



---

**Utah State Board of Education**

---

**UTAH K-12  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL  
COUNSELING PROGRAM  
MODEL**

FOURTH EDITION 2024

**October 2023**

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	4
Vision and Mission	4
Definition of Terms	4
College Readiness	4
Career Literacy	5
Philosophy of School Counseling Programs	5
Chapter 2: Implementing the Program	6
Plan for College and Career Readiness	6
Collaborative Classroom Instruction	7
Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports	8
Program Management	10
Program Implementation	10
Program Supports	10
Chapter 3: Program Design	14
Preconditions for Developing a Program	14
LEA and Administrative Support	14
Framework/Structural Components	14
Steps to Develop and Implement a New Program	16
Step One: Plan the Program	16
Step Two: Build the Foundation	17
Step Three: Create an Action Plan	17
Step Four: Operate the Program	18
Step Five: Make the Program Sustainable	19
Chapter 4: School Counseling program Fundamentals	20
Roles and Responsibilities	20
Leadership, Advocacy, Collaboration, and Systemic Change	20
Culturally Sustaining Practices	21

Leadership	21
Collaboration, Outreach and Advocacy	22
Direct and Indirect Services	22
Direct Student Services	22
Indirect Student Services	22
School Counselor Time Allocations	23
Chapter 5: Data-Informed Leadership	27
Systemic Approach	27
Data Categories	28
Access Data	28
Achievement Data	28
Behavior Data	28
Types of Data	29
Systemic Assessment	29
Data Projects	29
Longitudinal Data	30
Chapter 6: Accountability	31
School Counseling Program Accountability	31
School Counseling Program Standards	31
School Counseling Program Assurances	33
Individual School Counselor Accountability	34
School Counselor Performance Standards	34
References	36
Glossary	37

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model*.

This model provides a **FRAMEWORK** for comprehensive school counseling practices. These practices work to advocate for equitable educational access, rigorous academic preparation, and the achievement and behaviors necessary for college and career readiness for all students. By taking a comprehensive, systemic approach, school counselors, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and policymakers can utilize a range of strategies to effectively address the unique needs of their schools and communities. The model is a student-focused, data-informed, counselor-implemented, systemic practice that allows every student to engage in an educational experience that results in the educational preparation and social capital necessary for college and career success as well as full participation in a global society.

## VISION AND MISSION

---

Utah school counselors are student focused. School counselors envision a Utah where every school has a high-quality, comprehensive school counseling program that drives student outcomes and ensures postsecondary plans and pathways for all students. To accomplish this, school counselors collaborate with multiple stakeholders and are an integral part of the school leadership team where decisions regarding school improvement and climate are made.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

---

### *COLLEGE READINESS*

College Readiness is the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need to transition from high school to postsecondary education and training. College includes a range of postsecondary options, including on-the-job training programs, apprenticeships, certifications, and college degrees of two, four, or more years.

## CAREER LITERACY

Career Literacy is the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need to navigate the world of work. It includes helping students to make informed decisions regarding their career pathway, understand a range of career fields, multiple entry and exit points for various occupations, and strategies for career development and advancement.

## PHILOSOPHY OF SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

---

Each school, under the direction of the administration and school counselors, works with stakeholders to develop a set of beliefs, a vision statement, and a mission statement for the school counseling program. Data is used to develop a set of program goals, create curricula, and plan activities that support the school improvement plan. School counselors support the philosophy that:

- All students (regardless of abilities, interests, backgrounds, etc.) succeed at high levels given sufficient support and encouragement.
- All students are prepared for 1, 2, 4, or more years of college (postsecondary education) or training upon graduation from high school.
- All students respect others and are prepared to fully participate in a global society.
- All students deserve a quality education.
- All students have access to the skills and knowledge provided by school counseling professionals.
- All students graduate with career literacy skills that are necessary to succeed in postsecondary education, training, and the workplace.

The Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model, referred to as the Utah Model, serves as a reminder of the important role that school counselors play in students' lives. It provides the rationale and a clear guide, for implementing effective practices and high-quality programs. The Utah Model is written to reflect a systemic approach to program administration, focusing on student outcomes.

**Please Note:** Although state school counseling program funding does not currently provide support for elementary school counselors, it is **highly recommended** that school districts find opportunities to allocate resources to provide these services to all students.

## CHAPTER 2: IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

The Utah Model uses four program delivery components as the foundation of a comprehensive, systemic program designed to reach 100% of students. This chapter outlines these components, which are as follows:

- Plan for College and Career Readiness Process
- Collaborative Classroom Instruction
- Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports
- Program Management

It also provides methods and strategies for applying each of these components when implementing a school counseling program.

### PLAN FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

---

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:

- (A) is initiated at the beginning of grade 7;
- (B) identifies a student's skills and objectives;
- (C) maps out a strategy to guide a student's course selection; and
- (D) links a student to postsecondary options, including higher education and careers. (53E-2-304(b)(i))

Although the formal Plan for College and Career Readiness is not initiated until grade 7, the Plan for College and Career Readiness **process** is a K-12 experience in which school counselors help students establish a foundation in college and career readiness by helping them identify their interests, abilities, and skills as well as explore educational and career opportunities, expectations, or requirements. This includes support and recommendations for exploring services and opportunities available at the school and community, making appropriate course selection and changes to the course schedule, determining meaningful educational goals, and selecting programs of study that support the student's 4-year and next-step plans.

School counselors who establish a systemic approach for the school counseling program build an environment where all students have equitable access to all

school programs, can achieve, and attain their goals. The student college and career-ready planning process is implemented through strategies such as:

- **Plan for College and Career Readiness Meetings:** School counselors meet with students and their parents or guardians consistent with state and LEA policy to develop, review, and/or revise the student's Plan for College and Career Readiness. School counselors collaborate with special education teachers to hold the IEP meeting with the Plan for College and Career Readiness meeting so that the student, parents or guardians, teachers, and school counselors all contribute together on behalf of the student.
- **Transition Planning:** School counselors work with students in transitioning between grade levels, from one educational program to another, from one school to another, or from school to college/career (e.g., next-step planning).
- **Individual or Small-Group Advisement:** School counselors work with students to assess students' abilities, interests, skills, and achievements. School counselors advise students using educational, career, and labor market information in planning college and career readiness goals. Advisement includes recommendations for exploring services and opportunities available at the school and community, making appropriate course selections, determining meaningful educational goals, and selecting programs of study that align with career interests.

## COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

---

In systemic practice, teacher, administrator, and school counselor collaboration is essential, as school counselors support teachers with the distribution of knowledge and skills in areas where counseling expertise can enhance student academic learning and development.

Collaborative classroom instruction consists of a written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative, proactive, and developmental in design. It includes structured lesson plans intended to help students attain the knowledge and skills needed for success.

School counseling programs, in coordination with their LEA, will determine the specific set of skills implemented to support student success.

Examples may include:

- [Utah's Portrait of a Graduate](#), or the LEA-specific version
- [American School Counselor Association Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#)
- Utah College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies (Utah Model 3<sup>rd</sup> edition)
- [Durable Skills by America Succeeds](#)

To operationalize the student success skills, school counselors write or select measurable learning objectives that align with the skills which become the foundation for classroom instruction, appraisal and advisement, and school counseling activities. The learning objectives directly reflect the school counseling program's vision, mission, and goals, as well as the school's improvement goals.

Collaborative classroom instruction is delivered through such strategies as:

- **Classroom Presentations:** School counselors provide instruction, team teach or assist with learning activities or units in classrooms, the career center, or other school facilities. A variety of engaging strategies are employed to reach students with diverse learning styles and needs.
- **Parent Workshops and Instruction:** With parent involvement, students are more engaged in learning and feel connected to school. School counselors conduct workshops and informational sessions for parents and/or guardians to address the needs of the school community and support collaborative classroom instruction.
- **Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development:** School counselors participate on interdisciplinary teams to develop and refine the curriculum in core areas. These teams develop collaborative classroom instruction that integrates with the subject matter. Aligning the curriculum to the content standards ensures that students acquire integrated, cross-curricular competencies, meaning that they are fully woven into the context of core curriculum whenever possible.

## DROPOUT PREVENTION WITH SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

---

School counselors promote student engagement, which is vital to dropout prevention. In consultation with parents or guardians, school personnel, and other identified parties, school counselors develop plans and strategies for facilitating

student supports. School counselors use the following methods to provide student services:

- **Collaboration:** School counselors consult and partner with parents or guardians, teachers, staff members regularly to provide information, support the school community, receive feedback on the emerging needs of students, and to address those needs.
- **Individual and Small-Group Counseling:** This method is provided on a small group or individual basis for students expressing difficulties dealing with relationships, personal concerns, or normal developmental tasks that impede student success. Individual and small-group counseling helps students identify problems, causes, alternatives, and possible consequences or appropriate action. Such counseling is short-term in nature. School counselors do not provide therapy. When necessary, referrals are made to appropriate school and community resources.
- **Prevention and Intervention:** School counselors implement systemic practice through prevention and intervention collaboration. Some of the common models used are Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), multidisciplinary teams, Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Trauma-Informed Schools, and Restorative Practices.
- **Referral Resources:** Professional school counselors compile referral resources which may be shared with students, staff, and families to effectively address issues. These referral sources may include mental health agencies, employment and training programs, vocational rehabilitation, disability resource centers, juvenile services, and other social and community services.
- **Crisis Counseling:** Crisis counseling provides prevention, intervention, and postvention services. Counseling and support are provided to students and families facing emergencies. Such counseling is short-term and temporary in nature. When necessary, referrals are made to appropriate school and community resources. School counselors provide a leadership role in the LEA's crisis intervention team process. Written LEA procedures are followed in crisis situations. School counselors offer a range of services along the continuum from prevention and early intervention to crisis response in order to meet student needs. Although school counselors have special training and skills to respond to school-based mental health needs, more intense interventions are sometimes needed for student supports and wraparound

services. This makes the consultation and referral process essential to student supports.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

---

Program management consists of activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors use their leadership and advocacy skills to promote systemic change by contributing in the following areas: collaboration, outreach, and advocacy; program management and operations; professional learning; and technology use.

### *PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION*

Program implementation includes the planning and management tasks needed to support activities conducted in the school counseling program. It also includes fair share responsibilities that need to be fulfilled by members of the school staff.

- **Management Activities:** These include budget, policies and procedures, annual calendaring, research and resource development, and data analysis.
- **Data Analysis:** School counselors analyze student achievement and counseling program-related data to evaluate the school counseling program, conduct research on activity outcomes, and discover gaps between different groups of students that need to be addressed. Data analysis also aids in the continued development and updating of the school counseling program and resources.
- **Fair Share Responsibilities:** As team members 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. School counselors should not routinely be assigned sole responsibility for test coordination and administration, master schedule building, or other non-school counseling activities.

### *PROGRAM SUPPORTS*

Management of the Utah School Counseling Program requires counselors to develop relationships with all members of the educational communities across the state. The use of a Principal/Counselor Annual Agreement assures the alignment of

program and school goals. It is an essential document that outlines duties and responsibilities as well. School counselors also meet with their advisory council to maximize stakeholder input and determine priorities within the communities they serve.

## **PRINCIPAL/COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP**

The principal is a key stakeholder in promoting collaboration throughout the school on behalf of students. By school counselors and principals working together, their efforts can create better opportunities for all students to achieve.

## **USING THE PRINCIPAL/COUNSELOR ANNUAL AGREEMENT**

The use of annual agreements within the school counseling program can enable smooth, effective program implementation to meet student needs. The entire school counseling staff, including the administrator who oversees school counseling, must make management decisions based on site needs and data analysis. Program implementation is predicated on integrating all elements of the school counseling program.

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

An advisory council is a representative group of persons who advise and support the school counseling program within a school. Advisory council membership reflects the school and community's diversity and demographics. It can include representative stakeholders of the school counseling program, such as students, parents and guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, school board members, business, and community members. The advisory council reviews the program goals and results and participates in making recommendations to the school counseling department, principal, and superintendent. The council meets a minimum of twice a year.

When creating an advisory council, the school counselor must consider two things: stakeholder representation and group size. The broader the representation on the advisory council, the more the group's work will accurately reflect the school and community's values, concerns, etc. Although broad representation is important, it is equally important to consider the size of the group. A council with too many

members may be ineffective. Creating an environment that is conducive to informed, constructive discussion is optimal.

To ensure effectiveness, it is crucial that each advisory council meeting has a specific agenda and goals to be accomplished. Committee members should receive the minutes of meetings and an agenda of the upcoming meeting several days in advance.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

School counselors actively seek out opportunities for updating their professional knowledge and skills.

Examples include the following:

- **Ongoing Training:** School counselors participate in school and district in-service training, school counselor conferences and webinars sponsored by the Utah State Board of Education, Utah System of Higher Education, Utah Association for Career and Technical Education, Utah School Counselor Association, and other entities that help school counselors stay current with best practices and research.
- **Professional Learning Communities:** School counselors participate in professional learning communities to analyze student data, discuss student interventions through a tiered approach, and develop collaborative classroom instruction curricula that support goals for overall school improvement.
- **Professional Association Membership:** As the school counseling profession continues to change and evolve, school counselors maintain and improve their level of competence by being members of professional associations and taking advantage of the resources and supports which they provide.
- **Post-Graduate Education:** School counselors are lifelong learners and pursue post-graduate educational opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge base. School counselors are encouraged to contribute to professional literature.

## TECHNOLOGY USE TO PROMOTE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

Technology is a vital tool in system support. Technology encourages active participation for students and is an invaluable resource for parents and other education stakeholders. Technology can help counselors perform the following functions:

- Identify the priorities and goals of the school counseling program.
- Make available information to supplement individual planning sessions.
- Provide information and resource links on College and Career Readiness.
- Offer information regarding social/emotional supports and dropout prevention.
- Enable access to a calendar of counseling activities.

The use of other forms of social media and technology is also encouraged to help publicize school counseling programs. The choice of media and content needs to be school appropriate and monitored for accuracy.

# CHAPTER 3: PROGRAM DESIGN

This chapter outlines how to design and develop an effective school counseling program.

## PRECONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

---

The following section outlines the essential preconditions for developing a school counseling program.

### *LEA AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT*

It is important to recognize that the Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program is adopted at the LEA level. The support of school administrators is necessary to ensure effective implementation of the school counseling program. Site principals and their administrative team who meet regularly with the counseling staff to discuss the school's mission and the counseling program are critical in supporting the school's mission and meeting student needs.

### *FRAMEWORK/STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS*

To support the school counseling program, the following conditions should be met:

#### **Program**

- Every student, parent and guardian, teacher, and other recipients of the school counseling program has equal access to the school counseling program.
- The program operates in a supportive work environment and has an adequate budget and materials.
- School administrators and school board or governing board members understand and support the program's priorities and demands.
- The Utah State Board of Education provides leadership, training, and technical assistance as schools implement the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model.
- School counselors work cooperatively with parents and guardians, teachers, and community partners. School counselors follow federal and state laws, and LEA regulations and policies regarding counseling with students.

- School counselors use data regarding their school population to work with the administration, teachers, and advisory council in making recommendations to improve academic achievement.

## **Personnel**

- School counselors hold a valid Utah school counselor license.
- School counselor responsibilities are clearly defined by the program to make maximum use of the school counselor's expertise. (See School Counselor Performance Standards.)
- The student-to-counselor ratio is appropriate to implement the designed program.
  - ASCA recommends a ratio of at least one school counselor to every 250 students.
  - Utah State Board Rule R277-462-6 requires schools receiving Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program funds to have a school counselor-to-student ratio no greater than 1:350.
- School counselors are members of their state and national professional associations.
- School counselors understand and are willing to follow the ASCA's Code of Ethics.
- School counselors engage in ongoing professional learning.

## **Budget**

- A school counseling department budget is established to support program needs and goals.
- Local, state, and federal funds are made available to support the program's goals.

## **Materials, Supplies, and Equipment**

- Materials are relevant to the program and appropriate for the community.
- The school counselor consults with the advisory council and the local board policy concerning the evaluation and selection of program materials.
- Materials, supplies, and equipment are easily accessible and of sufficient quantity to support the program.
- All school counselors have locking file cabinets, private telephone lines, and computers with internet access in their offices, to support student privacy.

## Facilities

- The school counselor has a private office that is designed with consideration of the student’s right to privacy.
- Access is provided to facilities for meeting with groups of students.
- All facilities are easily accessible and provide adequate space to organize and display school counseling materials.

## Technology

- School counselors use technology, especially the Utah Career Information Delivery System (CIDS), to help students perform career and advanced educational searches and create online portfolios.
- School counselors use technology in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the school counseling program.
- School counselors use technology as a tool to gather, analyze, and present data to drive systematic change.

## STEPS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A NEW PROGRAM

---

Five steps are involved when school- or LEA-wide teams decide they want to establish a Comprehensive School Counseling Program. These are:

1. Plan the Program
2. Build the Foundation
3. Create an Action Plan
4. Operate the Program
5. Make the Program Sustainable

The following section provides a general overview of the actions necessary to complete these steps.

### *STEP ONE: PLAN THE PROGRAM*

The planning phase starts with the decision to align with the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model.

1. **Secure Commitment**
  - a. Obtain school board or governing board approval to implement the Utah Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Program Model.

## 2. **Get Organized**

- a. Form a team of school counselor(s) and staff members to work as a program development team.
- b. Create a timeline for program development and implementation.

## 3. **Assess Your Current Program**

- a. Use the Utah Comprehensive Counseling Program Performance Review booklet to identify program components and elements already in place and those that need to be developed.
- b. Identify current counseling functions, activities, and services.
- c. Conduct a school counselor use-of-time analysis.

# *STEP TWO: BUILD THE FOUNDATION*

After the creation of the school counseling program development team, data should be collected to assess school needs and how implementation of the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model supports the school goals.

## 1. **Assess the needs of the school and the LEA**

- a. Use data from surveys for teachers, parents or guardians, and students to identify needs.
- b. Use school achievement and related data, including attendance, dropout rates, graduation rates, and college attendance rates.
- c. Identify how adopting and implementing the Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program will support the school's mission and goals.

## 2. **Commit to the Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program Framework**

- a. Discuss beliefs about students and learning, philosophies, and mission.
- b. Write the program philosophy and mission statement.

# *STEP THREE: CREATE AN ACTION PLAN*

After creating a philosophy, writing a mission statement, and determining student competencies to be addressed in the school counseling program, priorities are identified, and corresponding percentages of school counselor time are allocated to program components (Chapter 2). The school counseling program must be clear,

purposeful, and presented in a manner that can be easily understood by all who are involved in the program.

**1. Identify Strategies and Interventions**

- a. Identify specific counseling strategies and interventions for each program component based on data and student need.
- b. Develop detailed and specific work plans for program components outlined in Chapter 2.
- c. Identify the curriculum, resources, and instructional strategies to be used.

**2. Establish Data Collection Procedures**

- a. Determine data to collect when implementing the program (e.g., participation, perception, and outcome).
- b. Determine the frequency of data collection. Note that for data projects, outcome data is required.

**3. Determine Roles and Timelines**

- a. Decide who will perform the various tasks and when.

## *STEP FOUR: OPERATE THE PROGRAM*

In this phase, the comprehensive school counseling program is put into operation.

**1. Set Up the Program**

- a. Establish the budget for the program.
- b. Complete the principal/counselor agreement with the school administration (see the USBE school counseling program website for form)
- c. Establish an advisory council.
- d. Send a Letter of Intent to implement the Utah School Counseling Program Model to the USBE School Counseling Program Specialist during the enrollment period of March 1 to May 1.

**2. Work Within the Program**

- a. Develop a master planning calendar for the program at all grade levels.
- b. Determine school counselor target time allocations based upon the program design.

- c. Launch the program by implementing collaborative classroom instruction and/or school counselor core curriculum based on systemic assessment for each grade level.
  - d. Select a data project activity to implement and measure.
  - e. Collaborate with administration, school staff, feeder system, and other educational stakeholders to develop a systemic approach to college and career readiness.
- 3. Promote the School Counseling Program**
- a. Develop a program brochure.
  - b. Present the program to the school site staff.
  - c. Develop a school counseling department website.
  - d. Design multiple methods of communicating with students, parents, and other stakeholders.

### *STEP FIVE: MAKE THE PROGRAM SUSTAINABLE*

When the program is fully implemented, an evaluation to determine the program's effectiveness is conducted and shared with the advisory council. At this point, after one year of a fully implemented Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program, schools can arrange for an on-site review of the program, using the Utah School Counseling Program Model performance standards for effective program implementation. An evaluation provides the information necessary to ensure that there is a continuous process to measure the results of the school counseling program by reviewing the following.

- 1. Develop Program Results Reports**
- 2. Review**
  - a. Revisit your program self-evaluation to determine areas of improvement and areas requiring more attention.
- 3. Reflect**
  - a. Reflect on the results when making decisions for program adjustment and improvements.
- 4. Assess Teams**
  - a. Evaluate how the school counseling team is working together.

# CHAPTER 4: SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

## FUNDAMENTALS

This chapter reviews the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor within a school counseling program. Through direct and indirect student services, school counselors support student success, and provide a school-wide lens to student advocacy.

Topics Include:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Direct and Indirect Services

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

---

### *LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, COLLABORATION, AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE*

School counselors incorporate the qualities of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change in their role and responsibilities to implement the Utah K-12 School Counseling Model. Working as leaders, advocates and collaborators, school counselors promote student success by closing existing achievement gaps found among different student demographics.

School counselors work as advocates to remove systemic barriers that impede the academic success of any student. They are catalysts for educational change and accept a leadership role in educational reform.

School counselors are in a position to not only call attention to barriers within schools that can defeat, frustrate, or hinder student achievement but to also be proactive change agents for student success and school improvement. School counselors are advocates for students striving to prepare for the postsecondary transition to college and career. Through their roles as school leaders and collaborators, school counselors are positioned to provide interventions and promote systemic change.

## *CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PRACTICES*

In order to be culturally sustaining, individuals must recognize, value, and respect cultural differences. School counselors stay current on international and world events and seek professional development to design and implement culturally sustaining school counseling interventions. Culturally sustaining school counselors acquire knowledge of generational trauma and are sensitive to each student's cultural identity.

## *LEADERSHIP*

School counselors provide an important leadership role in improving student achievement and are uniquely positioned to be student and system advocates. School counselors strive to ensure that every student has the opportunity to access a well-balanced education and rigorous courses. Working as leaders, advocates, and collaborators, school counselors promote success for all students by working to close existing achievement gaps for students of ethnic or culturally diverse backgrounds, students from low-income families, students needing academic support, first-generation college students, and any other underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

When school counselors use data effectively to inform their work, they:

- Advocate for all students
- Provide equity in college and career readiness preparation
- Transform school counseling practices to better serve student needs
- Monitor student progress in academic and behavioral areas
- Engage decision-makers in data-driven decisions
- Challenge existing policies, practices, attitudes, and mindsets
- Expose equity barriers for focused advocacy
- Target resources, programs, interventions, and strategies
- Include systemic assessment in program improvement
- Provide leadership in systemic educational reform
- Demonstrate accountability

## *COLLABORATION, OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY*

Through collaboration, consultation, and referral with education stakeholders, school counselors establish priorities for systemic practice. In systemic practice and transformation, school counselors serve as leaders in establishing positive learning environments that promote educational equity and success for students.

## **DIRECT AND INDIRECT SERVICES**

---

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

Utah State Board of Education Rule 277-464 requires school counselor spend 85% of time in direct student services, with 15% or less time spent in indirect services.

### *DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES*

Direct student services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. Through the direct services of collaborative classroom instruction, career literacy, dropout prevention, social and emotional supports, and individual student planning, school counselors help students develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enhance academic achievement and college and career readiness.

Direct student services include activities that promote growth in mastery, autonomy, and purpose for each student. School counselors review access, achievement, and behavior data to inform their decisions about what activities they will deliver to create the most significant impact on student outcomes.

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

### *INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES*

Indirect student services are services provided on behalf of students as part 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 equity and access for all students.

School counselors provide indirect student services to effectively implement a comprehensive, systemic school counseling program and promote equity and access for all students through consultation, collaboration, and referrals.

## *SCHOOL COUNSELOR TIME ALLOCATIONS*

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

The recommended distribution of total school counselor time (Figure 1) is the general recommendation for a school counseling program. 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 student outcome goals. Time spent in indirect student services should not exceed 15 percent of school counselor time.

**Figure 1: Recommended Distribution of Total School Counselor Time\***

<b>Program Delivery Area</b>	<b>Elementary School Percent of Time</b>	<b>Middle School Percent of Time</b>	<b>High School Percent of Time</b>
Plan for College and Career Readiness (Direct Services)	<b>5-10%</b>	<b>35-45%</b>	<b>45-55%</b>
Collaborative Classroom Instruction (Direct Services)	<b>35-45%</b>	<b>25-35%</b>	<b>15-25%</b>

<b>Program Delivery Area</b>	<b>Elementary School Percent of Time</b>	<b>Middle School Percent of Time</b>	<b>High School Percent of Time</b>
Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports (Direct Services)	<b>30–40%</b>	<b>25–30%</b>	<b>15–20%</b>
Systemic Program Management (Indirect Services)	<b>10–15%</b>	<b>10–15%</b>	<b>10–15%</b>

\*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.

## **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 time to focus on the prevention and intervention needs of their program.

### **NON-SCHOOL COUNSELING DUTIES**

---

Non-school counseling duties are identified by the ASCA National Model as inappropriate to the school counselor’s role and 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. In order for the school counselor to maintain focus, it is critical to define appropriate and inappropriate activities.

**Figure 2: Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities\***

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 achievements tests. School counselors should not be organizing and administering 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.

Appropriate Activities (Direct and Indirect Student Services)	Inappropriate Activities (Non-School Counseling Duties)
Advocating for students at individual education programs (IEPs), 504 plans, English Language support plans, student support team meetings, response to intervention, or MTSS plans, as necessary.	Coordinating and managing schoolwide individual education programs (IEPs), 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.

\* Adapted from American School Counseling Association. (2019). *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, Fourth Edition*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

**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. However, counselors should not routinely be assigned sole responsibility for test coordination and administration, master schedule building, or other non-school counseling duties.

# CHAPTER 5: DATA-INFORMED LEADERSHIP

Data-informed leadership for school counselors is a powerful way to break down barriers to create the conditions that help students realize their potential. Data-informed leadership is a call to action for school counselors to advocate on behalf of all students. Using a data-informed, decision-making model allows school counselors to answer the question, “Is the school counseling program making a difference for students, and how can I prove it?”

Topics Include:

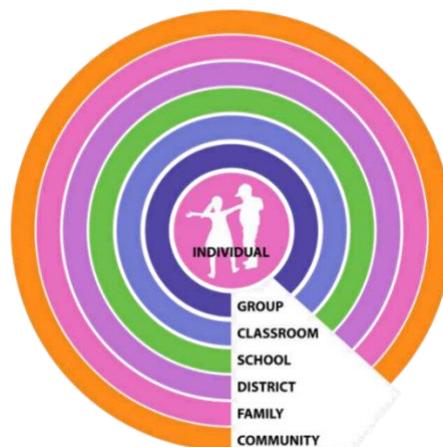
- Systemic Approach
- Data Categories
- Types of Data
- Data Projects

## SYSTEMIC APPROACH

---

A systemic perspective focuses on the “big picture” and long-range goals, by using data to address gaps and barriers to student success. A systemic approach offers school counselors, administrators, and policymakers a wide range of strategies to work more effectively in their schools and communities, and allows school counselors to examine each level of support in identifying existing barriers that impede student success.

**Figure 3: Levels of Support for Student Success**



## DATA CATEGORIES

---

To effectively manage and analyze data, it is important to have categories of data. These categories assist school counselors in examining data to determine the need and school counseling program delivery for all students.

### *ACCESS DATA*

Access data provides an examination of the groups of students who are able and who are not able to access educational programs. By further disaggregating data within groups, the school counselor identifies where specific gaps exist.

Examples of data elements are:

- Rigorous courses
- Gifted and talented
- Special education
- Leadership opportunities
- Extracurricular activities
- College and career readiness activities (college applications submitted, FAFSA completion rate, SAT/ACT test taking rates, etc.)

### *ACHIEVEMENT DATA*

Achievement data are evaluations of academic performance revealed through:

- Grades on exams and end marking periods (quarter, trimester, semester)
- Grade point average
- Test scores from end-of-level testing
- ACT/SAT college entrance exam scores
- Course completion rates
- Graduation rates

### *BEHAVIOR DATA*

Behavior data are evaluations of student behaviors revealed through:

- Attendance rates
- Dropout rates

- Office referrals
- Incidents of breaking the school/student conduct policy

## TYPES OF DATA

---

There are three types of data: participation, perception, and outcome. Participation data describes the counseling activities conducted and how many students participate in them; it is counting the numbers. Perception data is the understanding of a concept. Perception data is collected through pre- and post-testing, systemic assessments, program evaluation surveys, or other feedback methods; it may indicate changes in attitudes and beliefs or perceived gains in knowledge or skill mastery. Outcome data show the impact of an activity or program on student behavior, performance, or attainment of competencies; it is ending results and achievement.

### *SYSTEMIC ASSESSMENT*

The purpose of conducting a systemic assessment is to use data to drive the school counseling program and implement data-informed interventions. The systemic assessment is given at least once every three years. The data from the systemic assessment allows for school counselors to serve the ever-changing needs of a school in a culturally sustaining manner. When the school counseling program aligns with the school needs, it integrates and supports the school improvement plan.

## DATA PROJECTS

---

As school counselors work with administration and school leadership teams, they continuously work with data. Outcome data is a requirement of systemic practice and access, achievement, and behavior for student success.

Utah School Counseling Program Data Projects are action research. Using data projects, school counselors can provide evidence needed to show how well their interventions help students. School counselors who complete data projects are fundamentally instrumental in promoting and improving the work of school counseling, thus affecting data-driven change.

Each year, all schools receiving Utah School Counseling Program funds are required to submit a data project to the Utah State Board of Education by June 15. The electronic data project reporting template can be found on the USBE School Counseling Program website. Data projects are connected with school needs and goals from the school improvement plan.

School counselors share the results of the data project with key stakeholders, including the local board of education, parents, students, community, faculty, and school counseling advisory council.

### *LONGITUDINAL DATA*

Documenting baseline data before strategic planning and programmatic restructuring provides necessary information for longitudinal data collection. Each year data is charted, indicating growth or change in the areas of concern. The analysis of longitudinal data enables school counselors to identify patterns and trends in student development. It gives the counseling staff the ability to review overall student progress and provides a review of the comprehensive program for the school site or LEA. Using the longitudinal data gives school counselors and administrators the big picture and serves as a catalyst for systemic change.

## CHAPTER 6: ACCOUNTABILITY

This chapter explains why accountability matters. Accountability measures are foundational in the work of school counselors for systemic change. School counselors demonstrate accountability by using program standards and individual school counselor performance standards.

Topics Include:

- School Counseling Program Accountability
- Individual School Counselor Accountability

### SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

---

As part of the program performance review process, schools are required to complete a formal review every six years, with an interim review done by the LEA leadership during year three. During the formal review process, the Utah State Board of Education School Counseling Specialist meets with school administrators and school counselors to assess the level of adherence to the program standards and assurances outlined in the performance review manual. The performance review document is a tool for school counselors to break down and analyze each program component. These standards are the foundation for creating college and career-ready students. Accountability for student outcomes and meeting program standards (performance indicators) is used for the appropriation of CTE Add-on school counseling program funds.

#### *SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM STANDARDS*

- **Needs of Each Student:** All program elements are t to recognize and address the diverse needs of each student. Access, achievement, and behavior data for academic and non-academic student needs are used to guide the Comprehensive School Counseling Program. This standard provides the foundation for the school counseling program to reach each student as individuals. Modification to program implementation based on identified gaps from this standard should be reflected in the remaining standards.

- **Data Effectiveness and Program Improvement:** Systemic program management and implementation are driven by the collection and analyses of current school data, including a formal student, parent, and teacher systemic assessment. Data projects are developed and implemented based on the data results to close access, achievement, and behavior gaps and evaluate program effectiveness.
- **Plan for College and Career Ready Process:** Programs shall establish Plans for College and Career Readiness for each student, both as a process and a product, consistent with local board policy and the Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model, Utah Code 53E-2-304, and Utah State Board of Education Board Rule R277-462.
- **Career Literacy:** Career literacy provides students with the capacity to make informed decisions regarding their college and career readiness plan. Through career development assistance for all students— which includes career awareness and exploration, job applications, interview skills, and understanding of CTE Pathways and 1, 2, 4, or more years of postsecondary educational opportunities—students will complete high school with the social capital necessary to participate fully in a global society. CTE programs are designed to provide students with practical skills and knowledge in various fields. Effective collaboration between school counselors and CTE programs can greatly enhance the overall educational experience for students by helping students make informed career choices, succeed academically, and develop essential skills for their future careers.
- **Collaborative Classroom Instruction:** The program delivers a developmental school counseling curriculum in harmony with content standards identified in the Utah Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model. The curriculum is prioritized according to the results of the school curriculum delivery survey, systemic assessment, and other data analyses to improve academic and non-academic student outcomes.
- **Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports:** The program provides a systemic approach to addressing the immediate academic and non-academic concerns and identified needs of all students through an education-oriented and programmatic approach, and in collaboration with existing school programs and coordination with school, family, and community resources.

- **Alignment:** Program alignment includes communication, collaboration, and coordination with the K–12 feeder system regarding the Comprehensive School Counseling Program.

## *SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM ASSURANCES*

- **Board Adoption and Approval:** Adoption and approval of the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program by the local board or governing board and ongoing communication with the local board regarding program goals and outcomes supported by data.
- **Structural Components:** Structural components and policies support the Comprehensive School Counseling Program. This includes adequate resources and support for the school counseling facilities, materials, equipment, clerical staff, and school improvement processes. CTE Add-on funding is one source of funding for approved school counseling programs. However, this funding is not sufficient to be the sole source of funding.
- **Administrative Assurances:** Administration (CTE director and building administrators) understands the value in the Comprehensive School Counseling Program and its relationship to the school improvement plan.
- **Use of Data:** The program uses multiple data sources, including the formal school counseling program systemic assessment, for strategic program implementation to improve student outcomes.
- **Program Leadership and Management:** Structures and processes are in place to ensure effective program management, including an advisory council. Evidence is present that school counselors are working as program leaders and the Comprehensive School Counseling Program is an integral part of the school improvement team.
- **Time Allocation:** Evidence is provided that 85 percent of aggregate school counselors' time is devoted to direct services to students through a balanced program of individual planning, collaborative classroom instruction, and drop-out prevention with social emotional supports consistent with the results of school data and identified student needs.
- **Comprehensive School Counseling Program Training:** Regular participation of all team members in USBE-sponsored Comprehensive School Counseling Program trainings.

- **School Counseling Program Evaluation:** School counseling programs annually evaluate program implementation and effectiveness to meet accountability requirements.

## INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR ACCOUNTABILITY

---

**Effective school counselors are leaders in systemic education reform.** The effective school counselor focuses on students' long-term academic, college and career, citizenship, and social/emotional development; an effective school counselor demonstrates the skills and dispositions to promote students' autonomy, literacy, responsibility to self and others, and lifelong learning. Effective school counselors help every student develop the social capital necessary for success in college, career, and community.

These school counselor standards accurately reflect the unique training of school counselors preparing them to fulfill their focused responsibilities within the school system. The standards are an important tool in the school counselor's self-assessment, professional advocacy, and development of personal and professional growth plans. Using the [Utah Effective School Counselor Performance Standards](#), school counselors and administrators should work within their individual LEA systems to design appropriate evaluation tools that meet the requirements in LEA policy.

### *SCHOOL COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS*

1. **Performance Standard 1: Collaboration, Leadership, and Advocacy**

The school counselor is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

2. **Performance Standard 2: Collaborative Classroom Instruction and Instructional Skills**

The school counselor delivers a developmental and sequential school counseling curriculum prioritized according to the results of the school needs assessment process.

3. **Performance Standard 3: Plan for College and Career Readiness Process**

The school counselor implements the individual planning component by guiding individuals and groups of students and their parents or guardians through the process of educational plan for college and career readiness.

4. **Performance Standard 4: Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports**

The school counselor provides responsive services through the effective use of individual and small-group counseling, consultation and referral skills, and implements programs for student support in dropout prevention.

5. **Performance Standard 5: Data-Driven Accountability and Program Evaluation**

The school counselor collects and analyzes data to meet the needs of students and ensures program improvement.

6. **Performance Standard 6: Systemic Program Management**

The school counselor is involved in management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program.

7. **Performance Standard 7: Professional and Ethical Behavior**

The school counselor demonstrates the highest standard of legal, moral, and ethical conduct in Utah State Board of Education Rule R277-217.

The above standards are outlined in Utah State Board Rule R277-530.

## REFERENCES

American School Counselor Association. (2019). *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, Fourth Edition*. Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

Gysbers, N.C. K& Henderson P, eds. (2017). *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program, 5th ed.* Alexandria, VA: American School Counseling Association.

DRAFT

# GLOSSARY

**ACT:** American College Test. The ACT is a test for high school students for college admissions and course placement.

**Advisory Council:** A representative group of persons who advise and support the school counseling program within a school. The advisory council reviews the program goals and results and participates in making recommendations to the school counseling department.

**AP:** Advanced Placement. AP offers high school students the opportunity to take college-level courses while attending secondary school.

**ASCA:** American School Counselor Association. ASCA provides professional development, research and other resources related to school counseling.

**Career Literacy:** The basic knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need to navigate the world of work. It includes helping students to make informed decisions regarding their career pathway, understand a range of career fields, multiple entry and exit points for various occupations, and strategies for career development and advancement.

**College Readiness:** The knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need to transition from high school to postsecondary education and training. College includes a range of postsecondary options, including on-the-job training programs, apprenticeships, certifications, and college degrees of two, four, or more years.

**Comprehensive School Counseling Program:** A school counseling program where all program components are delivered to students. A comprehensive program is driven by data collection and analysis to align school counseling program goals with school improvement goals. A comprehensive school counseling program ensures student supports are deeply ingrained in the system and improve outcomes for students, not only academically but for lifelong success.

**CTE Add-on School Counseling Program Funds:** Distributed funds for school counseling pursuant to 53F-2-311(2)(b)(ii) and R277-462.

**CTE:** Career and Technical Education means organized educational programs that: (a) prepare students for a wide range of high-skill, high-demand or emerging careers; (b) provide all students with a seamless education system from public

education to postsecondary education, driven by a Plan for College and Career Readiness as defined in Rule R277-462; and (c) provide students competency-based instruction, hands-one experiences, and certified occupational skills, culminating in meaningful employment.

**FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA form is used to apply for federal student aid such as federal grants, work-study funds, and loans.

**IEP:** Individualized Education Program. IEP means a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 (2004), and rule.

**K-12 Feeder System:** The succession of schools that a student enrolls in as the student progresses from kindergarten through grade 12.

**LEA:** Local Education Agency. LEA means a school district or charter school.

**MTSS:** Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. MTSS is a framework for implementing systemic, evidence-based practices to maximize student achievement in academics and behavior in preparation for and leading to College and Career Readiness. The MTSS model includes Universal, Targeted, and Intensive levels of support, which are defined in the Utah MTSS 3-Tier Definitions.

**Multidisciplinary Team:** A group of individuals from multiple disciplines who meet to: (a) pursue the common goal of evaluating and triaging the academic, social, emotional, physical, and behavioral needs of a student or group of students; and (b) create individualized strategies and interventions to address identified needs.

**PBIS:** Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. PBIS is an evidence-based tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral and academic outcomes.

**PCCR:** Plan for College and Career Readiness. PCCR means a student education occupation plan for college and career readiness that is a developmentally organized intervention process that includes: (a) a written plan, updated annually, for a secondary student's (grades 7-12) education and occupational preparation; (b) all Board, local board and local charter board graduation requirements; (c) evidence of parent or guardian, student, and school representative involvement annually; (d) attainment of approved workplace skill competencies, including job placement when appropriate; and (e) identification of postsecondary goals and approved sequence of courses.

**Restorative Practices:** Approaches to proactively build positive school culture and relationships while holding students accountable for disruptive behaviors and providing students an opportunity to repair harm and restore positive relationships.

**SAT:** The SAT acronym originally stood for “Scholastic Aptitude Test” but as the test evolved the acronym’s meaning was dropped. The SAT is a test for high school students for college admissions and course placement.

**Trauma-Informed Schools:** Inform all school personnel about the prevalence and impact of trauma and toxic stress in the lives of students, and the short and long-term effects on student learning.

**USBE:** Utah State Board of Education.

DRAFT