)

The [New York State Social Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Benchmark - Equity Revisions](#) is another resource to help school districts develop their comprehensive programs and schools to develop their counseling plan. The SEL benchmarks are skills and competencies that adults practice, support, teach, and model to students throughout their K-12 education. The SEL benchmarks will help students build self-awareness, develop an affirming identity, build positive relationships, manage their emotional responses, and make informed decisions. SEL equips students with the skills necessary to thrive in school and life.

DATA DRIVEN SCHOOL COUNSELING

School counselors collect and analyze various types of data including process, perception, and outcome data. School districts should leverage data as part of the development, measurement of effectiveness, and revision of their district school counseling program.

Outcome data measures the impact and effectiveness of the school counseling program on student outcomes. Outcome data helps to assess the overall effectiveness of the school counseling program in achieving its goals and objectives. Outcome data may include academic achievement on New York State and district assessments, daily attendance and chronic absenteeism rate, disciplinary referrals and suspensions, and social-emotional development through appropriate screeners and assessments.



Perception data captures the subjective experiences and opinions of various stakeholders involved in the school counseling program. Perception data can provide valuable insight into how the school counseling program is perceived, the satisfaction levels of stakeholders, and their perception of the impact of the program on student well-being. Perception data involves collecting feedback from students, families, teachers, school and district leaders, and other staff members through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Process data is information about the activities and services delivered by a school counselor, and the number of stakeholders served. Process data includes the number of classroom lessons, individual and group counseling sessions, crisis interventions, referrals made, and students, parents, and other stakeholders who participated in the service delivery provided by a school counselor.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

[Commissioner's Regulation §100.2\(j\)\(2\)\(iii\)](#) requires each school district to establish a comprehensive developmental school counseling/guidance program advisory council. The advisory council is to meet a minimum of twice annually for the purpose of reviewing, advising on, and supporting the implementation of the district's comprehensive program. The advisory council's membership should include parents/guardians, members of the board of education (BOE), school and district leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other student-centered personnel. The advisory council must provide an annual report and meeting minutes to the BOE.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

School districts will want to provide a description of the unique services and programs offered at each grade level band. This section is not intended to be an exhaustive description or list of all services provided in all grade levels. Rather, it highlights some of the core services (i.e., individual counseling, group counseling, classroom lesson) and grade level band specific services that students receive only in elementary, middle, or high school. A paragraph for each grade level – simple and concise – to inform stakeholders of the opportunities offered through the comprehensive school counseling program is sufficient.

Sample Elementary School Counseling Program Description

An elementary school counseling program includes a variety of activities to support students' social, emotional, and academic development. These activities may include individual counseling sessions to address specific needs, group sessions to promote social skills and self-

esteem, and classroom lessons on topics such as empathy and conflict resolution. Elementary school counselors work in collaboration with teachers, school leaders, and families to create a positive and inclusive school environment. The program aims to improve students' well-being and academic success.

Sample Middle School Counseling Program Description

The middle school counseling program involves a range of activities designed to support students' academic, emotional, and academic growth during a critical stage of development. Activities may include individual counseling sessions to address personal concerns and challenges, group counseling sessions to foster positive peer relationships and promote healthy decision-making, and classroom lessons focused on self-esteem and goal setting. School counselors collaborate with teachers, school leaders, and families to provide the student with comprehensive support. The program aims to help students navigate the unique challenges of middle school, develop resilience and coping skills, and set a solid foundation for future success.

Sample High School Counseling Program Description

The high school counseling program provides students with activities to support their overall well-being, academic success, and career preparation. Activities may include individual counseling sessions to address personal and academic concerns, career counseling to help students explore postsecondary options and develop career goals, group counseling sessions to address common issues faced by high school students, and college or vocational school guidance to assist students and families through the application process. The program should provide equitable support to meet the individual needs of all students including students with special education services and English language learners. The goal is to empower students to make informed decisions, develop essential life skills, and successfully transition into adulthood.

LINK TO SCHOOLS' COUNSELING PLANS

Commissioner's Regulation §100.2(j)(2)(ii) expressly states, "Each school district shall develop district-wide and building-level comprehensive developmental school counseling/guidance plans..." Districts will want to link the schools' ("building-level") counseling plans to their district comprehensive school counseling program. The comprehensive program and counseling plans should be uploaded to the district website in an easily accessible format and location for all stakeholders to view.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERATION

[Commissioner's Regulation 100.2\(j\) School Counseling and Guidance Programs](#)
[NYSED Office of Student Support Services - School Counseling Webpage](#)
[New York State School Counselor Association](#)
[American School Counselor Association](#)



OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Office of Student Support Services promotes school improvement by focusing on social and emotional development and learning through programs, services, and activities related to student-centered services, school and student health, expanded learning opportunities, social emotional learning, and safe school & alternative education.