

SCHOOL COUNSELOR SERVICES DOCUMENT: R277-464-3

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SERVICES

School counselors provide activities and services with and for students. Delivery of services consists of two broad categories: direct and indirect student services.

- **Direct student services** are interactions between school counselors and students. Through the direct services of individual student planning classroom instruction, career literacy, dropout prevention, and qualities of character development, school counselors help students develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enhance academic achievement and college and career readiness.
- **Indirect student services** are services provided on behalf of students as a result of effective program implementation and school counselor's interactions with others. Through indirect services of program management, advocacy and outreach, collaboration, consultation, and referral, school counselors enhance student achievement and promote opportunity for all students.

DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

Direct student services include activities that support success for each student. School counselors review opportunity, achievement, attendance, and behavior data to inform their decisions about what activities they will deliver to create the most significant impact on student success.

Direct student services are delivered in several ways: individual student planning, dropout prevention, instruction, and academic and non-academic supports. Through each of these direct services, the school counselor and students work together toward a specific goal. Direct student services are delivered through the following program delivery methods:

- Plan for College and Career Readiness (53E-2-304) means a plan developed by a student and the student's parent/guardian in consultation with the school counselor that:
 - is initiated at the beginning of grade 7;
 - identifies a student's skills, accomplishments, strengths, and objectives;
 - maps out a strategy to guide a student's course selection; and
 - links a student to postsecondary options, including higher education and careers.
- **Please Note:** Although the formal Plan for College and Career Readiness is not initiated until grade 7, the Plan for College and Career Readiness *process* includes a K-6 experience in which school counselors provide exposure to future educational and career opportunities. School

counselors help students establish a foundation in academic achievement that opens doors of opportunity beginning in 7th grade.

- **Collaborative Classroom Instruction** is a planned, written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative in nature, and developmental in design. Example topics include:
 - study skills, organizational skills, goal setting, self-motivation, and balancing school, home, and activities.
 - building self-awareness of skills and interests, exploring careers, and understanding connections between lifestyle and career choices.
 - civic engagement, and caring and understanding of self and others.
 - self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Dropout Prevention with Responsive Services and Supports is assistance and support provided to a student or small group of students during times of transition, critical change, or other situations impeding student success. It is short-term, solution focused and based on evidence-based practices that are effective in a school setting to promote student development. Services are proactive as well as responsive and help students identify problems, causes, potential consequences and benefits, alternatives, and outcomes so they can make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

School counselors provide indirect student services to effectively implement a comprehensive, systemic school counseling program and promote opportunity for all students through consultation, collaboration, and referrals. Indirect student services are delivered through the following strategies:

- **Program Management** consists of management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the implementation of the school counseling program. Some activities include:
 - **Program management and operations** includes the planning and management tasks needed to support activities implemented in a school counseling program.
 - **Management activities:** To effectively manage a school counseling program, school counselors oversee and maintain the following: budget, policies and procedures, annual calendaring, research and resource development, and data analysis.

- **Professional learning:** As the school counseling profession continues to change and evolve, it is imperative that school counselors keep up to date with current trends, new research for effective practice, and evidence-based strategies and techniques through professional learning and professional association membership. School counselors also provide professional learning regarding the school counseling program and other areas of expertise to the school and community.
- **Advocacy and outreach** are the actions in which school counselors promote opportunity for all students by identifying and removing barriers that impede the academic success of students. All advocacy and outreach efforts should be aligned with Utah law and USBE rule. Advocacy and outreach help stakeholders understand how the school counseling program is integral to student achievement and college and career readiness through the following:
 - **Collaboration** is the process in which multiple individuals work toward a common goal and share responsibility for the associated tasks. This occurs in a variety of situations, including teaming and partnering, faculty and leadership meetings, and community partnerships. By serving on department, school, district, state, and community committees, school counselors assist in generating interventions, resources, and programs to promote positive student outcomes.
 - **Consultation** is the process of providing and seeking information and recommendations to or from families and individuals who can support the student's needs. School counselors both provide and seek consultation to identify strategies to promote student success.
 - **Referral** occurs when students' needs extend beyond the training and/or responsibilities of the school counselor role. School counselors provide instructional, advisement, and counseling services through brief, targeted approaches. When a student needs support beyond short-term services or counseling, it is a school counselors' ethical duty to refer students and parents to school or community resources for additional assistance or information.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR TIME ALLOCATIONS

To achieve the most effective delivery of a school counseling program, a minimum of school counselor time should reflect at least 85% in direct services to students, with a maximum of 15% of counselor time in indirect services to students. The time percentages are designed to be programmatic, not counselor specific, but each school counselor also maintains a balance of services, even though they may have areas of expertise. School counselors are encouraged to

allot times based on program priorities and needs. A time/task analysis of at least ten sample days is charted annually by each counselor (e.g., one day each week or one week per month) to determine total school counselor time spent in direct and indirect student services.

The recommended distribution of total school counselor time (Figure 7.2)¹ is the general recommendation for a school counseling program, use of time within the 85% may be allocated differently from school to school based on needs identified in school data. All components of direct and indirect student services are necessary for a program to be considered a school counseling program, but decisions about specific time allocation are based on student needs as demonstrated in the analysis of school and program data and in alignment with school and annual student outcome goals.

| Program Delivery Area | Elementary School Percent of Time | Middle School Percent of time | High School Percent of Time |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Plan for College and Career Readiness <i>(Direct Services)</i> | 5-10% | 35-45% | 45-55% |
| Collaborative Classroom Instruction <i>(Direct Services)</i> | 35-45% | 25-35% | 15-25% |
| Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports <i>(Direct Services)</i> | 30-40% | 25-30% | 15-20% |
| Systemic Program Management <i>(Indirect Services)</i> | 10-15% | 10-15% | 10-15% |

FIGURE 7.2: RECOMMENDED DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR TIME

USE OF TIME: APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES

School counselors’ duties are focused on the overall delivery of the school counseling program—direct and indirect student services, program management, and school support. Administrators are encouraged to eliminate or reassign inappropriate tasks, allowing school counselors to focus on the prevention and intervention needs of their program of students within a school.

Non-School Counseling Duties

Non-school counseling duties are identified by the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (4th Edition)* as inappropriate to the school counselor’s role and

¹ Figure 7.2 is adapted from Gysbers, N.C. K& Henderson P. (Eds.) (2017). *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program* (5th ed.), Alexandria, VA: American School Counseling Association.

take away valuable time from implementing a school counseling program that meets the needs of students. This includes activities such as test coordination and administration, master schedule building, student discipline, and substitute teaching. The focus of the school counselor’s work must be on leadership, advocacy, consultation, collaboration, referral, and systemic change for academic success of students. In order for the school counselor to maintain focus, it is critical to define appropriate and inappropriate activities (see Table 1 below).²

TABLE 1: APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES AND INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES COMPARISON

| APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES (direct and indirect student services) | INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES (non-school counseling duties) |
|---|--|
| Interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests, when in accordance with the test publisher’s interpretation guidelines. | Administering cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests. School counselors should not be organizing and administering standardized tests, including AP testing. |
| Giving input to administrators on the master schedule. | Building the master schedule. |
| Individual student academic program planning, including support and guidance in course selection, course scheduling, and class changes that support the student’s educational and postsecondary goals | Data entry and registering (main office in-take) all new students. |
| Providing short-term individual and small/large-group counseling services to students that promotes student development. | Providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders in a therapeutic, clinical mode. |
| Counseling students who are tardy, absent, or have disciplinary problems. | Disciplining students who are tardy, absent, or have disciplinary problems. |
| Collaborating with teachers to present school counselor curricula lessons. | Teaching classes when teachers are absent. |
| Interpreting student records. | Maintaining student records. |
| Collaborating with teachers regarding building classroom connections, effective classroom management, and the role of noncognitive factors in school success. | Supervising classrooms or common areas. |
| Protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations. | Keeping clerical records. |

² Table 1 is adapted from American School Counseling Association (2019). *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (4th ed.)*. Alexandria, VA.

| APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES (direct and indirect student services) | INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES (non-school counseling duties) |
|---|---|
| Advocating for students at individual education plans, 504 plans, English Language Support Plans student support team, response to intervention, and MTSS meetings, as necessary. | Coordinating and managing schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, English Language Support Plans, student support team meetings, response to intervention, or MTSS plans. |
| Analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data. | Doing data entry. |
| Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs, and problems. | Assisting with duties in the principal’s office, such as discipline, teacher evaluations, etc. |

Fair Share Responsibilities

As a team member within the educational system, school counselors perform “fair share” responsibilities that align with and are equal in amount to the fair share responsibilities provided by other educators on the school site. For example, if the school site is administering the ACT to all juniors, counselors may be asked to perform “fair share” duties on that day that is in equal amount to other educators on site. However, school counselors **should not** routinely be assigned sole responsibility for test coordination and administration, master schedule building, or other non-school counseling duties.

Note: As defined in Board rule [R277-462](#), approved school counseling programs are required to implement the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Components, 2024.