

Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive PreK-12 School Counseling Programs

THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

2025

Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive PreK-12 School Counseling Programs

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Dear educational partners,

As we continue our mission of helping every child in reaching their full potential in our schools in Rhode Island, it is essential to have a comprehensive school counseling program that provides the support our students need to graduate high school with an open door to create their future.

The updated Rhode Island School Counseling Framework represents a significant advancement in the Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE) commitment to supporting all students throughout their educational journey and beyond. At the heart of our school counseling program is the importance of building caring and trusted relationships, essential for academic success. This enhanced Framework is crafted to bolster these connections, ensuring that students link their PreK-12 experiences with their future aspirations. Our goal is for every student to graduate high school equipped with the skills and opportunities necessary to shape their own future, guided by a robust and supportive school counseling program.

To advance this goal, RIDE conducted a statewide analysis in partnership with the XQ Institute – the Educational Opportunity Audit – which identified a significant gap; while 80% of Rhode Island high school seniors expressed a desire to attend college, only 50% were enrolled in and successfully passing the classes required for four-year college eligibility.

To address this disparity and ensure all students graduate with open doors to create their own future, RIDE has taken several important steps:

1. We conducted an extensive, 18-month community engagement process—during the height of the pandemic, nonetheless—resulting in the new [Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements](#) approved by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education on November 15, 2022.
2. We developed the five-year [“Let's Get Ready” Action Plan](#) to support the implementation of these new graduation requirements.
3. As part of this plan, we set the goal of developing a statewide approach to comprehensive school counseling and support.

The Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements present an opportunity to reimagine the way high schools create opportunities and experiences for all students to realize their postsecondary goals, whether that be a path toward college, career, military, or otherwise. It also presents the opportunity to reimagine and bolster the [Individualized Learning Plan \(ILP\)](#) process, and the role school counseling plays in a student's educational journey. School counselors stand at the crossroads of student experience and future opportunities.

The updated Rhode Island School Counseling Framework is a crucial component in achieving the goal of developing a statewide approach to comprehensive school counseling. This Framework, an update to RIDE's original 2005 version, reflects current issues facing our students, families, and schools, as well as the agency's latest initiatives and priorities. It aligns with the current edition of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, providing a robust foundation for comprehensive school counseling programs.

Key aspects of this Framework include:

- A focus on data-driven approaches to target interventions and improve student outcomes,
- An emphasis on postsecondary readiness, including initiatives like FAFSA completion accountability and support,
- Guidance on implementing comprehensive school counseling programs that help students understand the link between their PreK-12 experiences and their future plans.

We're already seeing the positive impact of comprehensive school counseling programs across our state. From reducing disciplinary referrals in elementary schools to increasing FAFSA completion rates in high schools, these programs are making a real difference in students' lives.

This Framework, along with ongoing professional development provided by RIDE, gives administrators and school counselors the tools to implement comprehensive school counseling programs utilizing the ASCA National Model and a data-driven approach.

As you review this Framework, remember that it's more than just a document – it's a commitment to our students' futures. By implementing comprehensive school counseling programs, we can ensure that all students receive the support, advising, and skills they need for improved outcomes and future readiness.

Thank you for your dedication to Rhode Island's students. Together, we can create an educational environment where every student graduates high school with open doors to create their own future.

In partnership,



Angélica Infante-Green

Commissioner of Education

Rhode Island Department of Education

Acknowledgements

Rhode Island's updated 2025 Framework for Comprehensive PreK-12 School Counseling Programs is the result of a collaborative effort and contributions from many organizations, groups, and professionals who are committed to supporting Rhode Island students.

School Counseling Framework Working Group

The School Counseling Framework Working Group focused on updating the School Counseling Framework to reflect the needs of students while addressing the interests of school counselors, administrators, and other key educational partners. The Working Group also collaborated to ensure this updated Framework is aligned with the work of Rhode Island's Statewide School Counseling Advisory Council. Working Group members assisted with identifying sites for Listen and Learn sessions, contributed to and reviewed sections of the Framework, and contributed valuable recommendations on important topics to be covered in the Framework.

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Steering Committee

The Steering Committee worked in partnership with Thru Consulting and the American School Counselor Association to conduct a statewide Listen and Learn tour, statewide surveys, and interviews with members of the Advisory and Working Groups. We would like to thank: Sarah Kirk, Daniela Doyle, Hannah Farrell, and David Irwin for their exceptional leadership and contributions in the development and writing of this updated Framework.

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RIDE Advisory Group

The RIDE Advisory group collaborated to ensure that the updated Framework is aligned with RIDE's current policies and guidance and department and statewide priorities. The Advisory Group also made sure the Framework leveraged existing programs and resources. Members offered feedback and reviewed drafts of the Framework.

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Our Rhode Island Educational Partners

The Rhode Island Department of Education extends its sincere gratitude to all of the individuals who contributed their time, expertise, and insights to the development of the updated Rhode Island School Counseling Framework.

We especially want to recognize the dozens of school counselors, educators, administrators, and hundreds of students, families, and community partners who shared their experiences and perspectives. Your participation in interviews, focus groups, surveys, and school visits was invaluable. The input shared has been critical in shaping a Framework that reflects the diverse needs of Rhode Island's students and schools.

This collaborative effort has resulted in a more comprehensive and responsive Framework that will guide the future of school counseling in our state. Your dedication to improving student outcomes and supporting their academic, career, and social-emotional development is truly appreciated.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence in education and for helping to create a stronger foundation for Rhode Island's students.

In addition, our team gathered inspiration from the following School Counseling Frameworks:

- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Missouri
- Oklahoma
- Oregon

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Introduction

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is committed to ensuring all students have access to course offerings with high-quality curriculum and instruction as essential components of a rigorous education that prepares every student for success in college and their career. On November 15, 2022, the R.I. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements for all Rhode Island students beginning with the graduating Class of 2028. RIDE's adoption of Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements presents an opportunity to reimagine the role of school counseling programs across PreK-12. Specifically, this has presented the opportunity to enhance Rhode Island's Comprehensive PreK-12 School Counseling Framework to ensure all students receive the support necessary to graduate ready to create their own futures and pursue their postsecondary goals.

Decades of research make clear that comprehensive school counseling programs help students meet their goals. A comprehensive school counseling program is a cornerstone of student success that requires active engagement from every member of the school community – from teachers and administrators to families and support staff. When implemented with fidelity from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, these programs transform school communities and student outcomes.

Research consistently demonstrates the power of comprehensive school counseling programs: Reading and math scores increase while discipline referrals and racial disparities in the enrollment of advanced coursework decrease. School climate, attendance, and informed college decision-making all improve. Moreover, comprehensive school counseling offers all students – from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 – the opportunity to build the mindsets, skills, and behaviors they need for academic, social-emotional, and career development success. Critical to this success is the vertical articulation between elementary, middle, and high school counseling programs, ensuring that skills and competencies build systematically across grade levels while maintaining developmental appropriateness and creating seamless transitions as students progress through their educational journey.

Since its original School Counseling Framework in 2005, RIDE has worked to strengthen school counseling programs statewide. This document updates the 2005 Framework. This updated Framework represents a significant advancement in RIDE's commitment to supporting all students throughout their educational journey and beyond. It reflects the lessons learned, feedback, and experience of RIDE leaders as well as a dedicated Working Group representing school counselors, administrators, and those overseeing college and career planning. It also incorporates takeaways from nearly 20 school site visits, touching on every grade level and county in the state, and more than 1,800 survey responses from students, families, and classroom teachers.

A comprehensive school counseling program is a schoolwide program that is developed collaboratively and delivered collectively. While Rhode Island's school counselors are often the primary facilitators of this work, the success of comprehensive school counseling hinges on authentic collaboration and shared responsibility across the entire school community. School

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leaders must champion these programs by articulating clear visions for student success and cultivating broad-based support for implementation. Teachers, support staff, families, and community partners all play vital roles in creating a cohesive support system for students. This Framework therefore serves as an essential resource for all educational partners committed to student success through comprehensive school counseling.

The Framework includes three main parts.

Part 1. A Vision for Comprehensive School Counseling speaks to everyone involved in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. It outlines comprehensive school counseling, describes the role the school counselor and others should play in implementing such a program, and shows how comprehensive school counseling fits within the state's vision for student success and broader school improvement efforts.

Part 2. Implementing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program offers more detailed direction for developing a school counseling program. It outlines four components of a comprehensive school counseling program in alignment with the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model—define, manage, deliver, and assess—and the steps the school community should take to implement those components.

Part 3. Appendices. The appendices contain descriptions of Rhode Island initiatives connected to school counseling, a transition guide to support implementation, and report references.

In addition, a variety of tools, templates, and examples to support implementation are available on the [Rhode Island School Counseling Framework website](#).



The Administrator's Essential Role in School Counseling Program Success

[Research confirms](#) that administrative leadership and support are fundamental to the success of comprehensive school counseling programs. As an administrator, your understanding and active engagement with your school counseling program directly impacts student outcomes.

Why Your Role Matters

Recent national research demonstrates that when administrators fully understand and support school counseling programs, counselors and other mental health professionals are better positioned to:

- Deliver comprehensive services to all students systematically.
- Make data-informed decisions that improve student achievement.
- Address gaps in student outcomes.
- Focus on improved student achievement, attendance, and discipline rates.

Your Impact on Program Excellence

As an administrator, you have unique power to enhance your school counseling program's effectiveness by:

Advancing the Program Goals

- Align program goals to the Local Education Agency (LEA) Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plan (in collaboration with counselors, school-based mental health professionals, and other educators on the school counseling program team).
- Ensure counselors and other school-based mental health professionals can focus on their core mission.
- Support counselors and other school-based mental health professionals in maintaining appropriate caseloads.
- Advocate for adequate resources and staffing to administer an effective school counseling program PreK-12.

Fostering Program Development

- Participate in regular program review and planning sessions.

- Support professional development opportunities.
- Implement performance evaluations based on the school counseling program goals.
- Facilitate collaboration between counselors, school-based mental health professionals, classroom educators, and other educational stakeholders.

Championing Support for All Students

- Partner with counselors, school-based mental health professionals, and other educators to analyze school data and student outcomes.
- Support the implementation of action plans addressing achievement, opportunity, and access gaps.
- Champion the sharing of program results and impact data across the school and district.

Building on Current Success

National data shows that administrators already recognize school counselors as certified/ licensed educators who support students' academic success, career development, and social-emotional learning. By strengthening this foundation through active engagement with the team leading your school counseling program, you can:

- Enhance program effectiveness through strategic planning.
- Improve student outcomes across all domains.
- Create systemic change that addresses student outcome gaps.
- Build a stronger college and career readiness culture.

Your leadership and support are not just beneficial —they are essential to maximizing the impact of your school counseling program on student success.

A Vision for Comprehensive School Counseling

RIDE's School Counseling Vision Statement

The vision of School Counseling at RIDE is that every school implements a comprehensive school counseling program. Each program follows the ASCA National Model, including the implementation of a robust Individual Learning Plan (ILP). All students have access to a school counseling program that provides academic, career, and social-emotional support through direct and indirect student services including but not limited to a multi-tiered system of supports. All LEAs define, manage, and assess their school counseling programs as outlined by the ASCA National Model.

Comprehensive School Counseling

Comprehensive school counseling is defined as a program that is comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, developmental in nature, and collaborative in implementation.

Comprehensive in Scope

A comprehensive school counseling program focuses on the mindsets, skills, and behaviors all students – from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 – should know, understand, and be able to do across three domains – academic, career, and social-emotional (see “Three Domains of Comprehensive School Counseling”). It builds on the core belief that **every** student can achieve at high levels. Comprehensive school counseling programs, therefore, support all students to attain their educational goals and develop into successful members of society.

Three Domains of Comprehensive School Counseling

Comprehensive school counseling programs build students' mindsets and behaviors across three key domains, ensuring today's students become productive, well-adjusted adults.

- **Academic development:** Cultivating the skills, mindsets and behaviors students need to maximize their ability to learn.
- **Career development:** Equipping students with the skills, mindsets and behaviors needed to understand the connection between school and the workplace, and to plan for and transition to postsecondary education and careers.
- **Social-emotional development:** Teaching students the skills, mindsets and behaviors they need to navigate life's challenges, including managing emotions and developing interpersonal skills.

Preventive in Design

School counseling programs are intentional and data-informed. They impart specific [mindsets and behaviors](#) in a proactive manner aimed at equipping students to address potential issues before they arise. The school counselor's duties should therefore focus on program delivery and direct and indirect school counseling services rather than reacting to situations or behaviors that pop up. Examples of preventive activities include creating program goals, delivering a school counseling curriculum, implementing data-driven action plans, and analyzing data to monitor progress.

Developmental in Nature

School counseling programs and services should be designed to meet student needs at different stages of growth and development. These programs address the developmental needs of all students by facilitating their social-emotional, academic, and career development growth, helping create positive and safe learning climates in schools, and helping students feel connected to school. They are therefore important and impactful across all grade levels—from elementary through high school.

Collaborative in Implementation

A comprehensive school counseling program is not implemented in isolation; rather, it is a schoolwide program that is developed collaboratively and delivered collectively. While Rhode Island's school counselors are often the primary facilitators of this work, the success of comprehensive school counseling hinges on collaboration with others—including administrators, classroom teachers, school-based mental health professionals, and families—in the process of supporting every student across the three domains of a comprehensive school counseling program. Through this collaborative effort, along with a clearly articulated vision for student success, school counseling programs become an integral part of a school or district strategic plan delivered schoolwide (in classrooms and large groups), in small groups, and individually. Comprehensive school counseling programs also generate a myriad of benefits for students across the whole school community when the whole community is involved (see “Comprehensive School Counseling Programs Benefit the Whole School Community”).

School counselors play a pivotal role in our students' success. We are natural collaborators who rely on the collective wisdom of educators, students, and families working together. It's a partnership where every voice contributes to the growth and success of each student.

ANNE-MARIE FLAHERTY

President, RI School Counselors Association

School Counselor & Department Chair, East Greenwich High School

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs Benefit the Whole School Community

To name just a few examples:

Benefits for Administrators:

- Promotes an interdisciplinary team approach to address student needs
- Provides a proactive approach to address student needs and promote student success

Benefits for Classroom Teachers:

- Helps ensure students engage in classroom learning
- Improves school climate
- Fosters consultation and collaboration across departments

Benefits for School Committees:

- Encourages significant school- community interaction
- Provides continuous data for monitoring and improving program implementation and student outcomes

Benefits for School Counselors:

- Positions school counseling as central to a school's educational mission
- Provides a clearly defined organizational structure and responsibilities

Benefits for Parents/ Guardians:

- Increases engagement and chances for parent/ guardian and school collaboration
- Provides data on student progress

Benefits for the Broader Community:

- Creates awareness of the support systems needed to promote student success
- Provides regular opportunities for collaboration between the school and the broader community

Benefits for Students:

- Higher academic outcomes
- College and career ready
- Increased enrollment in advanced coursework
- Improved learning behaviors, including study skills, time usage, and persistence
- More informed postsecondary decision-making

Partners in a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

The comprehensive school counseling program is part of the larger school system where all members of the school community work together to support positive student outcomes. Critical members in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program include the school counselors, administrators, teachers, and school-based mental health professionals.

School counselors are vital members of the school team and coordinators of the comprehensive school counseling program. They uphold the [Ethical](#) and [Professional](#) standards of school counselors and promote the [Student Standards](#) describing the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness, and social-emotional development. They play a leading role in a broader team, using the skills of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration to promote systemic change. As such, the school counseling role has shifted considerably over the last three decades (see “From Guidance Counselor to School Counselor”).

From Guidance Counselor to School Counselor

Historically, the term “guidance counselor” referred to counselors working in schools. This term has evolved to “school counselor” as the scope of duties has changed and evolved. Although some schools still use the outdated “guidance counselor” term, school communities are encouraged to use “school counselor” to more accurately reflect the role.

Guidance Counselors of Yesterday

- Reactive
- Served some students
- Measured impact via feelings and perceptions
- Played an ancillary role to the school improvement process
- Worked in isolation
- Provided college and career advising for a few

School Counselors of Today

- Proactive and data-driven
- Serve all students
- Measure impact via achievement, attendance, and behavior data
- Play an essential role in the school improvement process
- Work as school leaders in collaboration with the broader school team
- Provide college and career advising for all

A school counselor’s primary job is to design and deliver a comprehensive counseling program in collaboration with the school community that is in alignment with the schoolwide vision for student success. To design an effective school counseling program, school counselors work with others to define, manage, and assess their program. This includes steps such as analyzing schoolwide student data, writing program goals, and creating action plans to meet the goals. Data-driven design allows for a school counseling program to deliver more impactful services aligned with school goals and student needs.

However, school counselors do not work in silos. It requires the entire school community to implement an effective school counseling program.

- **Administrators** are responsible for guiding and overseeing the development and implementation of the school counseling program. School leaders play a critical role in setting a vision for student success and generating buy-in from the broader school team to implement it. They can support and facilitate school counselors’ work by providing a vision, time, space, and other resources needed for school counseling activities. The role of the administrator may vary from acting as a “supporter” to a full “collaborative partner.” Ideally, administrators understand that school counselors are equipped to lead schoolwide efforts, including collaborating for school success, data analysis, goal setting, and strategic planning. (see “School Leaders as Critical Partners” for more.)
- **Teachers** work with the school counseling program by developing and infusing school counseling activities into the instructional program. School counselors can provide professional development and consultation on classroom management, human development, trauma-informed practices, and other preventative topics to give teachers the skills to address student needs. Teachers collaborate with school counselors to reinforce skills being taught as part of school counseling interventions in the classrooms. This partnership can support the development of critical student knowledge and skills.
- **School-Based Mental Health Professionals** (e.g., school social workers, school psychologists, and student assistance counselors) contribute to the school counseling program and collaborate with school counselors and other partners to support social-emotional development and student well-being. They can teach important mindsets and behaviors to students and, when needed, provide counseling services.

- **Students** are active participants in the school counseling program and are ultimately responsible for applying the skills and knowledge they learn to be successful.
- **Parents/ Guardians** can partner with the school and school counseling program by maintaining open communication, serving on advisory or other committees, and advocating for their children.
- **Community Members**, such as business, labor, and community agencies, can partner with schools in a variety of ways to support student success, including mentoring, providing sites for student service learning experiences, and offering placements for school Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning programs and field trips.

Support from School Counseling Comes from the Top at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School

At Coventry's Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, Principal Joe Lucian is clear about the value the school's three counselors bring. "They're one of the puzzle pieces that hold the school team together," he explained. "They are absolute rock stars when it comes to building relationships with kids, working with our staff to make sure students find success, and figuring out time management so they can get everything done."

The way Lucian works with the school counselors reflects his respect for them and their many roles. The school counselors participate in nearly every schoolwide team and committee. When they tell Lucian they need something, he does his best to respond as quickly as possible. They also talk and text regularly (though Lucian makes sure to respect their personal time).

"After 25 years as a math teacher, the level of respect I felt soon after I began working as a school counselor at Feinstein made me feel appreciated and trusted in this new role," noted Jennifer LaBrie. "Administrators would come into my office asking about a wide variety of school-based topics, and my input mattered."

That respect, along with a shared commitment to support Feinstein's students and a strong work ethic, has fostered a trust that allows school counselors and administrators to both push and support one another. When, for example, an assistant principal left unexpectedly, Lucian asked the school counselors to play a role outside their typical responsibilities. Their relationship was strong enough that the school counselors felt comfortable sharing their concerns and collaborating to set guidelines that allowed the work to move forward in a way that let them best serve students.

"Our strengths complement each other. We trust each other, and we're not afraid to take risks with our thoughts and opinions," school counselor Sandra Clunan shared. "We are willing to be vulnerable and step outside our comfort zone, which has allowed us to build an environment in which students thrive – academically, socially, and emotionally."

That trust and support extends beyond administration as well. "We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the administration," explained school counselor Lori LeBrun. "But we also rely on the collaboration and support of our amazing support staff. Our social workers, school psychologists, and substance abuse counselor work with us to best support students."

School Leaders as Critical Partners

Perhaps no relationship is as critical to a successful school counseling program as that between the school principal and the school counselors. As the leaders setting expectations and managing resources, a principal's support can elevate or undermine the importance and value of a comprehensive school counseling program across a school.

It is important for school counselors and principals to have a shared purpose that aligns with the vision and mission of the school as a whole and the school counseling program in particular. Additionally, effective communication, trust and respect, collaboration, and shared decision-making are all vital elements of a school counselor and principal relationship.

When a school counselor and principal work together effectively, they leverage their relationship to collaboratively initiate systemic change and improve student outcomes, ensuring every student receives the support they need, which will raise achievement for all students. ASCA's [Enhancing the Principal-School Counselor Relationship](#) toolkit includes a variety of resources to help foster such a relationship, including resources focused on effective communication, cultivating trust and respect, and collaborative decision-making.

“Students face so many challenges in their efforts to grow and learn; they need the support of effective partnerships in school. These partnerships are vital to promote school reform and improved academic outcomes. Close collaboration between school principals and counselors can make this happen. School principals provide leadership and direction. They create and sustain a school climate with high expectations for all students and cultivate a college-going culture. School counselors, in turn, have unique skills and experience to support this vision by helping all students and their families successfully attain rigorous academic preparation and navigate the sometimes confusing path to college. The efforts and expertise of these professionals are especially important for students from families who do not have a college-going tradition. When principals and counselors work together effectively, college becomes more than just a dream for their students.”

FINDING A WAY: PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF HOW AN EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL- COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP CAN LEAD TO SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

College Board | ASCA | National Association of Secondary Principals

Classifications of School Counseling Activities

To reap the wide array of benefits comprehensive school counseling programs offer—from higher reading and math scores to improved attendance and fewer discipline incidences—it is recommended that school counselors, as coordinators of the school counseling program, spend at least 80% of their time performing direct and indirect services and 20% on defining, managing, and assessing the program as well as other school support tasks (see “Classifications of School Counseling”).

Classifications of School Counseling Activities

<i>%of Time</i>	≥80%		≤20%		
<i>Type of Task</i>	Example	Indirect Student Services	Program Planning & School Support		Non-School Counseling Tasks
<i>Description</i>	In-person interactions between school counselors and students	Services provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselor's interactions with other adults	Completion of the tools and assessments to help school counselors create an effective program	The routine responsibilities all members of the school staff take equal turns doing to ensure the school's smooth operations	Tasks that do not utilize a school counselor's unique training and expertise and take time from the school counseling program
<i>Activities</i>	• Instruction • Counseling • Appraisal and Advisement	• Referrals • Consultation • Collaboration	• Defining • Managing • Assessing	• Fair-Share Responsibility • Other School Support Activities	Varies
<i>Example</i>	Delivering a lesson for students on goal-setting	Working with teachers to support students	Analyzing school and student data	Helping organize a schoolwide assembly	Varies

Direct Services

Direct services include face-to-face or virtual interactions **with** students. A school counseling program delivers three kinds of direct services:



Instruction refers to teaching the school counseling curriculum to students using the [ASCA Student Standards](#). Instruction takes place in large groups, classrooms, small groups, and individually.



Appraisal and Advisement is a two-step process for establishing personal goals and developing future plans. During the appraisal process, the focus is on assessing students' abilities, interests, skills, and achievement using a variety of data (e.g., student tests, inventory). This data informs the development of students' immediate, intermediate, and long-range plans. After creating the plans, students are guided through advisement with recommendations to support their goals, such as appropriate course selection and exploring opportunities in the community. Appraisal and advisement can take place within classrooms, in small groups, or individually (see [Appraisal and Advisement](#) in Part 2 for more information on how this looks in Rhode Island).



Counseling includes professional assistance and support during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change, or other situations impeding student success. It is short-term and based on counseling theories and techniques that are effective in a school setting. Counseling can be done in small groups or individually.

Indirect Services

Indirect services are the services provided **on behalf** of students as a result of interactions with others. Indirect services include the following:



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



Collaboration is the process through which multiple individuals work toward a common goal and share responsibility for the associated tasks. School counselors, classroom teachers, administrators, families, and other members of the school community collaborate to support students.



Referrals occur when a student's needs extend beyond the purview of the school counseling program. When a student needs further support, it is a school counseling team's ethical duty to refer students and parents to school or community resources for additional assistance or information.

Program Planning & School Support

Program planning includes activities to inform the direct and indirect services of the school counseling program, such as data analysis, goal-setting, and action planning. These key areas of responsibility will be covered in detail under the "[Manage](#)" component of the Framework.

As shown, school counselors are part of a broader school team. Like other school staff, they must also therefore provide school support – the routine responsibilities all members of the school staff take equal turns doing to ensure the school's smooth operations (see “Considerations for Administrators as They Assign Tasks Across Their Building”).

Considerations for Administrators As They Assign Tasks Across Their Building

Running a school requires a team to accomplish a myriad of tasks and activities. School counselors may seem to have considerable flexibility in their schedules, making it easy to assign them tasks that are important to a school's smooth functioning, but fall outside of a school counselor's training and expertise. However, if school counselors are pulled from school counseling activities, there is a trade-off because they cannot implement comprehensive programs that support student academic, career, and social-emotional development.

When assigning tasks to school counselors, school leaders should therefore consider the following four questions:

1. Does the task align with the school counselor's expertise and training?
2. Does the duty represent a “fair-share” relative to what you are asking of other building staff?
3. Would the duty prevent the school counselor from meeting the goals set for the school counseling program?
4. Have you spoken with your school counselor(s) to identify which duties and tasks are most appropriate for them given their broader role and responsibilities?

A Role for School Counseling Programs at Every Grade Level

At a high level, comprehensive school counseling does not change from one grade span to the next; it is always comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, developmental in nature, and collaborative in implementation. Similarly, at every grade level, the school counseling team delivers services in large groups in classrooms, in small groups, and individually. School counseling programs and services are designed to meet student needs at different stages of growth and development as well as across various college and career readiness milestones as students progress through their PreK-12 experience. Strong support and leadership from administrators serve as the cornerstone of effective school counseling programs. The role of administrators goes beyond basic oversight —deep understanding and direct involvement with the counseling program play a crucial role in shaping and improving student success.

Elementary school counseling. The elementary years are a time when students begin to develop their academic self-concept and feelings of competence and confidence as learners. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups, and family. The elementary school counseling program helps students develop the mindsets and behaviors needed for effective decision-making, emotion management, communication, life skills, study skills, and character values that ultimately support college and career readiness. School counseling programs are pivotal in creating a safe and respectful learning environment; they provide the foundational and preventative support needed for continued success in school. Effective school counseling programs provide opportunities for career exploration through programs such as career lessons, career days, or career fairs.

School counselors and other school mental health professionals are uniquely trained in child development, learning strategies, self-management, and social skills.

Middle school counseling. Middle school is an exciting yet challenging time for students and their families. Several characteristics mark this passage from childhood to adolescence, including high levels of activity coupled with frequent fatigue due to rapid growth; a search for their own unique identity as they begin turning more frequently to peers rather than parents and guardians for ideas and affirmation; extreme sensitivity to comments from others; and heavy reliance on friends to provide comfort, understanding, and approval. Middle school counseling helps students explore a variety of interests while connecting their learning in the classroom to its practical application in life and work. Strong school counseling programs at the middle school level provide more students with direct access and opportunity to advanced coursework, college and career fairs, and CTE programs. The mindsets and behaviors of an effective school counseling program help students develop and prepare for the transition into secondary school and equip them with the skills needed for success in school and life. School counselors and other school-based mental health professionals are experts in adolescent development and key collaborators for success in the middle years.

High school counseling. High school is the final transition into adulthood toward postsecondary education and/or the world of work; counseling programs help students explore the real world as students begin separating from their parents/guardians and exploring and defining their independence. Students are deciding who they are, what they do well, and what they will do when they graduate. During these adolescent years, school counseling can help students evaluate their strengths, skills, and abilities. Impactful school counseling programs ensure that students' high school experiences are connected to their postsecondary goals, in alignment with RIDE's Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements, including course taking to support their goals, CTE participation, support for FAFSA, resume completion, and ILP completion. Often, high school students are searching for a place to belong and rely on peer acceptance and feedback. This can lead to increased pressures regarding risk behaviors while exploring the boundaries of more acceptable behavior and mature, meaningful relationships. Students also need assistance managing and responding to the challenges of using technology safely and appropriately for personal expression. High school counselors and other school-based mental health professionals help students navigate academic, peer, and parental pressures, the college admissions process, dual enrollment and credential opportunities, the scholarship and financial aid application process, and entrance into a competitive job market.

At each level, school counseling programs identify students' academic, career, and social-emotional needs, as well as provide necessary education, prevention, and intervention. These supports are essential to removing barriers to learning and helping students develop skills and behaviors critical for academic achievement. The knowledge, attitudes, and skills students acquire through the school counseling program during these years build the foundation for future success.

Our school counselors work closely with students to ensure ILP goals are met and to keep them informed about their progress towards their goals by reviewing grades, data, and test scores.

RHODE ISLAND TEACHER

Comprehensive school counseling programs yield optimal impact when integrated across PreK-12, with strong administrative support driving the vision. When district and school administrators champion these programs, it enables vertical articulation – allowing students to systematically develop and reinforce essential skills and mindsets throughout their educational journey. This administrative backing ensures counselors can implement consistent, scaffolded programming that builds on previous learning experiences while preparing students for future challenges. With an aligned vision, programs can be strategically coordinated across grade levels to maximize student growth and development.

This continuous access and coordinated implementation ensures skills are not just introduced, but regularly practiced and deepened as students mature. Vertical alignment, championed by the administration, creates a coherent developmental Framework that responds to evolving student needs while maintaining programmatic continuity toward college and career success.

Operationalizing a Vision for PreK-12 School Counseling Across West Warwick Schools

In West Warwick Public Schools, school counseling is a districtwide endeavor. “At a high level, we want to assist students in making appropriate decisions,” explained Michael Whaley, the district’s Assistant Superintendent. “Participating in the ASCA cohort (a two-year training program focused on implementing the ASCA National Model) has helped us to operationalize that vision.”

Although school counseling looks different at each grade level, establishing procedures that are aligned and consistent across PreK-12 has been a key piece. There is a districtwide scope and sequence for social-emotional learning (SEL). All schools, including elementary, use the Xello platform to provide continuity in college and career readiness across grade levels. And the district expects – and trains – all school counselors to identify patterns in student data to drive programmatic decisions.

People are another key ingredient. All schools have school counselors, and coaches in the district office help schools with SEL. In addition, West Warwick makes a point of providing professional learning opportunities to help educators grow their toolbox. Nearly 1,800 staff members participated in over 12,000 hours of SEL professional development over the last two years. School counselors from all six of the district’s schools have also participated in the state’s ASCA training.

“We have committed to supporting student mental health, so we’ve prioritized those positions because they all play a piece in it,” Whaley noted. “Having somebody that students and families at every grade level can connect with when they have an issue, or they have a need – it’s really important for us.”

Comprehensive School Counseling as a Tool to Achieve Goals Across Initiatives

When implemented effectively, school counseling programs are an integral part of a school or district’s broader strategies aimed at supporting student success, including [School Improvement Plans \(SIPs\)](#), [Multi-Tiered System of Supports \(MTSS\)](#), and [Individual Learning Plans \(ILPs\)](#).

School Improvement

Every year, schools across Rhode Island develop their SIPs, which use data to identify areas of student need. Each SIP then sets priorities and goals for student performance and describes how the school will fund initiatives to achieve those goals.

School counseling programs can and should align with the goals and priorities in a school's SIP. Using data to set goals is a key component of comprehensive school counseling. When school counselors and other school-based mental health professionals are invited to the table, they can bring additional data and insights into the planning process and identify opportunities to leverage their work to help achieve schoolwide goals. School improvement planning and comprehensive school counseling are so aligned that one of the [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards](#) includes using “achievement, attendance and/or discipline data to create annual student outcome goals aligned with school improvement plans.”

Partners in Improvement Planning at South Kingstown High School

At South Kingstown High School (SKHS), the school counseling team has more than a seat at the table for school improvement; its members play a leading role in implementing the first priority in the school improvement plan, which is focused on increasing student access to rigorous courses.

“We know all the students in the school. We know and look at all the relevant data. And we know how the courses rotate in the schedule, so we can work with students to be sure classes fit into Advanced Placement (AP) or Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming,” explained Barbara Crudale, the school's Director of School Counseling. “As a result, we're in an ideal position to help the school community achieve this goal.”

More specifically, the school's counselors drive the key interventions related to the goal. They utilize Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to identify students' academic and personal interests. They review test data to help identify students who may be ready to take AP or College classes. And they work with incoming and newly arrived students to ensure they understand CTE offerings and how AP and college classes can fit into those programs. “Our school improvement team feels strongly that students should take courses that prepare them to be college and/or career ready when they graduate high school,” shared the school principal, Dr. Chip McGair. “Our school counselors support the attainment of a school improvement goal designed to push our students to be ready for life after high school.”

School improvement isn't the only schoolwide issue for which school counselors play a central role. The team is represented on the MTSS Committee, involved in curriculum development, and participates in a standing meeting with administrators every other week. Their prominence reflects not only the value they bring, but also an intentional effort team members have made over time to inform the school community of what they do, advocate for their participation, and build strong relationships.

“When I started in this office 26 years ago, we were not at the table having these discussions,” Crudale explained. “School counselors need a clear vision of counseling and school goals and to work on achieving them as a team. Together with administration, you get there.”



Planning for meaningful school improvement requires us to understand our students and their unique needs, and this can only happen if we bring all stakeholders and perspectives to the table. School counselors, families, classroom teachers, and students themselves provide valuable data and insights that strengthen the school improvement planning process.

JAMES ERINAKES

President, RI School Superintendents Association &
Superintendent, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs)

As RIDE's vision statement for school counseling makes clear (see "RIDE's School Counseling Vision Statement"), school counseling programs are also central to two other important statewide strategies – Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

School counseling programs are integral to all tiers of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a continuous school improvement framework that uses data-based decision-making to provide targeted student support. Through a variety of data collection methods, including looking at outcome data and universal screeners, school counselors identify and respond to student needs across all three tiers. At Tier 1, counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling curriculum to all students. For students requiring additional support, counselors provide Tier 2 evidence-based interventions, including small-group and short-term individual counseling. At Tier 3, counselors offer intensive individualized interventions while collaborating with educators, student services staff, and caregivers to ensure comprehensive support. Throughout all tiers, school counselors serve as student advocates and vital team members in the MTSS Framework, including actively participating on school MTSS teams where they contribute to data analysis to support a continuous improvement process to guide effective program and intervention planning.

School counseling programs also serve as the primary vehicle for implementing ILPs. ILPs are student-driven academic and career planning tools that personalize educational and training pathways starting in middle school. The curriculum aligns with the [ASCA Student Standards](#) to support academic, career, and social-emotional development through self-exploration, college and career exploration, and planning and goal setting. In addition, school counseling drives ILP conversations and activities with students and coordinates efforts between different members of the school team.

Making ILPs about Real Life at Blackstone Valley Prep

At Blackstone Valley Prep (BVP) High School in Cumberland, the school's counselors don't talk about Individual Learning Plans (ILPs); they talk about the skills and tools students need to meet their long-term goals. "Work like ILPs is additional and ungraded, so students really need to buy into it," explained Lorena Arango, the school's Postsecondary Planning Specialist: College and Career Advisor. "We meet students where they are and help them recognize the benefit of the work we're doing."

That is exactly how Arango and her colleague, Ashley Gemma, frame ILP activities for their students. When students work on their resumes, it's because they will need one to apply to college or a job. The team complements research about being a pharmacy technician, engineer, or small business owner with opportunities for students to meet and learn directly from community members holding those roles whenever possible. Additionally, lessons on email etiquette prepare students to effectively communicate with future professors and employers.

Moreover, Arango and Gemma enlist the broader school community to both amplify their message and make the ILP process more accessible to students. "We know students are spending the majority of their time outside of our office," Gemma shared, "so we try to make ILPs as much of a team effort as possible."

For example, Shanika Edouard, a High School Mentor and the 12th Grade Level Chair and Mentor/ Elective Chair, meets with Arango and Gemma weekly. They discuss what they need students to work on and how best to connect those skills and activities to real life. Gemma and Arango also work with Gerard Tetreault, Dean of Academics & Culture, to create lessons geared towards college and career exploration for classroom teachers to use during their Advisory period. In addition, all staff will build their own "college map" during the year, showing the path they took from high school to BVP educator – an activity that highlights for students what's possible, invites questions, and strengthens relationships between students and staff.

All these efforts seem to be having an impact. One student recently shared with Arango and Gemma that she signed up for some open houses and other campus events after she learned about them in the BVP newsletter. She added, "Now that I am comfortable sending emails to [you] and other teachers, communicating with colleges and admissions reps has been a lot easier."

School counselors play a vital role in nurturing students' social and academic well-being, guiding their future aspirations, and providing support during challenging times. They are leaders, collaborators, and staunch advocates dedicated to fostering student success.

CHERI SACCO

President, RI Association of School Principals &
Principal, Orchard Farms Elementary, Cranston Public School Department

Other Statewide Initiatives

Comprehensive school counseling can and should support other statewide initiatives as well. The box below includes seven additional Rhode Island state initiatives or programs aligned with school counseling, all of which emphasize whole child development, success in school and life, and meeting students' individual needs. [Appendix A](#) to this document describes each of these initiatives or programs, as well as the role school counseling programs can play in implementing them.

School Counseling Supports Many Rhode Island State Initiatives

- Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Career and Technical Education and Work-Based Learning
- School-Based Mental Health
- Attendance Matters Rhode Island
- Multilingual Learners
- Special Education
- Work Based Learning

While it's important to recognize how school counseling programs can help achieve strategic goals, this is only part of the story. To realize that potential, school and LEA leaders must be aligned in recognizing the value that comprehensive school counseling programs offer in supporting school improvement efforts and supporting student needs.



Sample of Research Demonstrating the Impact of School Counseling Programs

Summarized from ASCA's [*Empirical Research Studies Supporting the Value of School Counseling*](#)

Academic Development

- A study evaluating the impact of a small-group counseling intervention designed for students who underachieve found [**significant improvement for ninth- and tenth-grade underachieving students**](#) in the areas of organizational skills, time management, and motivation.
- An analysis of a large-scale psychoeducational study skills group for ninth-graders performing in the bottom 50 percent of their class found that a small-group counseling intervention [**strengthened studying behaviors**](#) as measured by a pre-test and post-test design.
- A case study describing the student success results from the counselor-led program [**All Hands on Deck: A Comprehensive, Result-Driven Counseling Model**](#) showed an increase in graduation rate.

Career Development

- A comparison of college and career readiness in Recognized ASCA Model Programs (RAMP) and non-RAMP high schools found that students participating in RAMP school counseling programs had [**statistically significant higher SAT and ACT WorkKeys scores and college enrollment**](#).
- A pretest-posttest analysis of an elementary career awareness program developed and implemented by school counselors found [**significant increases in students' knowledge and awareness of college and career readiness standards**](#).
- A study found that graduating 12th graders attending schools with lower student-to-school counselor ratios and more complete implementation of the ASCA National Model engaged in [**higher-quality college counseling learning activities**](#).

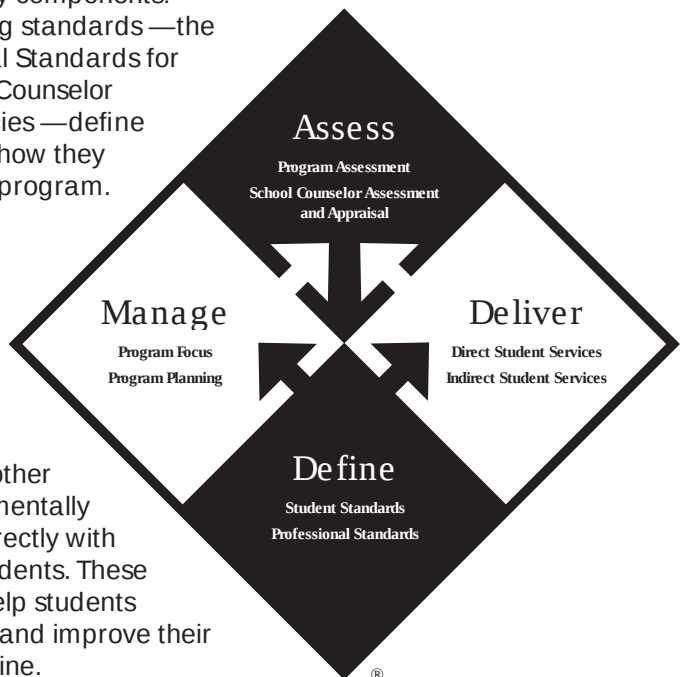
Social-Emotional Development

- An analysis of a classroom counseling intervention for first-graders found that students' [**self-efficacy scores increased by 72%**](#) relative to a comparison group.
- Researchers found that a school-based counseling intervention with a high-risk population of students recently immigrated to the United States resulted in [**significantly higher scores on school adjustment**](#), as well as higher GPAs, relative to a comparison group.
- A discussion group program that school counselors implemented with the families of young children referred for aggression and attention [**reduced children's hyperactive, defiant, and aggressive behavior and improved parents' management skills**](#).

Implementing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Since 2005, Rhode Island has used the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. The Model has evolved since then and is now in its fourth edition. The Model is [backed by research](#) and provides the basis for implementing a school counseling program that is comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, developmental in nature, and collaborative in implementation. This part of the Framework outlines the Model's four key components:

- **Define.** Three sets of school counseling standards—the ASCA Student Standards, ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, and ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies—define the school counseling profession and how they support a comprehensive counseling program.
- **Manage.** Efficient and effective management is key to an impactful program. The program focus and planning tools guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results.
- **Deliver.** School counselors, in partnership with administration and other school professionals, deliver developmentally appropriate activities and services directly with students or indirectly on behalf of students. These direct and indirect student services help students develop the ASCA Student Standards and improve their achievement, attendance, and discipline.
- **Assess.** To achieve the best results for students, school counseling programs are regularly assessed to determine effectiveness, inform improvements to design and delivery, and show how students are different as a result of the school counseling program.



In addition, data informs all aspects of school counseling, meaning that data collection and analysis allow school counseling programs to identify and prioritize student needs, determine the best strategies to address those needs, evaluate the impact of their efforts, and adjust their approach as needed (see “Key Data Questions by Component”).

Key Data Questions by Component

Manage:

- What is the data telling us?
- Where should we focus our efforts based on student needs?

Deliver:

- Are the strategies working?
- How might the strategies be adjusted to have a greater impact?

Assess:

- Who participated in what activities, and for how long?
- What did students learn by participating in school counseling activities?
- How did the school counseling activities improve student outcomes (achievement, attendance, or discipline)?

The rest of this section describes each component of the ASCA National Model in more detail, including the role of data-informed decision-making, in each. As ASCA updates the ASCA National Model, RIDE will update this section accordingly.



Defining the Program

Three sets of school counseling standards serve as the defining documents for the school counseling profession in supporting a comprehensive school counseling program. The [ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#) (ASCA Student Standards) address what students should know and be able to do, while the [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#) and the [ASCA Ethical Standards](#) focus on what school counselors should know and do. All three sets of standards help new and experienced school counselors manage, deliver, and assess school counseling programs to improve student outcomes (see “Three Sets of Standards: An Overview”).

Three Sets of Standards: An Overview		
The three sets of school counseling standards drive the school counseling program by defining the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should be able to demonstrate as a result of a school counseling program and how school counselors create a comprehensive program that supports students in acquiring them.		
Document	Describing...	Sets Standards for...
ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success	mindsets and behaviors	students
ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies	mindsets and behaviors	school counselors
ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors	ethical standards	school counselors

ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success

The [ASCA Student Standards](#) describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness, and social-emotional development. The 36 standards are based on a survey of research and best practices in student achievement from a wide array of educational standards and efforts. The mindset standards focus on the psychosocial attitudes or beliefs students have about themselves in relation to academic work, while the behavior standards address behaviors commonly associated with student success, including learning strategies, self-management skills, and social skills.

All Rhode Island school counseling programs should use the ASCA Student Standards to assess student growth and development, guide the strategies and activities they implement, and create a program that helps students achieve their highest potential. Rhode Island’s ILP scope and sequence is aligned with the ASCA Student Standards. These standards should serve as the foundation for classroom lessons, small groups, and activities addressing students’ developmental needs.

ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

The [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#) outline the mindsets and behaviors school counselors should possess to meet the rigorous demands of the school counseling profession and PreK-12 student needs. These standards and competencies help ensure that new and experienced school counselors are equipped to establish, maintain, and enhance a comprehensive school counseling program addressing academic achievement,

ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success K-12 College-, Career- and Life-Readiness Standards for Every Student

Each of the following standards can be applied to the academic, career and social/emotional domains.

Category 1: Mindset Standards

School counselors encourage the following mindsets for all students.

- M 1.** Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
- M 2.** Sense of acceptance, respect, support and inclusion for self and others in the school environment
- M 3.** Positive attitude toward work and learning
- M 4.** Self-confidence in ability to succeed
- M 5.** Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
- M 6.** Understanding that postsecondary education and lifelong learning are necessary for long-term success

Category 2: Behavior Standards

School counselors provide culturally sustaining instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling to help all students demonstrate:

Learning Strategies		Self-Management Skills	Social Skills
B-LS 1.	Critical thinking skills to make informed decisions	B-SMS 1. Responsibility for self and actions	B-SS 1. Effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
B-LS 2.	Creative approach to learning, tasks and problem solving	B-SMS 2. Self-discipline and self-control	B-SS 2. Positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them
B-LS 3.	Time-management, organizational and study skills	B-SMS 3. Independent work	B-SS 3. Positive relationships with adults to support success
B-LS 4.	Self-motivation and self-direction for learning	B-SMS 4. Delayed gratification for long-term rewards	B-SS 4. Empathy
B-LS 5.	Media and technology skills to enhance learning	B-SMS 5. Perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals	B-SS 5. Ethical decision-making and social responsibility
B-LS 6.	High-quality standards for tasks and activities	B-SMS 6. Ability to identify and overcome barriers	B-SS 6. Effective collaboration and cooperation skills
B-LS 7.	Long- and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals	B-SMS 7. Effective coping skills	B-SS 7. Leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse groups
B-LS 8.	Engagement in challenging coursework	B-SMS 8. Balance of school, home and community activities	B-SS 8. Advocacy skills for self and others and ability to assert self, when necessary
B-LS 9.	Decision-making informed by gathering evidence, getting others' perspectives and recognizing personal bias	B-SMS 9. Personal safety skills	B-SS 9. Social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment
B-LS 10.	Participation in enrichment and extracurricular activities	B-SMS 10. Ability to manage transitions and adapt to change	B-SS 10. Cultural awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness

career planning, and social-emotional development. Administrators can support school counselors in developing ASCA Professional Standards & Competencies by providing dedicated professional development opportunities, protecting counselors' time for direct and indirect student services, and implementing robust data collection systems. Leadership support involves advocating for counselors' critical roles, fostering collaborative environments, establishing clear role expectations aligned with professional standards, and encouraging continuous learning. Structural support is crucial, including schedules that prioritize data-driven student interventions and strategic program development. Ultimately, administrators play a pivotal role in creating an ecosystem that empowers counselors to effectively address academic, career, and social-emotional student needs.

While these standards are most relevant to school counselors, they can also support school administrators. More specifically, they can inform what school administrators look for as they recruit new school counselors and help shape meaningful performance evaluations for existing school counselors. This can be used to supplement the [Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals](#).

ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors

The [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) specify the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the highest standard of integrity, leadership, and professionalism. They guide school counselors' decision-making and help standardize professional practice to protect both students and school counselors. They inform all educational partners—including students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, community members, and courts of justice—of best ethical practices, values, and expected behaviors of the school counseling profession.

Our counselor helped my daughter navigate severe anxiety and made it much easier for her to attend school by providing coping strategies and social-emotional awareness activities.

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Managing the Program

To effectively deliver a comprehensive school counseling program that addresses all students' developmental needs, it must be effectively and efficiently managed. The “Manage” component of the ASCA National Model provides organizational assessments and tools designed to guide, target, structure, and construct a school counseling program to get results. It includes two sections: program focus and program planning.

Program Focus

A program focus should guide the school counseling program's work. This focus includes the program's beliefs, vision statement, and mission statement, and should align with those of the district.

Beliefs

The [ASCA Professional Standards & Competencies](#) include the foundational school counseling beliefs (see “School Counselor Beliefs from ASCA Professional Standards & Competencies”). The school counseling program is designed based on these beliefs.

School Counselor Beliefs from ASCA Professional Standards & Competencies

- M1. Every student can learn, and every student can succeed.
- M2. Every student should have access to and opportunity for a high-quality education.
- M3. Every student should graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities.
- M4. Every student should have access to a school counseling program.
- M5. Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving school counselors, students, families, teachers, administrators, and educational partners.
- M6. School counselors are leaders in the school, district, state, and nation.
- M7. Comprehensive school counseling programs promote and enhance student academic, career, and social-emotional outcomes.

Vision Statement

The school counseling vision statement communicates what school counseling programs hope to see for students five to 15 years in the future. The vision should center around **students**, rather than the school counseling program. In addition, the school counseling vision statement should align with the school and district vision statements (if available) —which should in turn align with the school improvement plan —and create a vision of success (see “Vision Statement for Greenbush Elementary School Counseling Program” as an example).

Vision Statement for Greenbush Elementary School Counseling Program

All students from Greenbush Elementary School will have a lifelong love of learning. Students will graduate high school with the critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills necessary to become culturally competent, successful members of a caring community.

Mission Statement

While a vision statement paints a picture of where students will be, a mission statement describes how the school counseling program will help students get there. It provides the focus, action, and direction to reach the vision. It informs educational partners of the school counseling program’s purpose and vision to make it a reality. The mission statement should align with the school and district mission statements whenever available (see “Mission Statement for Greenbush Elementary School Counseling Program” as an example).

Mission Statement for Greenbush Elementary School Counseling Program

The mission of the school counseling program at Greenbush Elementary School is to provide a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where all students can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. Through collaborative efforts with educators, families, and the community, our program aims to promote the holistic development of each student by delivering comprehensive counseling services that address their unique needs and challenges. We are committed to fostering a positive school climate, empowering students to build resilience, developing essential life skills, and cultivating meaningful relationships. Guided by principles of empathy, equity, and advocacy, we strive to inspire a sense of belonging and self-confidence in every child in a safe learning environment, preparing them to become responsible citizens and lifelong learners with future-ready skills.

Involving Others in the School Community

As the school counseling program’s focus is developed and refined, it is important that members of the broader school community are involved. This collaboration could include sharing the draft mission and vision statements and beliefs with community members for feedback, as well as sharing the mission and vision statements widely once they are complete (e.g., on websites, in newsletters, in signature lines). Doing so builds both awareness and buy-in for the program focus while also fostering collaboration.

[My child’s school counselor] supported my child through a difficult mental health situation, both by being a resource during the school day and by working with the broader school administration to make accommodations for my child. This was key in turning my child’s year around for the positive!

RHODE ISLAND PARENT

Program Planning

Program planning ensures the school counseling program is data-driven, preventive, intentional, and student-focused, and that the time spent on direct and indirect student services effectively reaches the stated program goals. It also ensures that school counselors, in partnership with administrators and other school professionals, develop, implement, and assess their school counseling program based on clearly defined priorities reflective of student needs.

There are eight tools to support the program planning process. These tools do not have to be completed in sequential order. Additionally, it is not expected that school counselors will utilize all the tools at once. Full implementation of the Rhode Island School Counseling Framework in alignment with the ASCA National Model typically takes 3-5 years (see [Phased Implementation Guide](#)).

1. [School Data Summary Template](#)
2. [Annual Student Outcome Goals Plan](#)
3. [Action Plans](#)
4. [Lesson Plans](#)
5. [Annual Administrative Conference](#)
6. [Use-of-Time Calculator](#)
7. [Calendars](#)
8. [Advisory Council](#)

The rest of this section describes each of these tools in more detail.

1 School Data Summary Template

The school counseling program should reflect student needs as determined by a school's data. A data-informed school counseling program therefore includes an annual data review at the start of the school year to reveal trends across grades, years, and student sub-groups, identify any barriers to success that may exist in student achievement, opportunity, or attainment, and determine priorities.

Consideration should be given for the time frame the data covers; looking across achievement, attendance, and discipline over several years shows how trends may have changed over time. Creating charts or graphs with year-by-year data is also a helpful way to show changes and trends in student success.

[The School Data Summary template](#) serves as a guide for the school counseling program that includes reviewing the school improvement plan, school data reports, and other data sources (e.g., student behavior surveys, climate surveys, school engagement surveys, etc.) to assess students' needs, including who to engage for support, priorities to consider, and analyses to conduct. This data summary answers the questions: "What does the student data tell us?" and "Where should we focus our efforts?" (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample School Data Summary template).

The data used to inform best practice overlaps with other school goals and priorities, such as school improvement plans. Therefore, school counselors collect and analyze these data in partnership with others in the building (e.g., School Improvement Team, MTSS team, administration team, data team). The School Data Summary template may be completed with these teams as part of the process.

As the School Data Summary template shows, this data analysis should include both schoolwide and disaggregated data that considers different sub-groups. While schoolwide data speak to trends across the student body, sub-group data may reveal achievement gaps or specific needs for pockets of students in the school. In addition, the data should span multiple years whenever possible to show how trends have changed over time. It is also helpful to consider how a school compares to other similar schools (see “Examples of Data Analyses Conducted to Identify Student Needs”).

Examples of Data Analyses Conducted to Identify Student Needs

Achievement gaps or concerns:

- Students off- track for on-time graduation
- Students performing below expectations or enrolled in remedial programs
- Students with two or more F's during the first grading period

Attendance gaps or concerns:

- Average daily attendance by school, grade level, or sub-group
- Students chronically absent (10%of the year or more)
- How absenteeism varies by different student sub-groups

Discipline gaps or concerns:

- Total disciplinary referrals during a specified time period
- Students with two or more disciplinary referrals during a specified time period
- Percentage of students in each sub-group receiving disciplinary referrals or specific consequences (e.g, suspensions)

2. Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan

Annual Student Outcome Goals are statements identifying the measurable impact the school counseling program will have on student achievement, attendance, or discipline. Similarly, the strategies and interventions put in place should support Annual Student Outcome Goals (see [Action Plans](#) in the next subsection).

To best support the school counseling program, school counselors should develop Annual Student Outcome Goals using the [Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan template](#) at the beginning of the school year. The template guides school counselors through the process of developing SMART goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound (see “Scituate High School Counseling Department SMART Goal” for an example).

Annual Student Outcome Goals should align with school improvement goals. The goals in the school improvement plan identify the school's big-picture needs, while Annual Student Outcome Goals may address a part of the schoolwide goal. For example, an Annual Student Outcome Goal may focus on a student sub-group identified in the school improvement plan.

The template ensures that school counselors have identified and understand the student needs each goal addresses and that the goal is tied to one or more specific ASCA Student Standards. The template also helps school counselors begin considering the actions they will take to meet the goal and how they will measure progress. In addition, it aligns with the Student Outcome Objective that school counselors complete as part of the [Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals](#) (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan).

Scituate High School School Counseling Department SMART Goal

By	June 2024 <i>End Date</i>	8th, 9th, and 10th grade students identified as failing or at risk of failing Algebra I at the end of first semester (Ds, Es, Fs) <i>Describe Targeted Students (Criteria for inclusion in interventions with multiple descriptors)</i>	
will	decrease <i>Decrease/ Increase</i>	The cumulative number of Ds, Es, and Fs in Algebra I <i>Describe specific outcome to be changed (achievement, attendance or discipline)</i>	
by	44% <i>Percent change</i>	from 9 <i>Baseline data (Numbers only)</i>	to 4 <i>Target data (Numbers only)</i>

The annual student goal process is beneficial because it establishes measurable objectives that enhance student outcomes. It provides a structured approach for developing targeted interventions tailored to students' specific needs.

DONNA POWELL, School Counselor, Melville Elementary School

3. Action Plans

It is recommended that two types of action plans be created, both of which the ASCA Student Standards inform:

- **The Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Action Plan** provides an overview of the direct student services delivered as a part of the school counseling program. Keeping in mind that the ASCA Student Standards guide the planning and delivery of all activities and interventions, this tool is used to identify all Student Standards addressed through large-group, classroom, and small-group activities. The large-group and classroom activities are typically considered Tier 1 supports that are comprehensive, preventive, developmental, and delivered to all students. The small-group activities are typically targeted activities, short-term interventions, or follow-up activities to address a student's specific needs. All these activities promote students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills based on the Student Standards.

Each school should have **just one** Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Action Plan that identifies all Student Standards addressed through classroom and group activities. While some activities address multiple Student Standards, the Action Plan should only include the **primary standard** the activity addresses. Each activity listed on the Action Plan should also be included on the [Annual Calendar](#). (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Action Plan).

- [The Closing-the-Gap Action Plan / Results Report](#) addresses academic, attendance, or disciplinary discrepancies between student groups. These discrepancies are identified through the review of disaggregated data. School counselors then develop detailed action plans indicating activities and resources to close the gaps. (Note that the “[Assess](#)” section addresses the “Results Report” portion of the template.) The [Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan](#) informs the Closing-the-Gap Action Plan and includes documentation of a variety of activities and interventions aligned with the Student Standards to close achievement, opportunity, information, or attainment gaps (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Closing-the-Gap Action Plan).

Both plans consider the ASCA Student Standards addressed, the participants involved, the school counseling activities to be delivered, the specific setting, and the timing of the activity. Moreover, both of these documents should be working documents that the school counseling team creates annually and revises during the school year as needed.

4. Lesson Plans

Instruction is a key school counseling strategy, and a solid lesson plan forms the basis of an effective lesson. There is limited classroom time to deliver school counseling curriculum, so it is all the more important to make the most of every minute available to provide instruction to students.

A thoughtful lesson plan should be prepared for every lesson delivered. The [Lesson Plan template](#) breaks down the elements of a strong lesson plan, including identifying the ASCA Student Standard(s) the lesson will address, what students will know or do as a result of the lesson, the lesson content, and how the school counselor will assess student understanding (see “Effective and Engaging Teaching Practices and Strategies,” as well as [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Lesson Plan).

School Counseling teams transitioning to the Lesson Plan template do not need to transfer all lessons at once; they can move some of their lessons into the template over time until complete.

Effective and Engaging Teaching Practices and Strategies

All instruction is not the same. Research shows that some strategies are more strongly correlated with improvements in student outcomes. Some examples include:

- **I do, we do, you do** is a strategy whereby a teacher gradually shifts responsibility for demonstrating a new skill from the teacher to the student. First, the teacher models the new skill (I do). Next, the class practices using the new skill together (we do). Then, students practice the skill independently (you do).
- **Questioning** involves asking students strategic, thoughtful questions to drive inquiry, deepen understanding, and prompt critical thinking.
- **Think-pair-share** is a strategy whereby the teacher proposes a question or challenge. Students then think about the question independently (think) before discussing the question with a partner (pair). Finally, students share their conclusions with the entire class (share).
- **Checks for understanding** are short, low-stakes, formative assessments throughout a lesson that allow the teacher to assess student understanding and adjust their instruction. For example, a teacher may ask students to write the answer to a question on a whiteboard, allowing the teacher to quickly determine whether students understand the key points from the lesson so they can proceed or re-teach using a different approach.

For more on high-quality instructional practices, see [Supporting Recovery with Evidence-Based Practices](#) from the Institute of Education Sciences.

5. Annual Administrative Conference

Successful comprehensive school counseling programs are implemented as a collaborative effort with administrators, school-based mental health professionals, and classroom teachers. The Annual Administrative Conference offers one tool to foster this collaborative effort.

The Annual Administrative Conference is a formal discussion between the school counselor(s) and administrator that takes place within the first two months of school. When school counselors and administrators meet to establish program priorities, implementation strategies, and organizational structure—while considering input from teachers, school-based mental health professionals, and other key stakeholders—the school counseling program is more likely to run smoothly and produce the desired results for students. An effective conference builds administrator awareness and buy-in for the school counseling program and provides an opportunity to further align the program's goals with those of the broader school.

The [Annual Administrative Conference template](#) provides an outline for the discussion, which should address a range of topics, including:

- Program goals
- The school counselor's use of time
- Ratio and caseload
- Program implementation
- Advisory Council
- Budget and materials

In addition, the school counselor and administrator should review several documents, including the School Data Summary, Action Plans, and Annual Calendar (see [Tools and Resources](#) for samples of these templates). It is worth noting that the Annual Administrative Conference aligns with the Beginning-of-Year Conference included in the [Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals](#).

The Annual Administrative Conference provides a valuable foundation for school counseling program collaboration, along with ongoing partnership between administrators, school counselors, school-based mental health professionals, and classroom teachers. To build a thriving school counseling program, these team members must meet regularly, plan, and set goals together.

The Annual Administrative Conference Reinforces Teamwork at Birchwood Middle School

Kym Hambly, school counselor at North Providence’s Birchwood Middle School, wanted to work towards receiving the [Recognized ASCA Model Program \(RAMP\)](#) designation. As part of that process, Hambly and Assistant Principal, Joe Palazzo, began holding the Annual Administrative Conference.

They had already been meeting regularly and discussing many of the topics included in the conference template, such as priorities for the school counseling program, Hambly’s role in school and district committees, and her professional development. The Annual Administrative Conference formalized their conversation, however, and invited Hambly to share and discuss her Use-of-Time Calculator.

The Annual Administrative Conference also validated Hambly’s work and better positioned Palazzo to support her. “Kym is at the center of so much at Birchwood,” explained Palazzo. “If there’s something she can’t get done, these conversations let us know.”

According to Hambly, they also reinforced how the school team works together. “I may be a one-woman department,” explained Hambly, “but it really does take a village with administrators, teachers, and other staff working together to meet our goals.”

6. Use-of-Time Calculator

The [Use-of-Time Calculator](#) provides a snapshot of how school counselors spend their time.

It is recommended that school counselors spend at least 80%of their time in direct and indirect services to students to reap the benefits of a comprehensive school counseling program. The remaining 20%of the time is set aside for program planning and school support services, such as tasks related to defining, managing, and assessing a comprehensive school counseling program. In addition, a small portion of the 20%of the school counselor’s time may include fair-share responsibilities.

The Use-of-Time Calculator allows school counselors and administrators to see how close school counselors are to the recommended 80% 20%split (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Use-of-Time Calculator). When that balance is off, the Use-of-Time Calculator also offers a useful tool for identifying opportunities to adjust. It is recommended that school counselors complete the Calculator at least twice each year —once in the fall and once in the spring —and track changes in how they spend their time. As noted above, school counselors should share their Use-of-Time Calculator with their administrator during their Annual Administrative Conference.

ASCA Ethical Standards

[ASCA Ethical Standard A.5.i](#) (2022) states, “Avoid [inappropriate roles](#) and relationships such as providing direct discipline, teaching courses that involve **grading students**, and accepting administrative duties in the absence of an administrator.”

7. Calendars

A comprehensive school counseling program utilizes calendars to provide effective use of time and to inform students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators regarding which school counseling activities will take place, as well as when and where. Calendars also help to ensure school counselors are spending at least 80% of their time providing direct and indirect services.

When sharing calendars, it is important to do so in a variety of ways to reach all audiences, including on websites, on social media, in emails, and by printing and posting them in hallways. It is also helpful to translate the calendars into families' home languages.

Annual Calendars

The [Annual Calendar template](#) is used to communicate **school counseling program** priorities. The school counseling program has one annual calendar that includes the dates and times of all major school counseling activities that the school counseling team delivers or coordinates, such as classroom lessons, back-to-school nights, and college and career nights. The annual calendar can increase the visibility and shared responsibility of school counseling programs and help students, parents/guardians, and staff identify high-priority activities (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Annual Calendar).

Weekly Calendars

In addition to a program-wide annual calendar, **each school counselor** should create a weekly calendar that provides a detailed plan of their activities for the week, such as data analysis, classroom lessons, and group and individual counseling sessions. Ideally, the weekly calendar is also shared in a variety of ways, such as posted outside of the counselor's office, given to front-office staff, and shared electronically with administrators and staff. Although the weekly calendar should allow for some flexibility so school counselors can support immediate student needs that may arise, this calendar serves as a plan for daily program implementation. As noted previously, it is important to balance the need for flexibility with school counselors' intentional, preventive delivery of scheduled activities.

There is not a weekly calendar template; however, school counselors may create one similar to the “Example Weekly Calendar” on the next page using time increments that work best for them.

Example Weekly Calendar

	Mon 9/ 2	Tues 9/ 3	Wed 9/ 4	Thurs 9/ 5	Fri 9/ 6
8:00 - 8:30 am	Arrival Duty	Data Analysis	6th Grade Study Skills Small Group	Parent Meeting	Schoolwide Weekly Assembly
8:30 - 9:00 am	Lead Mindful Monday Morning	7th Grade Emotion Management Classroom Lesson	MTSS Team Meeting	Prep for 8th Grade Career Fair	Individual Counseling with Student (session 2 of 6)

Key

Direct Student Services

Indirect Student Services

Program Planning & School Support

Non- School Counseling Tasks

8. Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is an important tool in the school counseling program’s continuous cycle of improvement. It is recommended that every school counseling program create an Advisory Council of 8-20 members representative of the school community, such as teachers, parents, and school-based mental health professionals from the community. The Advisory Council should meet at least twice a year, identify a chairperson to lead the group, and enter each meeting with a clear agenda.

The Advisory Council provides feedback and advice while creating an avenue to elevate all voices. More specifically, the Advisory Council can improve the school counseling program by:

- Advising on annual student outcome goals.
- Reviewing annual student outcome goal results.
- Making recommendations about the school counseling program.
- Advocating and engaging in public relations for the school counseling program.
- Gathering information for program development and improvement.

The first meeting typically takes place in the fall and informs members of the Council’s purpose, presents the school counseling program calendar and goals, and shares any relevant school data. In contrast, the second meeting typically takes place in the spring and provides a summary of the program’s impact on students, grounded in data, and discusses recommendations for program improvements.

Using the Advisory Council to Connect the Dots to Student Success at Ponaganset High

Ponaganset High School's (PHS) school counseling team knew it was having an impact on students every day. Even so, it often felt like members of the school community misunderstood their work. "It can look like doing busy work in an office," explained department chair, Linda Murphy. "Pursuing the [Recognized ASCA Model Program \(RAMP\)](#) designation offered a way to formalize and share the depth of what we do."

As part of its RAMP application process, PHS strengthened its implementation of the ASCA National Model by launching an Advisory Council. It recruited a 10-member group, which included the school's four school counselors as well as a classroom teacher, a parent, a student, the principal, a school committee member, and the superintendent.

At its first meeting, the Advisory Council focused on the school counseling team's Closing-the-Gap Action Plan. They reviewed a variety of data, which helped to identify three areas of need. The school already had initiatives in place to address two of those areas, so the school counseling team decided to focus on a third related to math – decreasing the number of students failing Algebra 1 or Geometry.

The school counselors then explained to Advisory Council members how they had considered ways they could best support math achievement, which led them to develop a plan where they would work with students on executive functioning skills like study skills, goal-setting, and scheduling. The Advisory Council asked questions about the plan and made suggestions to strengthen it.

Advisory Council members reviewed the data at its next meeting in the spring to evaluate the initiative's impact. Not only had the School Counseling Department met its goal of cutting the number of students failing Algebra 1 and Geometry by half, but students also demonstrated growth across a range of mindsets and behaviors as measured by pre- and post-assessment results.

Above all, however, the Advisory Council provided an opportunity for members of the school community to connect the dots across departments and better understand how school counseling can support schoolwide priorities. "We often focus on curriculum and teaching strategies when students are struggling academically," shared PHS Principal Amanda Grundel. "The Advisory Council made clear that there's a lot we can do – and that our school counseling team *is* doing – outside of the classroom to support student success."

Delivering the Program

The “Deliver” component defines the methods that school counselors, in partnership with administrators and other school professionals, use to help students attain the ASCA Student Standards and improve student achievement, attendance, and discipline. This component consists of two broad categories: direct services **with** students and indirect services **on behalf of** students.

In alignment with the ASCA National Model, RIDE recommends that school counselors spend 80% or more of their time providing direct and indirect student services to best support students and achieve the myriad positive outcomes identified in the [research](#). Meanwhile, the analysis and planning that takes place during the “[Manage](#)” component should inform the specific activities implemented in the school counseling program.

Direct Student Services

Direct student services are interactions **with** students to help them attain the ASCA Student Standards. They can take three forms: instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling. As the descriptions that follow demonstrate, direct student services require more than simply interacting with students in the hallways or as part of an after-school activity; they involve intentionally supporting students to build the mindsets and behaviors they need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness, and social-emotional development.

Instruction

Instruction refers to teaching the school counseling curriculum to students in one of three settings: classrooms, small groups, or individually.

1. **Classroom Instruction.** Classroom instruction is a preventative, Tier 1 support within MTSS that all students should receive.
2. **Small-Group Instruction.** School counselors work with small groups to reinforce concepts students may be struggling with or to provide instruction based on a shared interest or need. A small group typically includes no more than 10 students in a minimum of four group sessions.
3. **Individual Instruction.** A school counselor may turn to individual instruction when a child requires additional time or a different method to master a particular ASCA Student Standard.

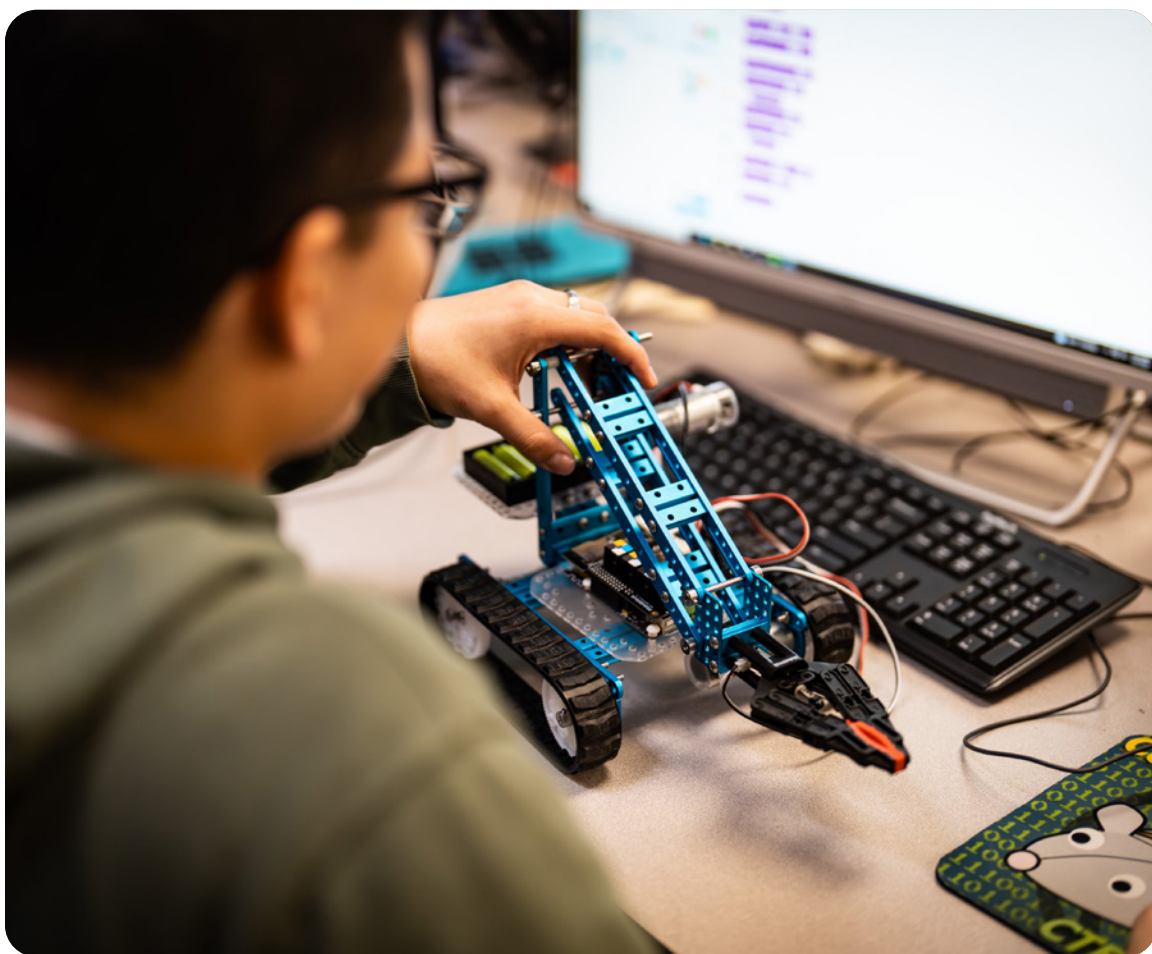
As part of a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors at every grade level should deliver instruction through all three formats (see “Example Instruction Topics” and “Same Standard, Different Lesson”). School counselors may provide instruction through direct instruction, team teaching, or assisting in learning activities. School counselors provide follow-up to small groups or individual students as needed to help students better attain the Student Standards and improve achievement, attendance, or discipline. To plan for effective instruction, [Lesson Plans](#) are created and aligned with the [Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Action Plan](#).

As is the case with all the direct student services school counselors provide, student needs should drive the format school counselors use in any particular instance. The “[Assess](#)” section later in this Framework describes how school counselors can evaluate the impact of their instructional lessons.

Example Instruction Topics

Instruction addresses all three domains of school counseling and occurs for PreK-12 students in large groups, classrooms, small groups, or individually. The table below includes examples of instructional topics that could occur in any setting.

Domain	Example Topics
Academic	Study skills, goal-setting, 4-year academic plan and course planning, self-motivation, and balancing school, home, and activities
Career	Building self-awareness of skills and interests, postsecondary planning, exploring careers, and understanding the connections between lifestyle and career choices
Social-Emotional	Self-discipline, peer relationships, personal safety, coping skills, stress management, self-regulation, and social skills



Same Standard, Different Format

The ASCA Student Standards drive instruction in all three formats. The table below includes examples of how instruction related to the Standards could look in classroom, small-group, and individual settings.

ASCA Student Standard	Classroom Instruction	Small-Group Instruction	Individual Instruction
B-LS 3. Time-management, organizational, and study skills	Provide instruction on how to effectively use a school agenda to keep track of school assignments	Provide a series of time management lessons for six students who have 10 or more tardies in the first quarter focused on creating schedules, daily routines, and ways to effectively manage time	Work with a student who received 3 Fs on the first progress report on using mnemonic devices and the Cornell notetaking system
B-SMS 7. Effective coping skills	Provide instruction on positive self-talk	Teach mindfulness techniques related to expressing feelings, deep breathing, and mindful meditation to small groups of five students with three or more discipline referrals involving aggression	Work with a student who is going through a difficult transition on their “circle of control” and what is and is not within their personal control
B-SS 4. Empathy	Provide instruction on what empathy is and why it matters	Facilitate a restorative conversation with three students who have ongoing conflicts	Work with a student who has difficulty understanding social cues, such as interpreting facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice

A Place for Large-Group Instruction

Sometimes, there may be opportunities for school counselors to provide instruction to large groups that extend beyond a classroom, such as to a grade level or even the entire school. This can be done collaboratively with administrators, teachers, and school-based mental health professionals. Often, those opportunities are part of a specific planned experience or interest area. For example, large group instruction might include:

- Academic activities such as working with an incoming 6th grade class to navigate the transition to middle school.
- Career activities such as application workshops that boost students’ skills around essay completion, job applications, or scholarships.
- Social-emotional activities such as an assembly related to bullying prevention.

Appraisal and Advisement

School counselors and other educational professionals (such as teachers and school-based mental health professionals) support the comprehensive school counseling program by providing appraisal and advisement to help students understand their abilities, values, and career interests. Appraisal and advisement occur with individual students, in small groups, and in classroom settings. It is a two-part process that often results in students establishing personal goals and developing future plans, both of which are major components of Rhode Island's [Individualized Learning Plans](#) (ILPs).

- 1. Appraisal** is the process of supporting students in analyzing and assessing their abilities, interests, skills, and achievements. The defining characteristic of appraisal is its focus on a student test, inventory, or other data that includes some level of interpretation, assessment, and feedback leading to the development of an academic, career, and/or social-emotional plan. A common example of appraisal is the analysis of a completed interest inventory to inform the student's selection of a career pathway.
- 2. Advisement** is the process through which school counselors make recommendations based on appraisal to help students make decisions about their future. Through advisement, school counselors help students explore opportunities, expectations, or requirements. They support students' course taking in alignment with their identified interests. After careful consideration and continued exploration and discussions with other key individuals—such as parents/guardians, teachers, and community members—students are empowered to make decisions about their futures. Advisement includes recommendations for exploring services and opportunities available at the school and in the community, making appropriate course selections, determining meaningful educational goals, and selecting programs of study. For more, see “Rhode Island Middle and High School Appraisal and Advisement.”



Rhode Island Middle and High School Appraisal and Advisement

In Rhode Island, the appraisal process is, in part, supported through students' Individualized Learning Plans (ILP). The ILP is intended to drive student appraisal and advisement at the middle and high school levels.

Appraisal and Advisement at the Middle Level

Rhode Island student ILPs in grades 6-8 support students with developing self-awareness, setting achievable academic goals, and exploring and refining career interests. By fostering a proactive approach to personal and educational growth, students are better prepared to transition confidently into high school and beyond. Leveraging the ILP, along with information such as grades, interest inventories etc. in the appraisal and advisement process, middle level support in Rhode Island should include, at minimum:

- 1. Middle School Course taking. Advising should ensure all students enroll in learning experiences that build foundational skills in core subjects, meet prerequisites for advanced high school courses, and align with their academic and career goals. All students should be provided with the opportunity to participate in advanced course taking beginning in middle school to jumpstart their high school experience.
 - a. For example, access to Algebra I in the 8th grade is strongly correlated with a student's ability to access advanced math course taking while in high school. Schools and districts should use multiple data sources to determine eligibility, communicate course opportunities early, and support students in aligning their math pathways with future goals. More details on these considerations can be found in the [RIDE Readiness- Based Graduation Requirements](#).
 - b. Transition to high school, course planning, and selection for high school should be supported to ensure all students are familiar with the graduation requirements for their class as well as the course work they should take to reach their postsecondary goals. Consideration should be given to how to support all students in the transition from middle to high school.
- 2. Career and Technical Education. Advising should ensure all students and their families are made aware of the various high school opportunities available to them. This may include information related to both in- and out-of-district RIDE-approved Career and Technical Education programs aligned with student interests as indicated in their ILP.

Appraisal and Advisement at the High School Level

Rhode Island student ILPs in grades 9-12 support students in setting and refining clear academic and career goals, building essential skills, and preparing for life after high school by exploring postsecondary options, career pathways, and practical experiences. Leveraging the ILP, Standardized Test Scores, Grades, and Interest/ Career assessments in the appraisal process, high school advisement in Rhode Island should include, at minimum:

- 1. High School Course taking. Advising should ensure all students enroll in high school-level learning experiences that are aligned with state and local graduation requirements and also prepare graduating students to achieve their college and career aspirations. Advising includes supporting students in developing their four-year course taking plan to align with their future postsecondary goals. This can take place through classroom lessons, group sessions, and individual student support.

- a. **Graduation Requirements.** Beginning with the graduating class of 2028 and beyond, advising should ensure all students are guided to enroll in the necessary experiences in alignment with [RIDE's Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements](#), which establish the minimum credit and proficiency requirements that all students must meet.
 - i. **Credit Requirements.** School counseling programs must guide and support students to successfully complete the following credit requirements:
 - 4 credits in English Language Arts
 - 4 credits in math, including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
 - 3 credits in science, including 2 lab sciences
 - 3 credits in history/social studies
 - 2 credits in world language
 - 1 additional college preparatory credit
 - 3 credits in art, computer science, and health and physical education
 - ii. **Proficiency Requirements.** School counseling programs must guide and support students to demonstrate proficiency in the following:
 - Civics
 - Financial Literacy
 - Computer Science
- b. **Advanced Course Taking.** Beyond the default expectations that are established by RIDE's Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements, advising should support students in identifying and enrolling in the necessary advanced course taking experiences aligned with their postsecondary and career goals. For example, RIDE's Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements align with the general admissions criteria at the University of Rhode Island (URI), Rhode Island College (RIC), and the majority of regional colleges and universities. While all students, by default, will graduate eligible for general admissions, some majors have specific admission requirements that go above this minimum/general expectation for admission. If a student is interested in matriculating into URI's School of Engineering, for example, the student should be supported in taking math courses aligned with the specific entry requirements, which include Pre-calculus or Calculus, in addition to the Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II sequence.
- c. **Career and Technical Education.** Advising should ensure all high school students have awareness of the Career and Technical Education opportunities available to them.
- d. **Work-Based Learning.** Advising should ensure that all students have exposure and access to high-quality Work-Based Learning (WBL) experiences aligned with their college and career aspirations. School counseling programs should provide all students with information (highlighting how these experiences connect to their postsecondary goals) and support to access these opportunities. WBL opportunities for academic credit may be available to students regardless of participation in CTE.

2. **Accessing Financial Aid.** Advising should ensure compliance with RIGL § 16-96-6, which establishes the requirement that notices are provided to students and their parent, guardian, or responsible adult regarding the merit and benefits of completing and filing the FAFSA form **and** the Rhode Island alternative financial aid application form. This notice shall be provided in either the student's junior year or no later than November 1 of the student's senior year. Providing Financial Aid nights, informational messaging, and sessions on FAFSA for students and their families is an important part of the school counseling program.

3. **Building Resumes.** Advising should ensure all students are supported to graduate high school with a resume to support them in gaining meaningful employment after high school. All students should be supported as part of their ILP development in creating a resume that aligns with their postsecondary goals.
4. **College and Career Transitions.** Advising should connect students with relevant information to inform their postsecondary college and career transition planning. This should include, but not be limited to, information on:
 - a. **College Options and Support with Applying.** School counseling programs provide college search and application support through classroom lessons, group sessions, individual supports, newsletters, and parent/ student large group sessions, to name a few. This programming provides students with appraisal and advisement that aligns their postsecondary school choice with their goals and provides assistance and knowledge to help them achieve their aspirations.
 - b. **Apprenticeships.** School counseling programs share apprenticeship opportunities with students and support their application to these programs (see [Resource Library](#)).
 - c. **Military.** School counseling programs provide information and resources on the branches of the military, as well as the career paths connected to those paths, through classroom lessons, group sessions, individual supports, newsletters, and parent/ student large group sessions, to name a few.



Appraisal and Advisement Bookend the High School Experience at William M. Davies Career & Technical High School

At the William M. Davies Career & Technical High School in Lincoln, appraisal and advisement services take place all four years, but they play a particularly prominent role both at the beginning and end of a student's time there.

In freshman year, Davies students must choose a career track, and the school counselors make sure they're prepared to do so. They expose students to all the career and tech functions and help them self-assess using an interest inventory. They then walk through the academic requirements students must meet to fulfill the track and graduate. "We have a lot of conversations about interests and rigor and goals," school counselor Amie Mello said. "And they're happening all year."

Meanwhile, in senior year, the focus turns to life after graduation. Students complete a survey on their future goals and then build out a plan to reach those goals. Many Davies students are first-generation college students, so part of the advisement piece includes educating them on the steps they'll need to take, like completing the FAFSA and submitting the Common Application. School counselors also make sure to support students who will be going right into the workforce by facilitating networking and other professional opportunities.

The school counseling team utilizes a mix of formal and informal methods that include large groups, small groups, and 1-on-1 conversations to make all these activities happen. For example, the school counselors typically debrief the results of an interest inventory with a class. Those conversations may then prompt a student to schedule an individual meeting to discuss their personal plans. Other students may follow up with their school counselor as they are strolling the cafeteria at lunch or during a quarterly, gradewide town hall meant to check-in with freshmen and build a sense of community.

The school counseling team stresses, however, that relationships are the key that make all these pieces work. "We really strive to know each and every one of our kids and let them know they have a place to go," school counselor Jessica Plumer explained. "That's what makes them trust us and allows us to help them."

Counseling

Counseling is the professional assistance and support a student or small group of students receives during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change, or other situations impeding student success. It aims to help students identify problems, causes, potential consequences and benefits, alternatives, and outcomes so they can make decisions and take appropriate action (see "What is Short-Term" Counseling?).

While school counseling programs aim to be preventive, counseling can also be responsive to a crisis. A crisis is a significant time of intense difficulty, distress, or danger that requires an immediate response. All counseling that a school counselor provides should be short-term and anchored on counseling theories and proven techniques. When students require long-term counseling to address mental health needs or to provide long-term support after a crisis, school counselors should collaborate with parents/guardians and other professionals to refer the child to appropriate school and/or community resources.

What is “Short-Term” Counseling?

Four features distinguish “short-term” counseling:

1. **Purpose.** Short-term counseling provides immediate support and interventions for students facing personal, social, or academic challenges.
2. **Focus.** It addresses specific, identifiable problems rather than long-term, complex issues that may require more intensive therapy.
3. **Solution-focused.** Short-term counseling emphasizes a strengths-based approach focused on finding solutions and developing coping strategies rather than extensive exploration of past experiences.
4. **Duration.** It typically involves a limited number of sessions (1-8 meetings), though the duration can vary based on student needs and school resources.

If an issue a child faces extends beyond the scope of short-term counseling, school counselors have a responsibility to refer the student to an outside mental health professional who can provide more intensive support.

Short-Term Counseling Offers an Opportunity to Support Children Through Trauma at Leviton Dual Language School

When students at Leviton Dual Language School in Providence experience an unexpected trauma and need additional support as they grieve, school counselor Ramonita Martinez will often utilize short-term counseling. After reaching out to the child’s parents, Martinez engages the child in play therapy and provides opportunities for the child to talk, always letting the child share as much —or as little —as they want.

When a student suddenly lost their sibling, for example, Martinez worked with the child to create a scrapbook. “I always enjoyed scrapbooking,” Martinez explained, “And I thought it would help them to build something they could turn to when they were feeling sad.” Other school staff got involved as well, donating materials and asking the student about the book.

The project worked. After about six weeks, the scrapbook was complete and the student showed that they were ready to end their counseling sessions with Martinez.

Martinez notes that although she is Leviton’s only school counselor, short-term counseling – like other aspects of her role – is collaborative. She always reaches out to other members of the team, including the social worker, principal, and classroom teacher, when a child experiences a trauma. “Ramonita is often our first line of defense,” explained Principal Jennifer Walker, “but it takes our whole school team to support students.”

Indirect Student Services

Indirect student services are services conducted **on behalf of** students in partnership with the child's family, teachers, administrators, school staff, and community partners. Just as with direct student services, the indirect student services school counselors choose to administer should support the ASCA Student Standards to help students improve achievement, attendance, and discipline. Indirect student services are delivered in three ways: through consultation, collaboration, and referrals.

Consultation

Consultation is the process of providing information, opinions, and recommendations to individuals who can support student needs or seeking out information from an expert about student needs. School counselors both provide and seek consultation. As experts in academic achievement, college/ career access, and social-emotional development, school counselors share strategies that support student success with parents/ guardians, teachers, other educators, and community organizations through consultation. School counselors also serve as student advocates through this strategy.

At the same time, school counselors seek consultation to collect information about student needs and identify strategies to support them. School counselors may consult with educational, legal, and mental health experts in their role.

Collaboration

Collaboration is the process by which multiple individuals work toward a common goal and share responsibility for the associated tasks. It occurs in a variety of situations related to comprehensive school counseling. "Examples of Collaboration in Support of School Counseling" outlines some forms collaboration might take.

Examples of Collaboration in Support of School Counseling



Parent/ Guardian Partnerships

- Parent workshops
- Parent meetings
- Information sessions



Community Partnerships

- Internships
- School-to-work initiatives
- College partnerships
- Mental Health services



Within-School Partnerships

- MTSS team
- Data team
- Attendance team
- School improvement team
- Crisis Response team
- School-based Mental Health team

Collaborating with Teachers to Provide Instruction

Since teachers spend the majority of the school day working directly with students, teachers often integrate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and [Individual Learning Plan \(ILP\)](#) lessons into classroom instruction. Many curriculums are designed to be teacher-led. However, the school counselor’s leadership is vital to the success of SEL and ILP implementation. To that end, school counselors can:

- Co-instruct lessons related to ILP, SEL, and career and academic development with classroom teachers.
- Advocate for schoolwide programs.
- Train and support teachers and staff.
- Collect and distribute data to demonstrate the value of SEL and ILPs.

Referrals

Referrals occur when students’ needs extend beyond the school counselor’s training and/or responsibilities. School counselors provide counseling services through brief, targeted approaches. When a student needs support beyond short-term services, it is a school counselor’s ethical duty to refer students and parents to school or community resources for additional assistance or information (for more, see “ASCA Ethical Standards Regarding Referrals”). Referrals can be as varied as students’ needs. School referrals may target academic support such as tutoring, career support such as college planning websites and employment training, or social-emotional support such as community agencies that treat mental health issues.

ASCA Ethical Standards Regarding Referrals

[ASCA Ethical Standard A.6](#) (2022) outlines how school counselors make appropriate referrals for counseling, including the need to “provide a list of outside agencies and resources in their community, or the closest available, to students and parents/ guardians when students need or request additional support. School counselors provide multiple referral options or the district-vetted list of referral options and are careful not to indicate an endorsement or preference for one individual or practice. School counselors encourage parents/guardians to research outside professionals’ skills/ experience to inform their personal decision regarding the best source of assistance for their student.”

When we experienced a tragic death in our extended family, our school counselor was able to not only speak with our child, but connect with them, check in on them, speak with us, and provide us with resources and connections we may not have had otherwise.

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Direct and Indirect Services as a Tool for MTSS

It is important to recognize that the direct and indirect services that school counselors use to implement a comprehensive school counseling program also support MTSS. As the graphic below illustrates, all students benefit from the services the school counseling program provides, making them a Tier 1 intervention. Many of the services, however, can also serve as Tier 2—and even Tier 3—services depending on the student need, group size, and specific activity.

Examples of Direct and Indirect Services by MTSS Tier

Tier 3 Direct and Indirect Services for FEW

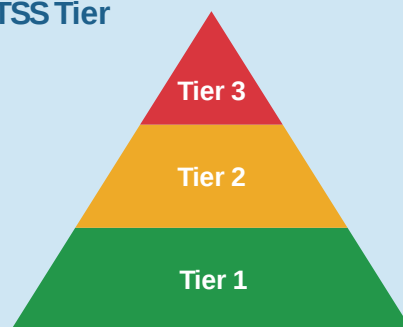
- Chronic, complex needs
- Consult and collaborate
- Fair, just, access, and inclusion policies and practices
- Wrap-around support
- Internal and community referrals
- Crisis management
- Individual counseling

Tier 2 Direct and Indirect Services for SOME

- Individual/ small group counseling based on data/ need
- Fair, just, access, and inclusion policies and practices
- Critical team member/ leader of multidisciplinary teams
- Appraisal and advisement
- Support Individual Learning Plan
- Targeted supports for college and career readiness for high needs students and transition planning
- Consult and collaborate with teachers/ staff, families, the community, and business/ industry partners

Tier 1 Direct and Indirect Prevention and Early Intervention for ALL

- School counseling classroom curriculum and instruction (academic, career, SEL)
- Large group/ schoolwide activities and initiatives
- Fair, just, access, and inclusion policies and practices for students and families
- Universal screeners and the use of data
- Support student Individual Learning Plans
- Student appraisal and advisement
- Staff collaboration and support
- Family and community, business/ industry partnerships



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Assessing the Program

To achieve the best results for students, school counselors should regularly assess the school counseling program and themselves to determine effectiveness. The “Assess” component involves looking at data over time, including program results and two kinds of assessments: program assessments and school counselor assessments and appraisals.

Program Assessments

Program assessments evaluate the impact of school counseling activities on student achievement, attendance, and discipline. Those assessments draw on various kinds of data —data related to participation, mindsets and behaviors, outcomes, and supplemental data (see “Types of Assessment Data”). The data analysis for this component focuses on three types of questions:

1. Who participated in what activities and for how long?
2. What did students learn by participating in school counseling activities?
3. How did those lessons affect students’ achievement, attendance, or discipline?

Types of Data

Program assessments rely on four kinds of data:

Data	Description	Examples
Participation <i>(Who participated in what activities and for how long?)</i>	• Number of students involved • Number of lessons or sessions • Length of time	• 120 12th grade students participated in a 50- minute classroom instruction lesson on the FAFSA • 8 5th grade students participated in 4 sessions of a study skills small group
Mindsets & Behaviors <i>(What did students learn by participating in school counseling activities?)</i>	• Pre- and post- assessments with students providing self-reported changes in attitudes, knowledge, and skills	• 92%of 8th graders can write a goal using the SMART goal format • 90%of 2nd graders can name two coping strategies to use when angry
Outcome <i>(How did those activities affect students’ achievement, attendance, or discipline?)</i>	• Change in student achievement • Change in attendance • Change in discipline	• 94%of 3rd graders reading on or above grade level (up from 87%) • 20%of 6th grade MLL students with 10 or more absences (down from 22%) • 42 9th grade students with discipline referrals related to vaping (down from 56)
Supplemental Data <i>(What else?)</i>	• Gathered from parents/ guardians, students, and staff	• Universal screeners* • School safety and climate surveys (e.g., SurveyWorks)* • Needs assessments*

*Reference [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment](#) (PPRA) guidelines for information regarding PPRA compliance with student surveys

It is recommended that school counselors utilize three kinds of assessments to evaluate the impact of their program.

1. **The ASCA School Counseling Program Assessment** captures all the elements of a comprehensive school counseling program identified in this Framework. It also provides a format for school counselors to acknowledge whether those elements are present at their school and to comment on their quality and/or effectiveness. The school counseling team should conduct the program assessment annually, typically in the latter part of the school year.
2. **The Classroom and Small-Group Results Report** assesses the impact of a classroom lesson unit or a small-group session using participation, mindsets and behaviors, and outcome data. It provides space for school counselors to reflect on what worked and how they can improve their lessons moving forward. This report can be used for any lesson or lesson unit (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Classroom and Small-Group Mindsets & Behaviors Results Report).
3. **The Closing-the-Gap Action Plan/ Results Report** begins during the “[Manage](#)” phase and helps school counselors evaluate the impact of their efforts to support specific sub-groups to attain the ASCA Student Standards and assess the impact on outcome data. It asks school counselors to collect and analyze how baseline data changed over time following intentional interventions. School counselors should complete this report annually (see [Tools and Resources](#) for a sample Closing-the-Gap Action Plan/ Results Report).

Summary of Program Assessments

	ASCA School Counseling Program Assessment	Classroom and Small-Group Results Report	Closing-the-Gap Action Plan/ Results Report
Focus	The school counseling program	All students	Targeted student groups that received an intervention
Purpose	To assess the extent of ASCA National Model implementation	To determine the effectiveness of classroom and small-group instruction	To determine the effectiveness of closing-the-gap activities and interventions

The templates for these assessments and reports walk school counselors through the data to collect as well as how to analyze them. These assessments both inform potential improvements to school counseling program design and delivery and show how students are different as a result. The information from them should be used to identify program strengths and areas for improvement, as well as short- and long-term priorities and actions.

Sharing Program Results

The program assessments school counselors conduct are not only meaningful to their work, but also to the work of the broader school community. For example, the results can educate partners about the program’s impact or communicate the organizational structure and core philosophical tenets of a comprehensive school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model. In addition, building a culture of assessment and reporting with educational partners further demonstrates how the school counselor and the school counseling program are essential to the school’s academic mission.

Program results can take many forms and be shared in numerous ways, such as:

- Websites
- Infographics
- Slideshow presentations to educational partners
- One-page handouts
- Inclusion in a report to administrators and school board members
- Inclusion in school or district data materials

School Counselor Assessment and Appraisal

It is recommended that school counselors both self-assess and receive a formal appraisal from a qualified administrator each year to inform their professional growth. This appraisal can enhance the [Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals](#). In addition, these tools should inform school counselors' professional development plans, training, and goals for the following year.

Self-Assessment

Each year, school counselors should use the [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment](#) to self-assess the mindsets and behaviors school counselors need to meet the school counseling profession's rigorous demands and PreK-12 student needs. Doing so ensures that both new and experienced school counselors are equipped to meet their responsibilities, and helps them to develop a meaningful professional development plan.

Formal Appraisal

Annually, it is recommended that a qualified administrator should complete a school counselor performance appraisal to evaluate the school counselor's overall performance. To that end, ASCA has created a [School Counselor Performance Appraisal](#) that administrators can use, though it does not serve as a substitute for the state tool unless otherwise determined and agreed upon (see "Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals").

The appraisal tool includes evidence of the following:

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

Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals

The [Rhode Island Model Evaluation & Support System: Support Professional \(Edition IV\)](#) outlines the state's evaluation process for professional roles, including school counselors. As part of the evaluation system, school counselors create a Student Outcome Objective (SOO). This process aligns with the [Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan](#) (ASOG). School counselors are encouraged to use the ASOG to create their SOO goals.

In addition, this process includes evaluation conferences at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. As noted elsewhere, the Beginning-of-Year Conference included in the state's evaluation model aligns with the [Annual Administrative Conference](#). They both focus on past performance and the year ahead, including goals.

If the district has created and been approved to utilize a different evaluation system, you would substitute those expectations in lieu of the Rhode Island Evaluation Model for Support Professionals. Regardless of the evaluation model utilized, however, school counselors could advocate for an evaluation system based on the tenets of a comprehensive school counseling program, and the [School Counselor Performance Appraisal](#) could serve as a guide or in addition to the district-required tool.



Conclusion

When school counseling programs are comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, developmental in nature, and collaborative in implementation, they can have a transformative impact on student achievement, attendance, discipline, and school culture.

This Framework offers a guide for schools across Rhode Island as they work to implement such programs. At the same time, this Framework recognizes the need for flexibility. No two schools are the same, and so no two school counseling programs will be the same either. School counseling programs at the elementary level will likely focus on some different topics and utilize different activities than those at the high school level. Similarly, middle school students in one part of the state may need different support than their peers in another. So, while all school counselors should analyze data and spend the majority of their time providing direct and indirect services, the right mix of those activities and how exactly they are implemented will differ with the school community.

At RIDE, we also acknowledge that the school counseling profession —and our expectations for it —have shifted over time. As a result, our schools and districts are at different points in their implementation of this Framework. For those early in this journey, we encourage you to join our next training cohort and identify those pieces you can implement this year and next. And for those further along, we hope this Framework highlights opportunities to push your practice even further.

Above all, we hope this Framework reinforces the immense value comprehensive school counseling offers students and how important it is for the entire school community to play a role.

They have been there when we need anything – from mental health check-ins to class scheduling and changes. The entire school counseling department – from school counselors to student assistance counselors and psychologists – are irreplaceable and invaluable to my child and our family.

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Appendices

For additional tools, templates, and examples to support implementation, please see the [Rhode Island School Counseling Framework website](#) and RIDE's [School Counseling Resource Hub](#).

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APPENDIX A.

RIDE Initiatives Connected to School Counseling

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

What is MTSS?

Rhode Island defines [Multi-tiered System of Supports](#) (MTSS) as a continuous school improvement framework that uses data-based decision-making to support students at all levels. It aligns academic standards, behavioral expectations, and social-emotional competencies to ensure all students, including multilingual and differently-abled students, receive the necessary support to meet their outcomes.

MTSS includes three tiers of student supports:

- **Tier 1:** Access to strong grade-level core instruction for all students with high-quality curriculum and differentiated practices.
- **Tier 2:** Additional instruction and evidence-based interventions for students needing extra support.
- **Tier 3:** Intensive, individualized interventions and additional evidence-based group interventions for students needing extra support .

For more information, visit [BRIDGE-RI](#) and the [Rhode Island MTSS Practice District Profile](#).

School Counseling Programs

- Deliver Tier 1 school counseling curriculum to all students.
- Support the implementation of Universal Screeners.
- Collect and analyze data to identify students in need.
- Provide and coordinate targeted Tier 2 interventions.
- Provide short-term intensive interventions or counseling.
- Advocate for students needing additional support.
- Collaborate with educators, student services, and families for support.
- Make necessary referrals for medical, counseling, and other services.

Attendance Matters Rhode Island

What is Attendance Matters RI?

[Attendance Matters RI](#) is a nationally and internationally recognized statewide initiative to combat chronic absenteeism (when students miss 10% or more of the school year) and its negative effects, such as lower achievement, disengagement from school, course failure, and an increased risk of dropping out.

The initiative includes:

- **Support for LEAs:** Using RIDE's [Attendance Nudge](#) tool to communicate with families about attendance concerns.
- **Data Tools:** Publishing a real-time [attendance leaderboard](#), a [community dashboard](#) displaying absenteeism trends by neighborhood and census tract, and other interactive data tools.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with federal, state, and municipal leaders, LEAs, and community organizations to prioritize attendance.

School Counseling Programs

- Conduct professional development on the importance of attendance.
- Set Annual Student Outcome Goals related to attendance.
- Identify and address the root causes of attendance issues.
- Contribute to a positive school climate to enhance student connection.
- Foster collaboration among educational partners and community members around attendance solutions.
- Connect students and families to resources like transportation.
- Support schoolwide attendance initiatives by implementing targeted attendance interventions such as small groups, check-ins, and mentoring programs.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

What are Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)?

An ILP is a student-driven academic and career planning tool that personalizes educational and training pathways starting in middle school. The ILP's portfolio lives on an electronic platform and follows students from grades 6-12. The [Rhode Island ILP Development and Implementation Toolkit](#) defines the ILP program through two interlinking components:

- **ILP curriculum:** Lessons aligned with the [ASCA Student Standards](#) to support academic, career, and social-emotional development through self-exploration, college and career exploration, and planning and goal-setting.
- **ILP process:** Steps for delivering ILP content and facilitating activities, with key grade-level benchmarks for academic, career, and social-emotional development.

Counselors and teachers support these components with lessons aligned to the ASCA standards.

For more information, visit [PREPARE RI's Counseling + Individual Learning Plans \(ILPs\)](#) webpage and the "Individual Learning Plans" section of [RIDE's PreK-12 School Counseling webpage](#).

School Counseling Programs

- Coordinate school-level ILP efforts and lead the ILP committee.
- Define ILP program responsibilities with administrators.
- Participate in ongoing ILP training.
- Drive ILP conversations and activities with students.
- Deliver ILP curriculum through classroom lessons, co-teaching, or videos.
- Engage in goal-setting conversations with students.
- Collaborate with educators on students' college and career plans.
- Become knowledgeable with available CTE programming, both within the district and externally.

Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements

What are the Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements?

On November 15, 2022, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously voted to adopt RIDE's [Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements](#). These updated statewide graduation requirements, which take effect with the graduating Class of 2028, ensure all students have access to course offerings with high-quality curriculum and instruction as essential components of a rigorous education that prepares every student for success in college and their career. The Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements aim to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to create their own futures and achieve their postsecondary goals.

RIDE has identified three main priority areas for the Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements:

- **Priority One:** Prepare graduates to create their own future.
- **Priority Two:** Increase engagement through real-world, relevant learning experiences.
- **Priority Three:** Change how we support our children and families.

For more information, visit [RIDE's Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements](#) webpage.

School Counseling Programs

- Assist with career planning and course selection by offering students, families, and educators critical guidance to align academic planning with students' college and career goals.
- Provide classroom lessons, workshops, small groups, and one-on-one support related to graduation requirements, FAFSA, and student resume completion.
- Develop students' mindsets, skills, and behaviors for college and career readiness.
- Analyze data on attendance, discipline, and achievement to support students' academic and behavioral needs.
- Engage students in [ILPs](#) and relevant applications.
- Provide students, families, and educators with proactive information on graduation requirements, work-based learning opportunities, and other opportunities aligned with students' college and career aspirations.
- Advocate for and support the identification of relevant support and flexibility for students with specific needs, including caregiving youth and working students, through short-term counseling and family and community outreach.
- Collaborate with teachers and families to support students' needs.
- Assist students with earning and communicating indicators of college and career readiness including, but not limited to:
 - Advanced Placement (AP)
 - Dual and Concurrent Enrollment
 - Commissioner's Seal
 - Seal of Biliteracy
 - Industry Recognized Credentials
 - Diploma Endorsements

Career and Technical Education and Work-Based Learning

What is Career and Technical Education and Work-Based Learning?

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs help students explore a wide range of career options and determine the best educational pathways for achieving their goals. By engaging in CTE, students develop skills that prepare them for high-demand, high-skill, and well-paying jobs as well as postsecondary education.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) serves as a critical piece of CTE programs by providing students with real-world experiences and professional interactions that connect academic learning to practical applications. Through WBL, students gain valuable insights from industry experts, develop essential skills, and prepare for success in both college and careers.

RIDE's [Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements](#) include a requirement for all high schools to implement a policy that recognizes WBL for academic credit. WBL opportunities for academic credit are available to all students, regardless of whether they are enrolled in a CTE program.

For more information, visit [RIDE's CTE website](#) or reach out to CTE@ride.ri.gov.

School Counseling Programs

- Facilitate ILP lessons that engage students in career exploration.
- Inform and encourage students to participate in local career fairs and industry events, emphasizing early exposure at the middle school level.
- Provide information on diverse postsecondary options, including beyond traditional college pathways.
- Identify and advise on career pathways based on student interests.
- Use ILP data to plan career fairs and related opportunities.
- Advocate for programming that aligns with students' career interests.
- Support all students with the opportunity to access and secure successful WBL placements and support the attainment of academic credit.
- Network with employers to understand the benefits of CTE and the opportunities it provides for postsecondary success.
- Support CTE students in meeting program requirements and achieving program completion.

Social and Emotional Learning

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process that helps children and adults develop essential life skills, including emotional regulation, empathy, relationship-building, responsible decision-making, and ethical problem-solving. Research shows that quality SEL instruction leads to better academic performance, improved attitudes and behaviors, fewer negative behaviors, and reduced emotional distress.

Effective SEL programs are multi-year, interactive, and integrated into the school's culture rather than being peripheral add-ons. SEL instruction can be delivered explicitly or embedded into teaching practices and academic content, with schoolwide practices providing a supportive environment for promoting SEL skills.

For more information, visit:

- [RIDE's SEL website](#)
- ASCA's "[The School Counselor and Social/Emotional Development](#)"
- ASCA's "[The School Counselor and Student Mental Health](#)"
- [The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\) website](#)

School Counseling Programs:

- Foster collaboration between administrators and school counselors to plan the implementation of [RI SEL Standards: Competencies for School and Life Success](#) across all grade levels.
- Facilitate/provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for educators to integrate SEL as part of strong Tier 1 instruction.
- Advocate for [SEL Standards](#) across all grades, adapting SEL skills to various age/grade spans using [SEL Indicators](#).
- Use evidence-based, inclusive, and trauma-informed curricula for SEL interventions.
- Strengthen collaboration between school counselors, school-based mental health professionals, and classroom teachers to deliver SEL lessons through direct instruction, team teaching, lesson plans, or support.
- Provide targeted, multi-tiered approaches to address the SEL needs of individual students and small groups.

School-Based Mental Health

What is School-Based Mental Health?

School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) is a RIDE initiative focused on supporting students' and educators' mental well-being by using principles of trauma-informed care. It includes prevention, early intervention, and targeted services from school social workers, psychologists, school counselors, and community partners. These services enhance access to care and create supportive learning environments, promoting better academic and behavioral outcomes.

For more information, visit [RIDE's School-Based Mental Wellness webpage](#) and [The Well Initiative](#)

School Counseling Programs:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program supporting academic, social-emotional, and career development.
- Deliver lessons based on the ASCA Student Standards, offering tiered support according to student data.
- Provide short-term counseling for immediate issues.
- Provide strategies and training on emotional health and coping strategies to staff during faculty meetings and professional learning.
- Organize parent/guardian events on student support topics.
- Refer students to external mental health services as needed.
- Refer students to Tier 2 or Tier 3 services.
- Foster collaboration to identify entry and exit requirements for SBMH Tier 2 and Tier 3 services
- Strengthen collaboration between school counselors and other SBMH providers, such as school social workers and school psychologists, on interdisciplinary approaches to support students

Multilingual Learners

Who are Multilingual Learners?

RIDE refers to students identified in federal policy as English Learners (ELs) as Multilingual Learners (MLLs). This term emphasizes the asset-based approach of recognizing the broad linguistic repertoires these students bring to Rhode Island schools. All educators in Rhode Island are responsible for providing high-quality instruction to help MLLs successfully learn English, master grade-level content, and prepare for college, careers, and life. [RIDE's Blueprint for Multilingual Learner Success](#) outlines the evidence-based practices necessary for MLLs' success and serves as the policy framework for the [Strategic Plan for MLL Success](#).

For more information, visit [RIDE's MLL webpage](#) and ACAS's "[How School Counselors Can Support English Learners](#)."

School Counseling Programs:

- Ensure proper course placement for MLL students, balancing rigor with individual needs.
- Connect MLL students with clubs and extracurricular activities.
- Pair MLL students with a student representative fluent in their native language for orientation and support.
- Support the identification of MLL students appropriately for special education services, ensuring they receive both English language and special education support when needed.
- Organize small groups to aid positive school adjustment, such as conversation groups for practicing English and college groups to navigate U.S. college systems.
- Include MLL families in school conversations and provide them with resources and translated materials.
- Arrange for interpreters during meetings with MLL families and ensure all communications are respectful, inclusive, and able to be translated.

Special Education

What is Special Education?

Rhode Island is dedicated to providing all students, including differently-abled students, the opportunity to achieve high educational standards. For students with disabilities, this commitment includes ensuring access to a free, appropriate public education tailored to meet their individual needs and access to rigorous learning options.

For more information, visit [RIDE's Special Education webpage](#) and ASCA's ["The School Counselor and Students with Disabilities."](#)

School Counseling Programs:

- Differentiate school counseling classroom instruction to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities.
- Provide short-term, goal-focused counseling as part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan.
- Encourage family involvement in the educational process.
- Consult with teachers on how to effectively differentiate instruction and modify lessons to support student needs identified in IEP or 504 plans.
- Consult with staff and families to understand and implement necessary accommodations and modifications.
- Advocate for students with special needs within the school and community.
- Contribute to the multidisciplinary team planning and supporting students with disabilities.
- Identify students for assessment to determine eligibility for special education or 504 plans.
- Strengthen collaboration between school counselors and school-based mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists, therapists, special education staff) in service delivery.
- Assist in developing academic, transition, and postsecondary plans for students with IEPs and 504 plans.

Alternative Learning Plans (ALPs)

What are Alternative Learning Plans (ALPs)?

In July 2011, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed revised compulsory attendance legislation requiring students to remain in school until they turn 18. For 16- and 17-year-old students at high risk of dropping out—and who have exhausted all other support and intervention options—a collaborative Alternative Learning Plan (ALP) can be developed between the student, their parent/guardian, and the enrolled high school team. This plan outlines the necessary services to support the student in earning a Rhode Island high school diploma or its equivalent.

For more information, visit [EnrollRI](#), RIDE's [Adult Education & GED](#) page, and RIDE's [ALP Frequently Asked Questions](#).

School Counseling Programs:

- Support students and families with questions about ALPs.
- Guide discussions around alternative pathways to ensure the ALP aligns with the student's goals.
- Strengthen active collaboration between school counselors, school and district administrators, families, and ALP providers throughout the ALP process.
- Support families and students in understanding the ALP process and selecting an appropriate RIDE-approved ALP provider and program early in the process.

APPENDIX B.

Phased Implementation Guide

This phased implementation plan guides schools in creating a comprehensive school counseling program using the RI School Counseling Framework and aligned with the ASCA National Model. The length of time to move from Phase 1 varies from school to school. Time frames may be influenced by a variety of factors, including knowledge and understanding of the RI School Counseling Framework aligned with the ASCA National Model, priorities, persistence, and peer and district support. All templates and tools can be found on RIDE’s website for the [School Counseling Framework](#).

At a minimum, all schools should be integrating Phase 1 activities into their school counseling program. All schools should aim to have a plan to get to Phase 1 implementation within two years. Comprehensive school counseling, when fully implemented, has all of Phase 3 completed.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Essential Level: Building the Foundation	Thriving Level: Expanding Impact	Excelling Level: Transformational Excellence
Activities/ Documents to Complete		
School Counseling Program Assessment	School Data Summary/ Data Priorities	School Data Summary/ Data Priorities
School Data Summary/ Data Priorities	Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan/ Closing the Gap/ Achievement Gap Plan and Results Report	Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan/ Closing the Gap/ Achievement Gap Plan and Results Report
Annual Student Outcome Goal Plan/ Closing the Gap/ Achievement Gap Plan and Results Report	Use of Time- Fall and Spring	Use of Time- Fall and Spring
Use of Time- Fall and Spring	Annual Calendar	Annual Calendar
Annual Calendar	ILP Scope and Sequence	ILP Scope and Sequence
ILP Scope and Sequence	Vision/ Mission for the program	Vision/ Mission for the program

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Essential Level: Building the Foundation	Thriving Level: Expanding Impact	Excelling Level: Transformational Excellence
	Classroom Mindset and Behavior Action Plan/ ASCA Student Standards Delivery Plan	Classroom Mindset & Behavior Action Plan/ ASCA Student Standards Delivery Plan
	Annual Administrative Conference	Annual Administrative Conference
	Classroom Lesson Plan and Results	3 Classroom Lesson Plans and Results
		Small-Group Lesson Plan & Results
		Advisory Council (1st semester & 2nd semester) Agenda and Minutes

Once the RI School Counseling Framework is fully implemented, schools can consider applying to become a [Recognized ASCA Model Program \(RAMP\)](#) school. RAMP designation signifies a school's commitment to delivering exemplary school counseling programs aligned with the ASCA National Model Framework. The RAMP designation also demonstrates to administrators, school boards, families, and the community at large that a school is committed to supporting the mission of the school and district. To date, more than 1,300 schools nationwide have earned the RAMP designation. As of this writing, however, there were not any RAMP schools in Rhode Island.

To find more tools and resources, visit the [Rhode Island School Counseling Framework webpage](#).

APPENDIX C.

References and Other Resources

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