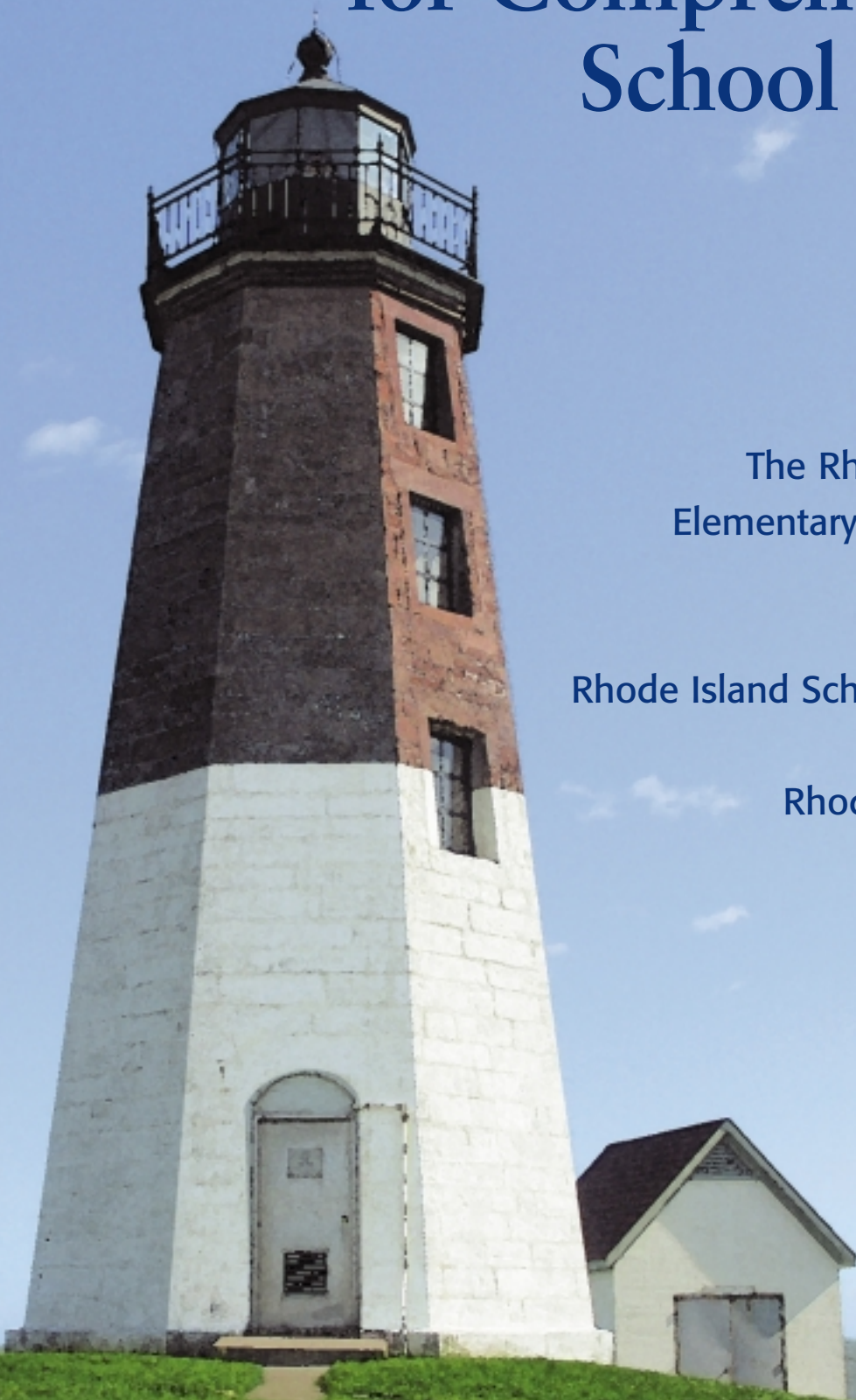


The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs

The Rhode Island Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education
in collaboration with

Rhode Island School Counselor Association
Providence College
Rhode Island School-to-Career



THE RHODE ISLAND FRAMEWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE K-12 SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Rhode Island School Counselor Association
Providence College
Rhode Island School-to-Career

This initiative is funded through the Carl J. Perkins Act of 1998.

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Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
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Peter McWalters
Commissioner

August 2005

Dear Colleagues in Education:

I am pleased to present you with this *Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs*, which will serve as the guideline for the school-counseling programs in our state for many years to come. Producing this book took several years of work and involved extensive collaboration among the education leaders in the state. In particular, this book represents the joint efforts of Providence College, the Rhode Island School Counselor Association, the Rhode Island School-to-Career Program, and the staff at the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE). I want to thank those who contributed for their excellent work.

Our mission at RIDE is to ensure "that all students achieve at the high levels needed to lead fulfilling and productive lives, to compete in academic and employment settings, and to contribute to society." We know that school counselors and school-counseling programs are vital in our efforts to fulfill our mission.

The importance of school counseling is recognized in state law: R.I.G.L. 16-7.1-2(2), in which the General Assembly "encourages every district to implement a K-12 standards-based comprehensive, developmental school-counseling program." In addition, the high-school regulations adopted in 2003 by the Board of Regents mandate that high schools adopt an advisory structure "by which every student is assigned a responsible adult who is knowledgeable about the student and tracks his or her progress." These are ambitious and worthy goals. The school-counseling model that is described in detail in this book will help all educators, not just school counselors, as we build a system that meets the social, emotional, academic, and career needs of every student.

I applaud all who were involved in developing this model and the many more who are working every day to improve our schools and to improve the lives of the parents and children in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Peter McWalters
Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education



THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL COUNSELING PROJECT

The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs is the product of a broad collaborative effort by Providence College, the Rhode Island School Counselor Association, Rhode Island School-to-Career and the Rhode Island Department of Education.

School counselors are critical players in systemic change. Their role as leaders, advocates, and collaborators allows them to be important contributors to positive educational change and to the success of students in three developmental domains: academic, personal/social and career. While continuing to serve as the primary conduit whereby the needs of students are addressed, counselors now develop and implement a program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, developmental in nature, and data driven.

Twenty-first century school counseling in Rhode Island ensures equitable access to educational and career exploration opportunities for all kids, promotes a rigorous academic curriculum for every student, provides strategies for closing the equity gaps, supports the development of skills to increase student success, and fosters advocacy for all students. The model encourages administrators and counselors to align school improvement strategies with school counseling by redefining and repositioning the role of school counselor.

"All Kids, All Schools." We want every student to achieve at the high level of proficiencies needed to lead fulfilling lives, succeed in a world economy and contribute to society. We know *The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs* will assist school counselors to analyze their current practice, organize and align their program in a comprehensive framework, develop curricula, and evaluate and measure the success of their counseling programs. With our "All Kids Agenda", school counselors, too, will help ensure that no child is left behind!

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The Advisory Board is a representative group of professionals appointed to advise and assist in the development of *The RI Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs*. The Advisory Board members, using their background and expertise, provides on-going support, input, and recommendations relating to the development of the *Framework*.

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

Professional school counselors design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that promote student achievement. These programs are comprehensive in scope, preventative in design and developmental in nature....A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the school's academic mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, driven by student data and based on standards in academic, career and personal/social development, promote and enhance the learning process for all students. (American School Counselor Association (ASCA), 2005)

Welcome to *The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs (The RI Framework)*. These are exciting times as professional school counselors seek to transform themselves and their programs in order to better serve students and contribute to school improvement.

A milestone in professional school counseling was achieved with the publication of the American School Counselor Association's *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (ASCA, 2003). The model provides a national vision for comprehensive school counseling programs. Two of the most important goals for realizing this vision are:

- All students will achieve the standards in the ASCA National Model.
- Comprehensive school counseling programs will be implemented in school districts throughout the country.

Rhode Island school counselors are committed to helping realize the ASCA vision by implementing school counseling programs throughout the state that are results-based, standards-based, data-driven, developmental and comprehensive.

The following table provides an overview of the key terms used in describing a transformed school counseling program.

Characteristic	Definition
Results-based	A results-based program “is designed to guarantee that all students acquire the competencies to become successful in school and to make a successful transition from school to higher education, to employment or to a combination of higher education and work.” (Johnson & Johnson, 2003, p. 181)
Standards-based	The standards address program content and the knowledge, attitudes, and skill competencies that all students will develop as a result of participating in a school counseling program. (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p. 3)
Data-driven	The National Model is based on the Comprehensive Developmental Guidance program model, with an increased focus on both accountability and the use of data to make decisions and to increase student achievement ... With the advent of NCLB (2001), school counselors have to work much harder to show that the work they are doing is helping school systems to meet the mandates established by this legislation. School counselors are now responsible for demonstrating their accountability just as teachers and administrators are. (McGannon, Carey & Dimmitt, 2005, pp. 5, 9)
Developmental	Provides developmentally appropriate instruction and services in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social. “They are developmental in that guidance activities are conducted on a regular, planned, and systematic basis to assist students to achieve competencies. Although immediate and crisis needs of students are to be met, a major focus of a developmental program is to provide all students with experiences to help them grow and develop.” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, p. 26)
Comprehensive	Guidance programs are comprehensive in that a full range of activities and services, such as assessment, information, consultation, counseling, referral, placement, follow-up, and follow-through, are provided. (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, p. 26)
School Counseling Program	An integrated system of counseling activities and services that are systematically provided to students. School counseling is a program with characteristics similar to other programs in education: “student competencies; activities and processes to assist students in achieving these competencies; professionally certified personnel; materials and resources; and program, personnel, and results evaluation.” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, p. 26)

Like the *ASCA National Model*, *The RI Framework* supports the overall mission of the school by promoting student achievement, career planning, and personal social development for every student. A successful school counseling program is achieved through effective collaboration with students, parents, faculty, administrators, community, business, and higher education partners. School counselors, using their leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, and data-driven decision-making skills, can help every student receive a quality and equitable education.

The RI Framework presents school counseling as an integral component of every school's mission and of every student's education. A school counseling program based on *The RI Framework* helps young people understand the link between academics and future plans, develop skills in career exploration, acquire and maintain positive personal/social relationships, and ultimately become responsible and productive citizens.

Comprehensive school counseling is an essential component of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's (RIDE) school improvement efforts, particularly high school restructuring and personalization. This document is intended to identify key strategies that counselors can use to help their schools and districts meet Rhode Island regulations and guidelines for student success.

The development of *The RI Framework* has been a collaborative effort. Many Rhode Island school counselors contributed to this document, offering their knowledge and expertise to help all Rhode Island counselors better understand the power and potential of comprehensive school counseling. Other vital partnerships (e.g., school administrators, school-to-career personnel, RIDE staff, Providence College counselor educators) have all contributed insights and expertise to the development of this framework.

Rhode Island proudly joins the national movement to ensure that every student will benefit from a comprehensive and developmental school counseling program. We encourage you to get involved and hope that the *RI Framework* establishes a meaningful context for you to collaborate with your professional colleagues.

In addition to this framework, toolkits to help districts implement comprehensive school counseling programs are available for free download at the Rhode Island School Counselor Association's (RISCA) website (www.rischoolcounselor.org). Substantive professional development is also offered by RISCA throughout the year.

*By using this Framework, RI School Counselors will...
"...work smarter, not harder. We will have a systemic
approach to what we are doing and can gather data to
show our impact."*

Lyn A. Hostetler, Guidance Department Head,
East Greenwich High School, East Greenwich

Organization of *The Rhode Island Framework*

The Rhode Island Framework is a continuous improvement strategy to build capacity for school counselors and all stakeholders involved in the design, delivery, implementation, and evaluation of a school counseling program. The document is organized in the following manner:

Section 1	Introduction provides the purpose of <i>The RI Framework</i> and an overview of its contents.
Section 2	School Counseling and School Improvement presents the national context for transforming school counseling and an overview of the ASCA National Model.
Section 3	Rhode Island’s Commitment to School Counseling explores the policy and regulatory support given school counselors by the RI State Government, as well as major counseling initiatives underway in the state.
Section 4	Building the Foundation identifies key areas in foundational program elements such as mission and belief statements as well as the counseling standards and competencies.
Section 5	Delivering the School Counseling Program identifies critical components of the counseling delivery system (e.g., individual student planning, school counseling curriculum, counseling services, and system support).
Section 6	Managing the School Counseling Program identifies key components of a management system for school counseling (e.g., calendars, principal-counselor partnership agreements, and analyzing time and tasks).
Section 7	Measuring Student Success and School Counselor Accountability identifies the requirements for a school counseling data management system and discusses counselor roles and accountabilities.
Section 8	Conclusion stresses the importance of school counselors becoming increasingly involved in shaping the future of K-12 school counseling in Rhode Island, and in participating in school improvement initiatives.
Resources	Resources, both electronic and hard copy, available to school counselors to assist in the writing, implementation and evaluation of district comprehensive, developmental counseling programs.

Section 2

SCHOOL COUNSELING AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School reform is a national priority. Landmark events such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), *America 2000* (1990), and *Goals 2000: The Education America Act* (1994) refocused our attention on the need to improve student academic performance in order to compete in the global workforce. Two events in particular served as turning points for school counseling and school improvement efforts: a) passage of federal legislation known as No Child Left Behind (2001) and b) publication of *The ASCA National Model* by the American School Counselor Association (2003).

No Child Left Behind

The reauthorization in 2001 of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, better known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)(2001), is a watershed event that permeates every facet of education. It requires schools to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. NCLB calls for stronger measures of accountability and expanded options for parents to seek a high-quality educational experience for their children. NCLB includes five primary goals to be realized by 2013—2014. The first three goals focus on the improvement of curriculum, learning, and qualified personnel. Goals 4 and 5 address affective development, school climate and culture, and graduation from high school for every child.

NCLB Primary Goals

Goal 1	By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
Goal 2	All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
Goal 3	By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
Goal 4	All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
Goal 5	All students will graduate from high school.

Implementing a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program is foundational to reaching each of the five NCLB goals. Counselors impact the instructional program by motivating students to achieve academic success through raising student aspirations and collaborating with teachers. School counselors, partnering with all school personnel, strive for schools that are safe, drug-free learning communities. Counselors also focus their efforts on creating a climate of respect among students, faculty, and community.

Research suggests that high-quality counseling services can have long-term effects on a child's well-being and can prevent a student from turning to violence and drug or alcohol abuse. High-quality school counseling services can improve a student's academic achievement. Studies on the effects of school counseling have shown positive effects on students' grades, reducing classroom disruptions, and enhancing teachers' abilities to manage classroom behavior effectively. High-quality school counseling services also can help address students' mental health needs. (*US Dept. of Education, 2002, p. 117*)

Research continues to support the effectiveness of the comprehensive model in increasing academic achievement, career development, parental satisfaction, school climate, and attendance (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Sink and Stroh 2003; Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997; Lapan, Gysbers & Petroski, 2001). These studies indicate that in schools with more fully implemented Comprehensive Developmental Guidance (CDG) programs, students reported earning higher grades, having better relationships with teachers, and feeling greater satisfaction with school. Students also reported that education is relevant to later life, school is safe, and high school students reported that career and college information was accessible. (McGannon, Carey, Dimmitt, 2005, p. 9) Other studies indicate that counseling programs reduce anxiety and depression among schoolchildren and is a positive factor in promoting social skills (Whiston & Sexton, 1998).

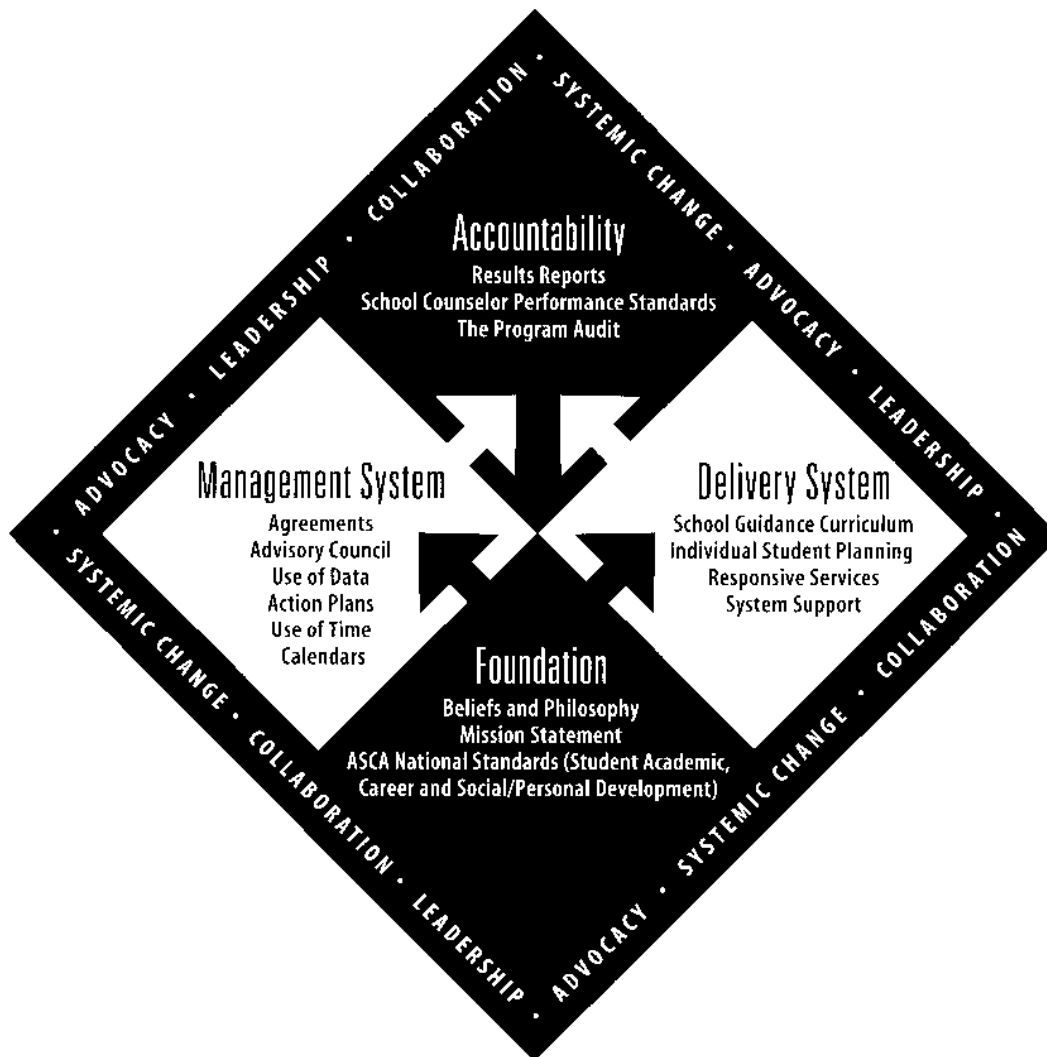
School counselors are in a unique position to review data in schools and can identify the gaps that exist in student success. School counselors, using their leadership and advocacy skills, direct their efforts toward ensuring that appropriate resources and programs are in place to offer each student equitable access to challenging curriculum and a full range of post-secondary opportunities.

ASCA National Model

Counseling is a process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. School counselors work with all students, school staff, families and members of the community as an integral part of the education program. School counseling programs promote student success through a focus on academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy and social/emotional and career development. (*American School Counselor Association (ASCA), 1997*)

In the 1960s, and particularly in the 1970s, the comprehensive guidance process emerged as the means to reorient school counseling from an ancillary set of services to a programmatic model (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Coupled with this was the developmental approach, defined as “a planned effort to provide each student with an (age appropriate) set of skills and experiences that helps enhance all learning and embraces all of the goals of education” (Myrick, 1999, p. 35). Additionally, Drs. C. D. (Curly) and Sharon Johnson (2002) strongly influenced school counseling by emphasizing to counselors the importance of results-based programs. The Johnsons encouraged school counselors to become aware of the impact of their work on student behaviors and decision-making skills. When the American School Counselor Association developed the National Model, it integrated the work of Gysbers, Myrick, and Johnson and then systematized the comprehensive, developmental process to demonstrate what an effective school counseling program could look like.

The figure below depicts the National Model as developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2003). It identifies the core areas that need to be a part of a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program:



The National Model was created to assist school districts in designing school counseling programs that support the academic success of every student. The outside frame of the model represents the skills of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and working towards systemic change as key philosophies and transformed skills (Education Trust, 1997), all critical to the new mission of school counselors.

The interior of the graphic depicts four interrelated themes representing key elements of a school counseling program, and are described below:

The **Foundation** of the counseling program addresses the belief and mission that every student will benefit from the school counseling program; it also contains the counseling standards, the basis of the counseling program.

The **Delivery System** defines the several ways in which counselors can implement a standards-based program with students, such as teaching through a counseling curriculum, individual planning with students, and utilizing intervention, prevention and responsive services.

The **Management System** is the organizational processes and tools needed to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program, and includes activities such as principal-counselor partnership plans, annual calendar, advisory council, and time and task analysis.

The **Accountability** component is the means for evaluating the effectiveness of school counselors' work in measurable terms such as impact over time, performance evaluation, and a program audit.

As students are expected to achieve higher academic standards, counselors seek ways to support all children in achieving those standards. Counselors are asked to become “catalysts for change who are proactive rather than reactive, communicators advocating for change for themselves, caregivers for self and others, and collaborators in providing the best and most appropriate services for children and adolescents” (Paisley & Borders, 1995, p.153).

The National Model identifies the components of a comprehensive K-12 counseling program, defines the school counselor's role, and infuses the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy, and systemic change. *The RI Framework* is fully aligned with the ASCA National Model, guiding school counselors toward the vision of a unified, focused, professional school counseling program that requires and embraces the broader participation of school, home and community.

School counseling programs, in order to benefit all students, require a shift from a student-by-student system of service delivery to comprehensive programming with a focus on student development. No longer is the question “What do counselors do?” but more importantly, “How are students different as a result of the work of school counselors?”

The ASCA National Model is standards-based and provides standards for student success in three developmental domains:

Academic Development — the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge contributing to effective learning in school and throughout the lifespan.

Career Development — the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge enabling students to make informed career decisions throughout their lives.

Personal/Social Development — the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge to help students understand and respect self and others, acquire effective interpersonal skills, understand and practice safety and survival skills, and develop into contributing members of society.

Just as Rhode Island’s educational strategy is standards-based and results-oriented, so too is the comprehensive school counseling program. The counseling standards and competencies will be explored further in Section 4, the Foundation.

Collaboration with National Organizations is Key

Collaboration with national organizations is a key ingredient in shaping the future of school counseling in Rhode Island. Four organizations, in particular, have been significant sources of information and advice. Their presence on the national level promotes school counseling, like school improvement, as a national priority. These organizations and their initiatives have deeply influenced the development of *The RI Framework*:

American School Counselor Association

By publishing *The ASCA National Model*, ASCA has identified academic, career and personal/social standards that all students should know.

The Education Trust

Its Transforming School Counseling Initiative has trained RI school counselors in a wider range of skills to support student achievement and to help systemically change schools.

The College Board

The Board’s National Office for School Counselor Advocacy Initiative regards school counselors as critical school-based professional staff who have tremendous impact on children’s aspirations, course choices, and future career options.

Center for School Counseling Outcome Research

Located at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), CSCOR’s mission is to improve the practice of school counseling by developing a strong research base. A RISCA – CSCOR partnership is helping RI counselors develop data-driven school counseling programs.

A Wider Range of Counseling Skills: Transformed School Counseling

A new vision and a wider range of skills are necessary for today's school counselors that will enable them to develop and implement a comprehensive and standards-based counseling program which is proactive and designed to reach every student. Many RI counselors were trained by the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative. It utilized The ASCA National Model to provide a vision for the transformed school counselor: Counselors are *leaders* who have ready, personal connections with students, teachers, and parents. They need to *advocate* for students who may not have access to certain opportunities; they must *collaborate and team* with others to plan for students' success. They also need to *collect data* to show student results and be more accountable for what they do.

Most of all, counselors must use their *leadership and advocacy skills* to change the system so that all students "have access to a rigorous curriculum which maximizes post-secondary options" (ASCA, 2003, p. 15). In doing so, Rhode Island school counselors will clearly connect their work to the mission of schools and contribute to student achievement and success.

In addition to accepting their role in implementing this vision, it is important for school counselors to embrace and develop this wider range of skills.

Counselors will always use their counseling, consultation, and coordination skills. However, as counselor training and professional development increasingly incorporate leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and use of data, a more effective role for school counselors will emerge. By focusing on student achievement, school counselors will become vital educators in the school setting (House & Martin, 1998).

Among the skills that characterize a transformed school counselor, the following are considered essential:

Skill	Description
Counseling	Traditionally, school counselors spend much of their time on individual counseling and in crisis intervention, prevention, or responsive services. By incorporating group counseling, counselors can impact more students than in a one-on-one model. The combination of individual and group counseling will increase the total number of student-counselor interactions and help ensure that no child is left behind.
Consultation	School counselors acting as consultants can help parents, teachers, and students work together effectively. They can seek solutions to improve the educational experience for all students.

Skill	Description
Coordination of Services	School counselors coordinate resources and services for students and families through community outreach school counselors collaborate with agencies to provide a variety of services and opportunities to students and their families.
Leadership	School counselors are invested in making schools a welcoming learning community where all students can achieve academic, career, and personal/social success. They initiate collaboration around the school counseling program and orchestrate its implementation as an infrastructure for personalization.
Advocacy	School counselors are advocates for the students they serve. All students need advocates, especially those who do not have the skills to self-advocate and who are at risk of dropping out of school. School counselors work diligently for systemic change to eliminate practices that inhibit or stratify student opportunity.
Teaming and Collaboration	School counselors use their collaboration and group process skills to work with all school community members. Counselors collaborate most closely with teachers to deliver the counseling curriculum. In addition, they use meetings and professional development opportunities to promote the counseling programs to members of the educational community and develop collaborative projects.
Use of Data	School counseling programs are data-driven. Data provides an accountable way to determine the impact of implementing a school counseling program on student success and the health of the school community. In this climate of accountability, connecting the work of school counselors to school improvement data is the most powerful indicator of the success of the school counseling program.
Use of Technology	School counselors need to be technologically literate and proficient in using the internet, communicating electronically, and processing data electronically to better assess student progress and program quality.

A transformed school counselor can...

"...help students find their passion and help dreams come true."

Kevin Quinn, School Counselor,
South Kingstown High School, South Kingstown

Collaborating for Student Success

School counselors are most successful when they engage others in the process of supporting every student in achieving his/her academic, career, and personal/social development. Achieving a school's or district's improvement goals depends on the degree of collaboration and team effort among members of the school community, including school counselors. Each constituency has explicit roles and responsibilities in the program to ensure that every student benefits. The following demonstrates how all can interact to assist students in achieving their goals:

School Community	Responsibilities in a Comprehensive Program
School Counselors	Counselors provide proactive leadership to ensure that every student can succeed. They manage the comprehensive program and coordinate strategies and activities with others (teachers, support staff, parents, community agencies, business representatives) to meet the stated goals, standards, and competencies.
Teachers	Teachers are partners with school counselors. They develop and infuse guidance activities that are integral to good learning rather than extraneous, disconnected, or added material into the instructional program. Teachers can team or co-teach with counselors in the classroom, or serve as advisors or mentors to students.
Students	Students participate actively and assume responsibility for meeting the counseling standards and competencies. They can identify the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that they have gained in structured counseling sessions. Students and their families, working individually with counselors, develop learning plans for school and plan for life after high school.
Student Support Services	Student support service personnel collaborate and team with the school counselors to ensure that school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, student assistance counselors, and other support personnel are actively involved in supporting each student's academic, career, and personal/social development. They assist students with mental, physical and/or social issues, and support students and families with in-school services and/or referrals to outside agencies.
Administrators	Administrators provide leadership in developing a comprehensive school counseling program and in ongoing program improvement. They provide continuous support, emphasize the importance of the program to others and promote cooperation among counselors, faculty, staff and the entire school community. Additionally, they provide facilities, resources, and allow time for facilitating the program process.

School Community	Responsibilities in a Comprehensive Program
Parents	Parents work cooperatively with school personnel in delivering the program by first supporting their own children in academic, career, and personal/social development. They serve on committees and provide linkages to the community by communicating program goals to others.
Business/Community Representatives	Representatives from business, industry, and others in the community serve on committees, talk with classes, act as mentors, provide financial support, and generally serve as partners in the education of youth. Connections established are vital in developing work-based learning opportunities.

School counseling is a national priority through the vision that has been established by the ASCA National Model. It is now time to realize this vision in practice. Rhode Island has a strong commitment to implementing comprehensive school counseling and using comprehensive programs as an infrastructure for personalization. School counselors have a tremendous opportunity to advocate for all students and to demonstrate the impact of their counseling programs on student success.

Section 3 describes the Rhode Island commitment to school counseling and the professional development initiative that is designed to establish/enhance the infrastructure for comprehensive school counseling in Rhode Island public schools.

RI School Counselors collaborate with...

...staff, students and administrators to provide for all students an environment that promotes personal and educational development resulting in a caring, well-informed community member.

Catherine Girard, School Counselor,
Narragansett Pier Middle School, Narragansett

...students, parents, teachers and administrators to create a successful learning environment.

Sandra Brault, School Counselor,
Coventry High School, Coventry

Section 3

RHODE ISLAND'S COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL COUNSELING AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Rhode Island's commitment to school counseling is obvious from the support of the RI General Assembly, RI Board of Regents, RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Regional Educational Collaboratives, and the RI Department of Labor/School-to-Career Office. These organizations promote comprehensive, developmental K-12 school counseling programs that create opportunities for all students to reach high levels of academic achievement and attain skills and competencies to meet their career and personal/social needs.

The Importance of Regulations and Policy

Rhode Island education policy is based on an ALL KIDS Can Succeed premise. The State's education system has established high expectations for every student and for every school to achieve at high levels. A comprehensive, developmental school counseling program helps achieve the expectations for student performance and provides students with the academic, personal/social, and career knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Rhode Island has language about comprehensive school counseling fully integrated into its plans for educational excellence for all students, and in giving school counselors a visible role in school improvement through personalization. The following timeline focuses on critical events in Rhode Island that lead to the current statewide effort to implement a comprehensive school counseling program based on the ASCA National Model.

Shaping the Future Step-by-Step

Year	Event	Agency	Description
1996	Comprehensive Education Strategy (CES)	Rhode Island Dept. of Education	RIDE publishes the CES as a policy framework for the state's education reform agenda with a focus on a) improving teaching and learning and b) creating responsive and supportive systems.
1997	Article 31	Rhode Island General Assembly	To implement the CES, the General Assembly passed "The Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative," popularly known as Article 31. This article targets investments to improve both student and school performance.

Year	Event	Agency	Description
2001	No Child Left Behind	U.S. Congress	The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is re-authorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Rhode Island merges NCLB with CES to create a single accountability system that requires statewide student assessments, curriculum and instruction aligned with state standards, and high-quality teacher preparation.
2003	Article 18	Rhode Island General Assembly	“The General Assembly recognizes the contribution of school counselors to positive educational change, to the implementation of the ‘No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,’ and to the success of students in three (3) developmental domains: academic, career, and personal/social. It endorses the National Standards for School Counseling Programs as developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Further, the General Assembly encourages every district to implement a K-12 standards-based comprehensive, developmental school counseling program.”
2003	High School Regulations	Rhode Island Board of Regents	The Board of Regents publishes the <i>Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for Students Entering High School</i> . These “require districts and schools to plan for and take action around literacy, graduation by proficiency, personalized learning environments (including advisory structure and individual learning plans), professional development and common planning time.”
2004	GLE’s and GSE’s	New England Compact	Rhode Island revises its accountability system by joining the New England Compact with New Hampshire and Vermont to develop grade level expectations (GLEs) and assessments for grades 3-8, and grade span expectations (GSEs) for high school in reading, written and oral communication, mathematic and science.
2004	Initial Guidance on High School Regulations	Rhode Island Dept. of Education	RIDE releases its initial guidance on the Regents’ High School Regulations. These documents guides schools in the development of required mandates and addresses importance of school counseling programs (see below).

Year	Event	Agency	Description
2005	Rhode Island High School Diploma System Technical Assistance Bulletin	Rhode Island Dept. of Education	RIDE issues a technical assistance bulletin to help districts and schools design and implement their components of the Rhode Island High School Diploma System as required by the Regents' Regulations. Its purpose is to "help make important connections among the state's secondary-school reform strategies and key policy expectations to ensure consistency and comparability of graduation requirements across all high schools." (RIDE, 2005). Emphasis is on graduation by proficiency and how students will demonstrate – through multiple assessments – that they have obtained the requisite content knowledge and applied learning skills in six core areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, and Technology. This system has as its primary objective that all Rhode Island high school graduates will be "college ready" regardless of their post-secondary plans.
2005	RISCA Toolkits Approach	Rhode Island School Counselor Association	The Rhode Island School Counselor Association initiated a statewide Professional Development Initiative (RISCA PDI) to implement comprehensive school counseling in Rhode Island public schools. This initiative involves trained coaches in districts, a partnership with the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research at UMASS to collect data, and Toolkits to assist counselors in developing and sustaining comprehensive school counseling programs.

Rhode Island Initiatives and School Counseling

The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education passed regulations in January 2003 to support student literacy and to ensure student academic achievement right through high school. Officially known as the *Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for Students Entering High School (Regents' Regulations)*, it presents a bold vision of restructuring schools so that students, rather than the system, are the primary consideration.

The *Regents' High School Regulations* and RIDE's initial *Initial Guidance on the Regulations* publications are instrumental in establishing the power and potential of comprehensive school counseling to student success and school improvement. The regulations contain three sections which direct schools to develop or expand their programs in literacy, redesign graduation requirements so that students need to demonstrate proficiency before they receive a diploma, and restructure the high school so that they become more personalized. The following chart summarizes the Regulations and the potential contribution of the school counseling program in each section.

Board of Regents Regulations Section Highlights	Opportunities for School Counselors
<p>Section 4.0: Literacy</p> <p>This section requires that the literacy needs of all elementary, middle, and high school students be met so that all students graduating from high school attain strong foundation in literacy. These regulations call for a continuation of the direct and intense focus on literacy that is currently occurring in the early elementary grades. They focus on three main elements of literacy: assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring.</p> <p>The regulations require that students be screened and diagnostically assessed to determine their literacy needs, that appropriate instructional interventions be provided, and that students with identified literacy needs continue to have their progress monitored and services provided until they attain grade-level proficiency.</p> <p>Within the <i>Initial Guidance for the Literacy Component of the Regulations</i> (Section 4.0), the “Scaffolded Framework for Secondary Literacy” depicts how schools and districts can create literacy programs and services (including school-wide, targeted, and intensive instruction) consistent with the assessment, intervention, and progress-monitoring components of the Regents’ Regulations and the Personal Literacy Plans (PLP) Guidelines.</p> <p><i>In order to accomplish these goals, high schools will need to focus on literacy, provide ongoing professional development, shift to a comprehensive school counseling model, establish clear proficiency-based graduation expectations, revisit the departmental structure, pilot new programs, establish a continuum of supports, and assess their effectiveness. The successful completion of such goals, and improving personalization at the high school level, will require each school to incorporate specific strategies into a school improvement plan. These strategies should include, but not limited to, academies, smaller communities, literacy, advising programs, learning plans, and teaming. (Section 4 Guidance, p. 4)</i></p>	<p>Counselors can support teachers in literacy by collaborating to develop and deliver the school counseling curricula that integrates literacy skills such as reading, writing, and communication with affective education in character and citizenship education. Collaboration ensures that school counselors can help to impact the instructional program by introducing books, journal writing, or public speaking, as a complement to the content instruction. Activities can be delivered developmentally and comprehensively across all grade levels.</p> <p>Literacy is a concern of all teachers; counselors can support and advocate at all levels for academic programs that offer students access to quality reading, writing, and verbal communication instruction.</p> <p>Highlighting the critical need to be literacy proficient in the workplace is another way counselors can encourage students to work on literacy skills while at the same time facilitate career awareness programs.</p>

Board of Regents Regulations Section Highlights	Opportunities for School Counselors
<p>Section 5.0: Graduation by Proficiency</p> <p>Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, earning the minimum number of "Carnegie" units will no longer be sufficient to graduate from high school. Section 5 calls for a mutually reinforcing system of proficiency-based graduation requirements, local assessments that involve multiple measures of performance for all students, and state assessments.</p> <p>Correspondingly, with the advent of proficiency-based graduation requirements (PBGRs), each student beginning with the class of 2008, must demonstrate his/her proficiency with both content knowledge and habits of thinking / applying that transcend disciplines as delineated in <i>RI's Grade Span Expectations</i>, <i>RI's Common Core of Learning</i>, and national content and performance standards.</p> <p>In addition to classroom tasks and assessments, students will need to demonstrate this proficiency through at least two of the following: proficiency-based departmental end-of-course exams, a Certificate of Initial Mastery, portfolios, extended "capstone" or "senior" projects, public exhibitions, or the use of technological tools. This proficiency must be demonstrated in a common academic core curriculum that includes the arts and technology.</p> <p>Additionally, all student learning experiences will incorporate applied learning standards through classroom, work-related, and/or community service experiences. This increased focus on applied learning offers a unique opportunity for schools to add contextual teaching and learning experiences in all classes.</p> <p><i>The central focus for everything that occurs in the school must be helping each student to attain the school's proficiency-based graduation requirements....School support personnel, comprehensive counseling – academic, career, and personal –must support students' learning and development. (Section 5 Guidance, p. 2)</i></p>	<p>School counselors can collaborate with teachers to design developmental activities and deliver them through Individual Student Planning, Prevention and Intervention (responsive) Services, School Counseling Curriculum and System Support (see Section 5). As students achieve knowledge and skills through academic, career, and personal/ social development, they will both enter and exit high school with a better sense of their interests, abilities, motivation, and achievement for successfully transitioning to the next phase of their post-secondary endeavors.</p> <p>Counselors can help to advise and guide students in their research and incorporate applied-learning skills that may become a "senior" or "capstone" project. Counselors may also assist students and parents in tracking the progress of the graduation portfolio.</p> <p>School counselors can support the development of new courses and encourage all students to enroll in rigorous courses in order to better prepare them to participate in a variety of the proficiency demonstrations including internships, business cooperatives, field experiences, and community service opportunities. Counselors can promote and support student learning through concurrent and dual enrollment programs with local colleges and universities.</p> <p>School counselors can further assist students by initiating exploration activities /programs that connect academic coursework to career options.</p>

Board of Regents Regulations Section Highlights	Opportunities for School Counselors
<p>Section 6.0: High School Restructuring</p> <p>This section of the Regents’ regulations requires districts and schools to plan for and take action around personalized learning environments, professional development and common planning time, and advisory structures.</p> <p>RIDE’s Guidance to Section 6 describes how a comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program should provide the infrastructure for personalization and ensure a collective responsibility for more students achieving the Regents’ standards for academic proficiency.</p> <p>Individual learning plans are a required strategy for responding to, recording and planning for each student’s academic, career and personal/social/emotional development beginning no later than grade 5.</p> <p>Other approaches suggested for personalization are: student advisories, schools within schools, academies, flexible scheduling, senior year dual enrollment, and interdisciplinary grade level teams organized around a common group of students. All strategies must be implemented no later than January 2005 and there must be a mechanism for evaluation and continuous improvement.</p> <p>Professional Development: All certified staff must receive an annual minimum of fifteen hours of professional development in the priority areas of literacy, graduation by proficiency and/or personalization.</p> <p>Common Planning Time (CPT): By September 2005, high school teachers must have weekly common planning time, organized around students, especially those with the highest need.</p> <p>Advisory: All schools must have a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult who is knowledgeable about that student and tracks his and her progress.</p>	<p>Elementary schools are intuitively personalized school environments. School counselors can capitalize on this positive climate to ensure that all students are known well by an adult.</p> <p>Middle schools can present a stressful transition for some students. Counselors can assist in personalizing the middle-level experience by encouraging teaming or supporting smaller schools-within-schools.</p> <p>Smaller, more intimate environments ensure that no child goes unnoticed and afford students the ability to make connections with adults.</p> <p>High schools are often large and impersonal environments. Every teenager needs a significant adult in her/his life to support the challenges presented by school rigor, policies, and socialization pressures.</p> <p>Because of their knowledge of students’ learning styles, abilities, talents and career interests, school counselors may collaborate with teachers in developing learning plans.</p> <p>Professional school counselors have skills that could be shared with the faculty during professional development.</p> <p>Counselors may be able to attend CPT meetings to learn more about their students’ struggles and share strategies that may help in this collaborative model.</p> <p>School counselors can assume a leadership role in the organization and curricular development of an advisory model. Since they are trained in many of the affective and life-skills instructional components, counselors can collaborate and train teachers to serve as advisors. Counselors can also deliver components of the counseling program that articulate the nine standards in the academic, career and personal/social domains.</p>

Summary: RI Regulations, the Regents and School Counseling

Rhode Island continues to develop regulations and policies supporting the work of school counselors. However, *Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for Students Entering High School (Regents' Regulations)* and the RIDE guidance to the regulations makes comprehensive school counseling programs a pivotal component of high school restructuring and reform. In Section 6, a key restructuring element is for schools to create personalized learning environment so students are known well by an adult. The Guidance to this regulation recommends six action steps for creating personalized learning environments. Step 4 states:

Implement a comprehensive school-counseling program as the infrastructure for personalization that includes an Individual Learning Plan for each student. (RIDE, Section 6 Guidance, p. 4)

The research is demonstrating that students who feel that they have high levels of support from an adult in the school have positive views of the school, of teacher support, of their overall learning experience, and of their own personal adjustment (DiMartino, Clarke & Wolk, 2003; Lisi, 2003). Personalized schools refocus the teaching and learning on the student.

The working definition of personalization is:

Personalization is a learning process in which schools help students assess their own talents and aspirations, plan a pathway toward their own purposes, work cooperatively with others on challenging tasks, maintain a record of their explorations, and demonstrate learning against clear standards in a wide variety of media, all with the close support of adult mentors and guides. (Clarke, 2003, p. 3)

RIDE's Initial Guidance to Section 6 describes how a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program should provide the infrastructure for personalization and can ensure a collective responsibility for more students achieving the Regents' standards for academic proficiency.

Effective personalized learning environments (used synonymously with personalization) in schools offer all students' individualized supports toward development in the academic, career and personal/social domains and in civic responsibility. As an outcome, students should demonstrate proficiency in the National Standards for School Counseling Programs that are categorized by these domains and are the foundation of comprehensive K-12 school counseling. (RIDE, Section 6 Guidance, p. 5)

RIDE's publication, *The Rhode Island High School Diploma System* (2005), reinforces the role of school counselors and comprehensive school counseling programs as an integral part of high school reform.

Nationally, Comprehensive School Counseling has been working to change the job and nature of the school guidance counselor to one who oversees and aids the school's overall climate and its social-emotional issues—along with the more traditional work of supporting student academic and college success. Moving from the model of one-on-one counseling, the Comprehensive Guidance Counselor helps schools re-organize so students are more connected to the adults, to the resources they need, and to other students in positive ways. Guidance is a critical player in helping school professionals understand and carry out their new roles – as advisors, for example—to create a social and academic fabric without cracks through which students can fall. Comprehensive guidance makes sure that systems are in place such that all students are well prepared to leave school ready for a career, whether they immediately go on to college, further training, the military or directly into the workforce. (RIDE, 2005)

RIDE's Guidance on Section 6 identifies three strategies for using comprehensive school counseling as the infrastructure for personalization: a) individual learning plans, b) student advisories and c) smaller learning communities.

Individual Learning Plans – At the core of the *Regents' Regulations* is the requirement for schools to address each student as an individual with unique needs....Consequently, *“school improvement plans and district strategic plans must address strategies for responding to, recording, and planning for each individual student's social/emotional, academic, and career needs beginning no later than grade five and consistent with the intent of the General Assembly in Article 18.”* (RIDE, Section 6 Guidance, p. 19)

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) help customize and direct student development in three domains: academic, career and personal/social. ILPs chart a student's courses, activities, and achievements over his/her middle or high-school experience. They include information, if applicable, about the student's Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP). ILPs are not a substitute for PLPs or IEPs but are a broader planning tool.

As a working document, the ILP is at the center of a flexible educational program that helps students to meet the national standards by the time they graduate. ILPs are discussed further in Section 5, Delivering the School Counseling Program.

Student Advisories – Student advisories, a method of personalizing schools, foster meaningful, sustainable student-adult and student-student relationships that support student achievement, improve student behavior, build community, and enrich the lives of all involved. Advisors meet with student on a regular basis for the purpose of academic, career, and personal-social advising. Advisory activities:

- help students with self-assessment in the academic, personal/social, and career domains;
- help students set goals and monitor their progress toward those goals in each of the domains;
- give students a chance to develop a meaningful relationship with a caring adult.

There are many models of student advisory programs, but all share the vision of one caring adult and a small group of students engaging in regularly scheduled interactions for the purpose of developing meaningful relationships. In an advisory group, a student has the opportunity to be heard, known, and understood. Successful advisories are forged out of counselor-teacher interactions.

Smaller Learning Communities – It is important that embedded within the school is a culture and a system of school practices that focuses on each student as a unique individual, monitors each one's progress, and provides the needed learning opportunities. ASCA supports the notion of schools implementing practice to create smaller and personalized learning communities.

Professional school counselors recognize the importance of smaller learning communities within large high schools. In smaller learning communities, professional school counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program that is essential for student success. The principles of rigor, relevance and relationship are integrated within the comprehensive school counseling program to create a more personalized high school experience and to improve achievement, attendance and behavior for all students. (ASCA, 2005)

Like any other educational initiative, the move to creating more personalized learning environments in schools must have a formal evaluation component. School-improvement plans must establish action steps around personalization that can be monitored.

The RISCA Toolkits – Rhode Island’s Strategy for Implementing Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

The Rhode Island School Counselor Association (RISCA) is implementing a statewide Professional Development Initiative (PDI) to help establish the infrastructure for comprehensive school counseling programs based on the ASCA National Model. This strategy, called “The RISCA Toolkits”, provides districts with a) structured processes, b) clearly defined protocols, and c) easy-to-use tools that enable them to assess the quality of their counseling program and develop plans for improvement.

Toolkits result in the implementation of an essential process required for successful comprehensive counseling programs at the district/school level, and the production of specific products that can be used to manage the counseling program. Each toolkit delivers specific results in terms of critical processes that need to be implemented (e.g., defining the essential counseling program, implementing a counseling data management system) and providing products that need to be produced (e.g., framework for school counseling, annual school counseling report card). The end result of using the toolkits is the successful implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program and creation of the organizational support infrastructure that ensures program quality and the quality of interaction with students.

The RISCA Toolkits are dynamic tools and are continuously updated to reflect the emerging needs of K-12 school counseling in Rhode Island. Seven toolkits are summarized below that help districts align with the ASCA National Model and meet Rhode Island regulations related to school counseling.

- **Toolkit #1—Strategic & Annual Planning.** This toolkit helps generate and provide input about school counseling into the district’s planning cycle through a collaborative effort between counselors and principals. The toolkit produces three important documents: a program audit, a strategic plan, and an implementation plan for the upcoming school year. The toolkit is used each year to update the strategic and annual plans.
- **Toolkit #2—Essential Counseling Program.** The essential counseling program is the heart of comprehensive school counseling. This toolkit helps schools define and document their essential counseling program (e.g., curriculum, responsive services). The toolkit produces a framework for school counseling that identifies all essential counseling activities in the program. Each district’s/school’s essential counseling curriculum is defined, organized in a scope and sequence, and aligned with the ASCA National Standards. The framework also includes a short documented summary of each essential counseling activity or responsive service.

- **Toolkit #3—School Counseling Data Management System.** School counseling programs must be data-driven. This is accomplished by focusing on meaningful data points and using process, results and perception data to assess student progress toward counseling standards, and assess the impact of implementing comprehensive developmental school counseling programs on student success and the health of the school community. This toolkit produces an important set of documents (e.g., progress, evaluation and accountability reports on school counseling, a data management system reports, and annual school counseling report card).
- **Toolkit #4—Professional Development Program.** Meaningful and substantive professional development is critical to the successful implementation of comprehensive counseling programs. This toolkit helps districts assess the need for professional development related to school counseling, develop a systemic approach to professional development, develop and document professional development modules, and produce an annual professional development calendar.
- **Toolkit #5—Program Implementation Management.** Schools and districts must provide organizational support for the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. Critical aspects of the organization must be defined and documented. This toolkit generates a school counseling operational handbook that delineates how the counseling program and department is organized, roles and accountabilities, policies and protocols, and structured processes and tools for implementing comprehensive programs.
- **Toolkit #6—Planning for Results.** Just as counselor administrators plan for the future of school counseling, individual counselors are provided with a toolkit to help them plan what they are going to do in each school year. Along with identifying personal action steps, counselors identify barriers to success and steps to overcome them. Individual plans are developed annually.
- **Toolkit #7—Individual Learning Plan.** Students are taught how to plan for their academic, career and personal/social future and are provided with multiple opportunities to practice their planning skills throughout their educational experience.

The RISCA Professional Development Initiative involves counselors helping counselors to better serve students, improve their practice and promote the positive impact of school counseling on student success.

All toolkits are resources for transforming school counseling in Rhode Island are available for free download at the RISCA website (www.rischoolcounselor.org). The site is updated often with new information and updated tools. School counselors are encouraged to visit the site often as a means of professional growth. In addition, professional development opportunities for school counselors are offered throughout the year and will be posted on the website.

Section 4

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

The foundation of an effective comprehensive school counseling program is the development of mission and vision statements and a set of beliefs that students will benefit from such a program. Also part of the foundation are the National Standards and student competencies that guide and support student development in academic, career and personal/social domains. The foundation provides the basis for every student to benefit from a comprehensive school counseling program and contributes to the goals of school improvement.

Mission Statement

The mission statement describes the purpose for the school counseling program and is aligned with the school district's – and the school's – mission. It emphasizes that the school counseling program supports the learning community and impacts the instructional program by providing the affective component to guide, promote, and enhance student achievement.

As such, the mission statement should reflect the school's mission Learner Expectations, and Grade Span/Grade Level Expectations (GSEs, GLEs) and other goals that may be set by the School Improvement Team. School counseling program mission statements reflect a commitment to providing ALL students with the skills needed to become life-long learners and productive members of society.

Vision Statement

A vision brings the dream into reality. It is an initial component of designing a school counseling program and is critical since it portrays what the counseling program is to be - *and do* - for all students. The vision statement should be constructed in terms of student outcomes attained by the fulfillment of the mission.

The mission and vision statements should be revisited every five years to assure that the school counseling program and the school's/ district's improvement goals are in alignment.

Beliefs

Beliefs inform behaviors. The beliefs held by school counselors and other members of the school counseling program team about students, families, colleagues, and community strongly influence their work with students. When designing the school counseling program, everyone involved needs to have open and candid discussion regarding his/her beliefs about students and learning. Belief statements are at the core of the Foundation of an effective school program and are public statements as to how counselors can best support student development and achievement. Each school counseling program must develop its own set of core beliefs.

Standards in the ASCA Model

Education in RI's public schools, with its new proficiency-based high school diploma system, is structured around standards that represent content knowledge and applied learning skills. These standards are defined clearly in grade level /span expectations (GLEs/GSEs) for reading, oral and written communication, and mathematics (and forthcoming science). Other content areas have national and state standards. Standards guide curriculum, instruction and assessment. Standards for a comprehensive school counseling program do the same.

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 1997) established goals, competencies, expectations, experiences and support systems for all students. The standards focus on what all students, from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, should know, understand, and be able to do to enhance their individual development. They clarify the relationship of school counseling to the educational system, and address the contributions of school counseling to student success.

The National Standards provide a framework for developing the content and writing of a school counseling program and are the foundation for the *ASCA National Model* (2003). The nine National Standards, three in each area of academic, career and personal/social development, are considered to be the essential foundation for the content for school counseling programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

The Standards motivate school counselors, school administrators, faculty, parents or guardians, businesses, and the community to engage in conversations about expectations for students' academic success and the role of counseling programs in enhancing student learning. They also uphold the guidance issued by RIDE that a comprehensive school-counseling program should serve as the infrastructure for school personalization that includes an Individual Learning Plan for each student (RIDE, 2004).

Standards and Competencies: The Basis of the Counseling Program

Student competencies define the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should obtain and demonstrate in academic, career, and personal/social success as a result of participating in a standards-based school counseling program. Since the purpose of the counseling program is to help students succeed in school and in life, it is important for school counselors to identify student competencies that support the goals of school improvement. Some school districts select specific student competencies from the ASCA national standards and competencies and align these with the district's mission for education and with the academic learning standards. Competencies can also be developed from needs assessments, advisory committee discussions, school improvement team goals, teacher observations, and relevant school data, all of which are sources of information to decide what students need to know and be able to do.

The competencies are organized developmentally by school level and serve as a scope and sequence of strategies and activities that support student academic, career, and personal-social development. When students acquire attitudes, skills, and knowledge as a result of the school counseling program, students become successful in school and in the transitions from school to postsecondary education and/or to employment (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997)

The competencies emphasize early intervention, prevention, and responsive services. The National Standards and the competencies selected by the school or district guide the development of the program content for student growth and achievement in the academic, career, and personal/social domains are an integral part of individual planning, guidance curriculum, responsive services, and system support (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

The school counseling program centers on the positive attributes of children and assists in developing their strengths. The identified competencies are organized developmentally and sequentially by school level and/or grade level and serve as a sequence of strategies and activities that help students to be successful in their daily lives. As with the other components of the school counseling program, student progress towards achieving the identified competencies is measured and evaluated annually.

The chart on the following page displays both the standards and competencies upon which comprehensive school counseling program should be built:

Domain	ASCA National Standards & Competencies for School Counseling Programs	
Academic	A	Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan. Competencies: Students will 1) improve academic self-concept, 2) acquire skills for improving learning and 3) achieve school success.
	B	Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college. Competencies: Students will 1) improve learning and 2) plan to achieve goals
	C	Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community. Competency: Students will 1) relate school to life experience.
Career	A	Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions. Competencies: Students will 1) develop career awareness and 2) develop employment readiness.
	B	Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction. Competencies: Students will 1) acquire career information and 2) identify career goals.
	C	Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work. Competencies: Students will 1) acquire knowledge to achieve career goals and 2) apply skills to achieve career goals.
Personal/ Social	A	Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others. Competencies: Students will 1) acquire self-knowledge and 2) acquire interpersonal skills.
	B	Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals. Competency: Students will 1) acquire skills in self-knowledge application.
	C	Students will understand safety and survival skills. Competency: Students will 1) acquire personal safety skills.

Tools for completing components of the Foundation section are located on the RISCA Website (www.rischoolcounselor.org)

Section 5

DELIVERING THE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The *Delivery System* delineates the activities, services, and methods for delivering a comprehensive school counseling program. The four areas in this section emphasize a collaborative and teaming approach that engages all school personnel in a school-wide effort that supports effective education and student growth in academic, career, and personal/social development.

School Counseling Curriculum

The school counseling curriculum is the written instructional program presented developmentally and comprehensively through classroom and group activities for every student in grades K-12. A comprehensive and developmental curriculum addresses and includes experiences in the academic, career and personal/social domains, reflects the mission and philosophy of each district, and is aligned with the ASCA standards. The counselor's responsibilities include leading collaborative activities in designing, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school counseling curriculum.

The counseling curriculum can be delivered to groups through a series of lessons. Lessons are derived from the standards, are competency based and supported with specific objectives and assessments that may include rubrics. The lessons focus attention on particular developmental issues or areas of concern in the school building or district. Samples of student work that have achieved the specific competency generated from the lessons should be kept in the student's school counseling portfolio. The results (effectiveness) of the total curriculum are seen in terms of each student's achievement of specific competencies that will ultimately support his/her attainment of the ASCA standards.

The school counseling curriculum can be delivered to students and the school community through a variety of means, including:

Classroom Instruction - School counselors present activities and coordinate with teachers to deliver the school counseling curriculum in the classroom or other appropriate setting.

Group Activities - School counselors plan a structured activity in response to school or student interests and needs. The activity may take place outside of the classroom.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development - Teams of school counselors and teachers collaborate to develop planned presentations that infuse academic, career, and personal social development across content areas.

Parent Workshops and Instruction - Parents attend workshops, and information sessions on topics delivered by school counselors and their collaborators that are timely, topical and instructional, and support the goals of the school counseling curriculum.

Counselors need not deliver the school counseling curriculum alone. Collaboration ensures that faculty and staff, and community partners, participate in the academic, career and affective development of students. School counselors can join with other professionals to determine *who* will teach which components of the curriculum, *where* the lessons will occur, *how* the opportunities for students to achieve the competency(ies) will be delivered (process/activity), and *what resources* are needed to accomplish the goals of the unit or lesson(s). By co-teaching and leading workshops and activities, counselors provide additional opportunities for students to acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that will help them contribute to the school community, climate, and culture.

Individual Student Planning

Individual student planning is comprised of activities in which school counselors meet with all students individually, with family members, in small groups or in classrooms to assist students in establishing short and long term goals; developing personal-social, and career plans; and exploring post-secondary options.

RIDE's *Initial Guidance to the Regents' Regulations* states that ALL students will have individual learning plans (ILPs) developed in collaboration with teachers, and put into place by the end of Grade 5. The expectation is that at the Grade 5 to Grade 6 juncture, schools would develop a data-rich profile of each student. The information in this profile would be the basis for an individual learning plan that could ease the transition between grades or schools and ensure proper placement. The ILP encompasses strategies for responding to and recording each student's academic, career and personal/social/emotional development and follow the student through high school. The Guidance states:

ILPs are a mapped academic plan and profile that reflect each student's unique set of interests, needs, learning goals and graduation requirements. A team, including the student, his/her family, the school counselor, advisor/ teacher, and/or mentor, help write an ILP, which includes authentic and challenging learning experiences that help each student succeed. As a team, they are mutually responsible for

helping the student with his/her personal curriculum and they regularly review, evaluate, and update the ILP as the student progresses. The process allows students to become active, responsible participants in their educational development and planning. (RIDE, 2004)

Every student must also take ownership and assume responsibility for his/her academic achievement, affective learning, and development. Individual planning provides opportunities for each to plan, monitor, and evaluate personal progress. Individual student planning also helps document achievement of specific competencies that will ultimately support every student's attainment of the ASCA National Standards. Likewise, parents/guardians have a responsibility to review their child's individual learning plan and be involved in his/her academic life and post-secondary planning.

Monitoring the individual progress of each student involves a number of continuous, interrelated activities. With periodic review and adjustment, the individual plan can guide student development by matching needs and interests with learning opportunities. School counselors and students (with family involvement) regularly monitor individual progress by:

- Analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating student achievement and their perception data.
- Identifying academic strengths and weaknesses and working to establish goals for success.
- Reviewing and reevaluating courses, goals, and future plans beginning in elementary school and continuing through the middle and high school years.

Counselors may assess components of students' portfolios as they represent students' achievement of the standards in the area of academic, career and personal-social learning. In addition, counselors need to gather and collect evidence that the school counseling program is indeed designed to meet the needs of all students. Assessing the portfolio of the school counseling program (the collection of information and artifacts that represents the student's development in the three domains) is key in counselors demonstrating evidence that students are working towards achieving proficiency in the nine counseling standards.

Prevention, Intervention and Responsive Services

School counselors become aware of student issues, concerns, needs, and problems through a variety of sources, including student self-referral, and referrals from faculty, family members, community representatives, friends and/or fellow students. School counselors deliver prevention, intervention, and responsive services to meet the immediate issues affecting

students. Prevention and intervention services include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- individual counseling
- school-based referral
- mentor assistance
- classroom activities
- group counseling
- community-based referral
- short-term crisis counseling
- dissemination of information
- family counseling
- peer assistance
- consultation
- workshops

Prevention, intervention, and responsive services are available for ALL students. They address a full spectrum of issues such as peer pressure, resolving conflict, family relationships, personal identity, substance abuse, stress, motivation, and achievement. While responsive services are generally delivered to individual and small groups of students, prevention and intervention services can be delivered in a direct setting (individual and group counseling), as a workshop or structured curriculum, or in an indirect manner (consultation or outside referral). These services support each student's growth and development in the academic, career, and personal/social domains.

Students are most successful when school counselors collaborate and consult with administration, faculty, staff, families, and community partners in delivering appropriate prevention, intervention, and responsive services and assist students in meeting the standards. Furthermore, how successful a school or district is in reaching its improvement goals is highly dependent on the degree to which all school members collaborate and work as a team toward this goal.

System Support

School counselors actively engage members of the school community in an effort to ensure that all students can benefit from the school counseling program. Through system support, school counselors participate in appropriate school-based initiatives that will help students achieve and succeed. System support consists of indirect services (e.g., not delivered directly to students). Participating on the school improvement team, coordinating student service volunteers, serving on a curriculum committee, and facilitating the school peer mediation program are some examples of the positive ways in which system support connects school counseling to the mission of the school. System support offers school counselors multiple opportunities to act as leaders and advocates and to facilitate discussions around school improvement, examine data that may be inhibiting the success of some groups of students, and assist with professional development and in-service activities for the faculty.

School counselors also need support from the school system to deliver the comprehensive program, grow professionally and to gather new materials for improving the district counseling program. Informed and knowledgeable counselors are critical to the success of the program.

The following avenues help school counselors strengthen the school counseling program:

Professional Organizations - School counselors can become members of state and national counseling associations for networking, sharing and exchanging practices and strategies, identifying resources, and accessing professional publications and research.

In-Service Training - School counselors can gain new knowledge in the areas of curriculum development, technology, or data analysis to improve their programs through school-based professional development. School counselors can also lead such activities that will improve the school climate, positively impact the school improvement plan, and engage faculty in the delivery of the comprehensive counseling program.

Colleague Collaboration – School counselors learn of new curriculum, small or group work techniques, funding sources and many other aspects of their program development when they have the opportunity to share and collaborate with colleagues through informal networking in districts and through the RISCA List-serv.

Professional Development - School counselors can continuously seek new knowledge and professional growth by engaging in activities sponsored by professional organizations, colleges and universities, and RIDE and its partners. School counselors can attend the annual Rhode Island Summer Institute, join the ongoing school counseling networks, participate in the Rhode Island School Counselor Association training programs, experience an educator externship, contribute to professional literature and research, and enroll in graduate counseling courses. All of these efforts will result in stronger school counseling programs.

Involvement with the Community - School counselors can gain valuable insights about the nature, needs, resources and opportunities of their broader environment by participating with those government, civic, community, charitable, volunteer and business organizations that do or have potential to connect with the school. Such knowledge can inform the development, implementation and support of the school counseling program.

Tools for completing components of the Delivery System are located on the RISCA website (www.rischoolcounselor.org).

Section 6

Managing the School Counseling Program

For the school counseling program to run smoothly and have an impact, school counselors, as program leaders, need organizational processes and tools to ensure that it is organized, concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school's needs. The ASCA Model identifies the four key interrelated areas - **Foundation, Delivery System, Management System** and **Accountability** – fundamental to a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program. The “what” of the counseling program is in The Model’s Foundation and the “how” is in the Delivery System. Sections 4 and 5 of this document address these. This section looks at the components of the Management System.

An effective **Management System** requires organizing the school counseling program to delineate:

Who on staff will implement the program? (Activities/Curriculum in the Annual Plan)

When will they undertake the Activities/ Curriculum? (Calendars, Annual Plans)

Why will certain activities and curriculum be implemented? (Use of Data)

What authority will guide the overall program? (Advisory Council, Counselor-Principal Partnership Plan)

Advisory Council

The school counseling program would benefit from the involvement of all stakeholders in order to truly impact the entire school community successfully. One method to involve the community is through an Advisory Council. Comprised of 8 to 20 people who have a sincere interest and enthusiasm for the school counseling program, the Council helps to support and direct the goals of the program.

Some of the tasks of the Advisory Council might be to:

- Review and comment on the goals and accomplishments of the school counseling program
- Provide a forum for open dialogue between school(s) and community
- Gather information for program development and improvement
- Synthesize information on community and parental expectations for the counseling program
- Act as a resource and support for the school counseling program
- Meet regularly

(Adapted with permission from the Delaware Education Department, 2000)

School counselors, working with the Advisory Council should:

- Establish the goals for the advisory council
- Lead the selection process for members
- Present yearly goals and objectives for the school counseling program
- Present yearly results and discuss plans for program improvement

Time and Task Management

Imperatives for an effective management system are proper vision and clearly delineated time frames in which to deliver the school counseling program. Calendars (district, departmental, and individual) and time allocation are integral to sustaining a comprehensive counseling program because they specify time in terms activities, actions and events.

District Calendars - The annual district calendar for the comprehensive K-12 school counseling program articulates the delivery of the various elements that comprise the program. Developed by the leaders of the district's school counseling program, it allocates time for curriculum development, individual student planning, responsive and intervention services, and system support. When a calendar is developed and published, teachers, administrators, students and families become aware of the scope and extensiveness of the activities of the school counseling program.

Department Annual Calendar -The annual school counseling department calendar follows the district calendar. The school counseling departments in each of the district’s elementary, middle and high schools constructs a calendar that aligns with its own building calendar. This calendar is set up by month and by grade levels for the entire year for each school. Counselors list activities or themes to be delivered and specify how collaboration with school, district, family and community stakeholders will occur. Yearly calendars also include quarterly grade reporting dates, state assessments, college entrance exams, orientation, graduation, as well as ongoing activities such as respect days, wellness days, career fairs, college expos, and other special events for students and their families.

Individual Planning Calendar -The individual calendar of the school counselor helps the counselor plan and manage time in terms of district, school and his/her own counseling program activities. School counselors can employ a variety of readily available planning aids such as appointment books, PDA’s, and web-based tools. By establishing personal time frames for delivering the identified themes and activities, individual planning calendars become tools for planning curriculum lessons one-on-one counseling, group counseling, preventive services, parent outreach, system support participation and the like.

Time Allocation – Time allocation by school counselors for direct services to students is a priority. In order to implement an effective comprehensive school counseling program, counselors need to spend the majority of their time in counseling activities with students. The ASCA National Model recommends that about 80% of counseling time be spent working directly with students. Counselors also need time for connecting and collaborating with the school staff, families and the community. Non-counseling activities (e.g. duty assignments, test proctoring, etc) need to be reassigned whenever possible.

ASCA’s Recommended Distribution of Total School Counselor Time

Delivery System Component	Elementary School % of Time	Middle School % of Time	High School % of Time
School Counseling Curriculum	35% — 45%	25% — 35%	15% — 25%
Individual Student Planning	5% — 10%	15% — 25%	25% — 35%
Prevention, Intervention and Responsive Services	30% — 40%	30% — 40%	25% — 35%
System Support	0% — 15%	10% — 15%	15% — 20%

This distribution of an individual school counselor's time in the delivery system components however does not always equate to the effectiveness of the school counseling program. When counselors implement a results-based program (Johnson & Johnson, 2002) the percentage of time on task is less important than the results, or outcomes. In a results-based model, the counseling department may reorganize their responsibilities so that each counselor specializes in certain task(s).

Prior to implementing a comprehensive counseling program, it may be beneficial for some counseling departments to consider how counselor time is currently being utilized. Traditionally, time and task analysis has been used to collect information regarding time allocation of school counselors for both school counseling and non-counseling activities. The data gathered provides a vehicle to collect, address, and delineate priorities and tasks. This helps to re-distribute counselor efforts in certain areas, document time on task and identify how much of the counselor's time is involved in non-counseling activities. After the time and task analysis is compiled, counselors can determine the total percentage of time currently spent in each of the delivery system components. With this information they can then build an annual calendar to ensure the delivery of all components of the comprehensive school counseling program.

As a whole, the full range of delivery system components is covered. The measurement of the success of the individual counselor and the counseling program is the data that shows that students were impacted by the particular activity.

School Counseling Department – Principal Partnership Plan

A School Counseling Department – Principal Partnership Plan is developed yearly by the counselors with input from the principal or other administrators. This Partnership Plan shows a concerted effort to align the school counseling program with the school improvement goals. It is an agreement among individual counselors, the department, the counseling supervisor, and the principal or administrator. It is a public statement to all stakeholders and serves to demonstrate the commitment of school counselors and administrators to collaborate and share accountability for student success and contribute to systemic change. As an annual statement, it defines what the counselors hope to accomplish in the coming year. It delineates counselor responsibilities, program implementation and methods of accountability, and offers a timeline for when these activities will occur.

Tools for completing components of the Management Section can be found on the RISCA website (www.rischoolcounselor.org).

Advisory councils...

...provide oversight and guidance to ensure the program remains focused on results and serves the needs of all students.

Patricia Dorchies, School Counselor,
Flat River Middle School, Coventry

Section 7

MEASURING STUDENT SUCCESS AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR ACCOUNTABILITY

This final section in the ASCA National Model, Accountability, is discussed from two interrelated perspectives. This first is measuring student success by examining critical data points (e.g., test scores, GPA, attendance, detentions) to see if a difference was made because of counseling program intervention. This second perspective is encouraging counselors to critically evaluate themselves and the counseling program by using data to examine the results.

School Counseling Data Management System

Accountability is demonstrated by the results, and results are informed and construed from the data. Collecting, analyzing and utilizing data need to be critical components of a school counseling program in order to link the counseling program to student success and school improvement.

Using Data

Data informs, confirms progress, and reveals shortcomings in student performance (Stone & Dahir, 2004). Closing the gap in student performance is at the heart of impacting systemic change. School counselors frequently rely on three types of data to demonstrate the impact of school counseling on student success:

- **Process data**—evidence only that an event or activity occurred. For example, school counselors may present the numbers of students seen individually, in groups, or in classrooms.
- **Perception data**—qualitative information gathered from needs assessments or surveys; reports opinions at the time of data collection.
- **Results data**—answer to the question "so what?" and provides evidence that a student competency is not just mastered but has affected course-taking patterns, graduation rates, knowledge attainment, attendance, behavior, and/or academic achievement (ASCA, 2003).

Twenty-first century school counselors shift their focus to using school improvement data. They can present a picture of the current status of student needs and achievement issues, and can use the data to develop practices that lead to higher levels of success. By examining demographic and performance data, it is possible for counselors to determine how policies and practices are impacting issues of equity.

Finding Data

Schools are brimming with data and counselors often have easy access to many of the facts and figures. Attendance, tardies and early dismissals are maintained per state law. Progress reports and report cards often times provide both quantitative data (e.g., grades, numerical averages) as well as qualitative data (e.g., comments, subjective remarks). Both can be invaluable in tracking student achievement. Many schools give assessments in core academic areas either for course placement or to evaluate students as they progress through a literacy or numeracy program.

Statewide annual school report cards publicize a variety of data elements including attendance, demographics, graduation and postsecondary planning rates, and standardized testing results. The RI Department of Education (RIDE) publishes this data by each district and school yearly in *Information Works!*, available on the Internet (www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu). In addition, public school children, parents and teachers are surveyed each year on a number of constructs relating to learning, relationships, social-emotional development, personal and career goals. The detailed results of the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) survey are also released to the public and can also be accessed via the above-mentioned *Information Works!* Internet site.

Analyzing Data

There are several things counselors can do with the data once collected. When data is disaggregated into categories such as grade, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, or teacher assignment, it provides rich information for the further analysis of student performance. It is then possible to more closely examine which groups of students are successful and which are failing. For example, data analyses would provide factual information for a school counselor to investigate whether or not equitable access to academically advanced course-work (such as AP classes) was available to all students. A school counselor familiar with using data to effect systemic change can make a strong case for looking at the equity issues in placement practices.

Using data enables school counselors to work in tandem with building administrators and faculty to close the achievement gap. School counselors can monitor student attendance and class performance and collaborate with faculty to devise strategies that will enable more students to move successfully from grade level to grade level. When school counselors work with the same school-based data as their colleagues, they share accountability for student outcomes and contribute to moving critical data elements in a positive direction.

Accountability and the School Counseling Program

Increasingly, school counselors and administrators are challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms. No Child Left Behind (2001) has raised the bar on accountability for everyone, including school counselors. *Initial Guidance for the High School Restructuring Component of the Regents' Regulations* (RIDE, 2004) requires school counselors to “gather evidence of progress toward results and report on progress on an established timetable” (p. 29).

School counselor accountability is in sharing the responsibility to collectively remove barriers that impede learning and involves all of the critical players in a school setting. Accountability is the result of intentional efforts to close the achievement gap and meet the goals of school improvement (Stone & Dahir, 2004). Accountability in the ASCA model addresses this area of responsibility. School counselors can use their trained reflective skills when examining data and become skilled action researchers to play a significant role in school reform and improvement.

Accountability requires all educators to systematically collect, analyze, and use critical data elements to understand the current achievement story for students. Examples of critical data elements include:

- student grades
- discipline referrals
- GPA
- standardized test scores
- suspensions
- postsecondary enrollment
- attendance
- graduation rates
- promotion from grade level to grade level

School counselors use this information to strategize and document how the school counseling program contributes toward supporting student success. School counselors can articulate and then communicate how their contributions positively impact student achievement, and, by so doing, share accountability for school improvement with other members of the faculty (Stone & Dahir, 2004).

Accountability is important to a comprehensive school counseling program because...

“...we need to take responsibility for what we do and how we make a difference.”

April Gentes-Robert, School Counselor,
Chariho Middle-Senior High School

Tools for Using Data

The use of data for accountability is a central focus in the effort to transform school counseling. Readers are encouraged to explore and use tools that best meet their data and accountability requirements:

- **RISCA Toolkits** provide tools that respond directly to the needs of Rhode Island counselors. These can be downloaded for free at www.rischoolcounselor.org.
- **ASCA** provides many tools and professional development related to the implementation of comprehensive counseling programs.
- **MEASURE**, an accountability system developed by Carol Dahir and Carolyn Stone (2004), guides a counseling department in assessing how the counseling activity or program is aligned with the school's mission, the recipients and deliverers of the activity, and the collection and use of data to support student achievement.

MEASURE is a way of using information such as critical data elements to develop specific strategies for connecting counseling to the accountability agenda of today's schools.

MEASURE is an acronym for: Mission: connecting the comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program to the mission of the school and to the goals of the annual school improvement plan; Elements: identifying the critical data elements that are important to the internal and external stakeholders; Analyze: discuss carefully which elements need to be aggregated or disaggregated and why; Stakeholders - Unite: determine which stakeholders need to be involved in addressing these school-improvement issues and unite to develop strategies; Reanalyze: rethink and refine the strategies, refocus efforts as needed, and reflect on success; and Educate: showing the positive impact the school-counseling program has had on student achievement and on the goals of the school improvement plan.

MEASURE supports the Accountability element of the ASCA National Model (2003) and the *RI Framework* and moves school counselors from a "counting tasks" system to aligning the school counseling program with standards-based reform.

- **EZAnalyze** is a software tool available to Rhode Island school counselors to help with the process of analyzing data and is downloadable free at www.ezanalyze.com. The program was developed to work in conjunction with an Excel database. After the raw data has been inputted into Excel, EZAnalyze can be used to look at the data in a variety of different ways. Data can be imported from the school district's student management program or inputted directly into Excel. Disaggregating data helps counselors to examine the different performance levels of students by gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other factors. A more advanced data disaggregation might be to show the number of days students are absent by grade level and by gender. Additionally, the program can show if the data the counselor collected is statistically significant. EZAnalyze can be used

to analyze surveys and show relationships between two variables (i.e. attendance and GPA). This software package can also create a variety of different graphs that assist counselors to visually present to school community members the effect a school counseling program has had on students.

Reporting and Documenting Results

Counselors use data to report on the impact of the school counseling program. The RISCA Toolkits contain templates for creating and publishing a school counseling report card. This report card is modeled after the nationally-recognized Support Personnel Accountability Report Card (S.P.A.R.C.) developed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education. S.P.A.R.C. is a “continuous improvement tool that gives a school an opportunity to demonstrate effective communication and a commitment to getting results” and helps schools promote their counseling and student support program, improve their program's accountability, and implement the ASCA National Model” (California Dept. of Education, 2004).

A S.P.A.R.C. contains several elements that support good counseling practice and is aligned with *The RI Framework*. The principal’s message affirms that the administration and faculty are aware of the counseling program’s mission and work and are supportive of its efforts. Data is crucial in not only ascertaining the current school situation, but also in determining how successful interventions, school counseling curriculum, educational and career planning and other delivery mechanisms were in achieving student results. Collaboration and working with all stakeholders, including faculty, parents and the community, is a key component of a S.P.A.R.C. Whether published on the school counseling department’s website or distributed at a parent event, the S.P.A.R.C. demonstrates the value of the counseling program and helps school personnel and community members gauge how students are different because of the work and priorities of school counselors. S.P.A.R.C.’s written by RI school counselors will enable schools to demonstrate their impact of their counseling program on student success and the health of the school community.

Tools to help counselors collect, analyze and report data (including templates) are available for download at the RISCA website (www.rischoolcounselor.org).

Professional Standards for School Counselors

Professional school counselors, like other educators, have standards which help direct the priorities of the school counselor, the school counseling program, and reflect school counselors’ training, expertise and responsibilities. These standards, aligned with the ASCA National Model, can also be used by school counselors in the design of Rhode Island’s I-Plans and for self-evaluation. ASCA recommends that school counselors work with administrators in their own system to design appropriate evaluation and/or appraisal tools that will address these standards, in compliance with district policies.

The following are adapted from the American School Counselor Association (2003) and the *Massachusetts Model for School Counseling Programs (2005)*.

The professional school counselor is expected to:

Standard		Actions
1	Plan, organize and deliver the school counseling curriculum to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address the developmental needs of students while supporting the school mission • support learning and close the student achievement gap • foster a safe and supportive school climate by demonstrating and promoting positive interpersonal relationships with students, staff, parents/guardians, and community partners
2	Implement individual planning interventions in collaboration with partners (e.g., teachers, parents, mentors) to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop students' planning and decision making skills • develop educational/career plans for students, individually and in groups • promote accurate and appropriate interpretation of assessment data and relevant information
3	Provide responsive services in consultation with administrators, teachers and student support services and through referrals to external organizations/agencies to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address students' identified needs and concerns individually and/or in small-group counseling • involve parents/guardians, teachers, administrators and support services staff as needed • utilize school and community agencies and organizations for providing long-term responsive and support services
4	Monitor student progress on a regular basis to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure equity in access and delivery • modify or develop curriculum and interventions as needed • track students' progress with their education/career planning
5	Manage and use time effectively in order to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure adherence to a master calendar for program implementation • distribute and post a calendar of events and services for timely access by students, parent/guardians, administrators and teachers

Standard		Actions
6	Collect and analyze school counseling data to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish goals and activities that work to close the student achievement gap • ensure that students are taking appropriate yet rigorous courses • guide counseling program direction and emphases • maximize use of counselors' time • measure results and disseminate outcome information • plan for and improve program evaluation
7	Encourage and provide system support to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the school counseling program is meeting the needs of students and the school community • support student achievement through collaboration with educational and community based programs • obtain input from school administrators and staff in developing the counseling management system • gain assistance and cooperation in carrying out program evaluations
8	Communicate regularly with the school council and other school advisory committees to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn of the needs and concerns of constituent groups • gain support for school counseling goals while learning how counselors may support others' • inform the council and other advisory committees of program features and services • review the school improvement plan and provide input
9	Conduct a yearly program audit to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine the degree to which the school counseling program is being implemented • inform appropriate stakeholders of program results • inform counseling staff of the need for modifications in the program and/or calendar
10	Act as a student advocate, leader, collaborator and systems change agent to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure support for all students achieving at the highest levels • ensure equity in the delivery and access of the program • advance the school's and counseling department's mission and goals

Section 8

CONCLUSION

The Rhode Island Framework for K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Programs is another step completed in the long journey to reach the goals of every student achieving the ASCA standards in conjunction with comprehensive programs being implemented throughout the state. *The RI Framework* recognizes the ASCA National Model as a substantive and achievable vision for the future of school counseling, and identifies The RISCA Toolkits as the Rhode Island strategy for achieving this vision.

This framework is intended especially for school counselors and building administrators, for it is primarily through their efforts that the national vision is realized at the school level. The vital importance of partnering and collaborating with other members of the school community is also recognized as a condition of success.

Additionally, by addressing the academic, career and personal/social development of students throughout their K-12 schooling, the comprehensive school counseling program promotes and enhances the learning process for all students. *The RI Framework* serves as a model for the development of these programs, thus providing a vehicle for all students in Rhode Island to be prepared for their futures as productive citizens. Rhode Island school counselors, using their leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration and data-driven decision making skills, now have the tools needed to assist every student to achieve his or her personal best.

This framework was developed because of Rhode Island's commitment to better serve students through comprehensive developmental school counseling programs. It is a reflection of how far the school counseling profession has evolved. Rhode Island school counselors are committed to student success and continually work to engage in meaningful interactions with students and other members of the educational community to help personalize the educational experience and make learning a critical component in students' lives.

We need to be the change we want to see happen.

We are the leaders we have been waiting for.

Gandhi

RESOURCES

Resources Related to Program Development

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Real Game: The Real Game is a program in which students learn about careers and actually assume a profession and learn to live as that person would live. It is designed to emphasize the value of all work and importance of ongoing education, adaptability and positive attitudes. Available through **RI Career Resources Network**.

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Electronic Resources

American School Counselor Association offers recent literature and research on school counseling, position statements, information on member benefits, and upcoming conferences: www.schoolcounselor.org

Bridges.com presents school counselors several versions of its career development programs for elementary, middle and high school students. Additionally, Bridges.com offers the web based “Do What You Are” interest inventory. Available at www.bridges.com or through RI Career Resource Network (reduced rate for RI school districts).

Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, UMass-Amherst: latest research on school counseling; surveys for students, parents, administrators and school counselors; numerous other resources for development of school counseling programs: www.cscor.org

College Board established the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy to publicly support school counselors. The College Board believes that every student is entitled to the guidance, support, and academic preparation required to make college a post-high school option: <http://www.collegeboard.com/prof/counselors/nosca.html>

The Education Trust reports on state and local K-16 initiatives, has data tools and presentations available, and trains counselors as part of its National Center for Transforming School Counseling Initiative: www.edtrust.org

EZAnalyze: free download as a supplement to Excel to assist in data collection and simple statistical calculations: www.ezanalyze.com

Rhode Island School Counselor Association: free, downloadable tools for comprehensive K-12 counseling program development; calendar for upcoming events and meetings, and contacts for the RISCA Board: www.rischoolcounselor.org

RI School Counselor Accountability Report Card: templates and examples available: www.rischoolcounselor.org

The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research. CSCOR’s mission is to improving the practice of school counseling by developing a strong research base The Center provides national leadership in the measurement and evaluation of the outcomes of school counseling interventions and programs: <http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/>

Additional State Counselor Association websites, offering curriculum, program development information and networking contacts can be contacted through ASCA: www.schoolcounselor.org

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The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs

“The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs... will serve as the guideline for the school-counseling programs in our state for many years to come. ...

...The school-counseling model that is described in detail in this book will help all educators, not just school counselors, as we build a system that meets the social, emotional, academic, and career needs of every student.”

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*“We know *The Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs* will assist school counselors to analyze their current practice, organize and align their program in a comprehensive framework, develop curricula, and evaluate and measure the success of their counseling programs. With our “All Kids Agenda”, school counselors, too, will help ensure that no child is left behind!”*

Thomas F. Flaherty, PhD,
Dean of Graduate Education, Providence College

James E. Guarino, President,
RI School Counselor Association

Linda Soderberg, Executive Director,
RI School-to-Career