

Comprehensive Counseling
and Guidance Plan
2022-2023

PLANNING



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Introduction

The Baldwin County Public School System strives to meet the learning needs of the individual student by providing a proper atmosphere for the educational process and by the thorough application of data derived from the evaluation of the student's goals, aspirations, achievements, attitudes, and learning styles.

The system's counseling and guidance program is an integral part of the total educational process in the schools and must be accessible to all students. The counseling and guidance program must consist of activities that address and meet students' various educational and developmental needs. School counselors must show that each activity implemented as a part of the school counseling and guidance program is developed as a result of a thorough analysis of student needs, desired achievement goals, and related data.

The system plan is designed to reflect a comprehensive model for counseling and guidance program foundation, delivery, management, and accountability. The model provides information regarding program design, coordination, implementation, management, and evaluation with the goal of ensuring student success in three broad areas: academic, career, and personal/social development. These three areas or domains encompass the specific standards, competencies, and indicators for student learning as identified in the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*.

The school counselors will continue to define new directions for their profession that focus on a shift in emphasis from service-centered for some students to program-centered for all students. The purpose of the system plan is to create one vision and one voice for comprehensive school counseling and guidance programs throughout the system. The plan is based on the following three premises:

1. School counseling and guidance programs are based on specific student knowledge and skill content.
2. School counseling and guidance programs are outcome-based programs.
3. School counseling and guidance programs are developmental and comprehensive in scope and sequence.

The Baldwin County Public School System is the third largest school system in the state of Alabama; it consists of 45 schools. There is one Prevention and Support Services Coordinator who meets the needs of 82 school counselors. Of these 82 school counselors, 41 of them are employed in the elementary school setting (K-6); 12 are employed in the middle school setting (7-8); and 29 are employed in the high school setting (9-12).

Mission Statement

The mission of the Baldwin County Public School System's Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program is to effectively provide a motivating, safe, and trusting environment which empowers all students to become life-long emotional, social, academic, and career-oriented citizens.

We strive to accomplish this mission by providing a variety of planned, purposeful, and sequential counseling and guidance activities that promote growth in the domains of personal/social, academic, and career development.

The district's counseling and guidance program, as well as each building-level program, is data-driven by students' needs and provides outcome-based accountability measures.

Program Benefits

When comprehensive school counseling programs are fully implemented in each of the schools within the Baldwin County Public School System, the following benefits can be expected for students, parents/guardians, teachers, communities, boards of education, administrators, and school counselors:

Benefits for Students

- Focuses on all students
- Enhances students' academic performance
- Centers on students' needs
- Seeks students' input
- Encourages more interaction among students
- Provides a developmental and preventive focus
- Promotes knowledge and assistance in career exploration and development
- Enhances life coping skills
- Helps students feel connected to school
- Enhances students' social/emotional development
- Develops decision-making skills
- Increases knowledge of self and others
- Broadens knowledge of our changing work world
- Increases opportunities for school counselor-student interaction
- Develops a system of long-range planning for students

Benefits for Parents/Guardians

- Enhances students' academic performance, and their social/emotional and career development
- Encourages outreach to all parents/guardians
- Provides support for parents/guardians regarding each child's educational development
- Increases opportunities for school counselor interaction
- Encourages input of parents/guardians
- Provides parents/guardians information about available resources
- Assures parents/guardians that all children will receive support from the school counseling program

Benefits for Teachers

- Contributes to a team effort to enhance students' social/emotional, academic, and career development
- Provides relevant curriculum ideas using school counseling grade level expectations
- Establishes the school counselor as resource/ consultant
- Encourages teachers' input into the delivery of the comprehensive school counseling program
- Encourages positive, collaborative working relationships
- Defines the role of school counselors as educators

Benefits for the Board of Education

- Enhances students' social/emotional, academic, and career development
- Encourages greater school-community interaction
- Meets the school counseling standards found in the *Alabama Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Plan*
- Provides a rationale for including a comprehensive school counseling program in a school system
- Provides program information to district patrons
- Provides a basis for determining funding allocations for the program
- Provides ongoing evaluation data concerning the full implementation of the program, the work of school counselors within the program, and the attainment of relevant school counseling student outcomes

Benefits for Administrators

- Enhances students' social/emotional, academic, and career development
- Provides a clearly defined organizational structure for the comprehensive school counseling program
- Establishes a clearly defined job description for school counselors
- Provides a way to supervise and evaluate school counselors
- Encourages administrative input and involvement in the implementation and evaluation of the comprehensive school counseling program
- Provides a way to meet the school counseling standards in the *Alabama Counseling & Guidance Plan*
- Provides a means of accountability through comprehensive school counseling program, personnel, and results evaluations
- Enhances the image of the comprehensive school counseling program in the school and community
- Promotes the work of school counselors as providers of direct services to students and parents, as well as being a consultant and collaborator with teachers and administrator

Benefits for the Community

- Encourages input from business, industry, labor, and other community partners including community mental health and social service agencies
- Increases opportunities for collaboration among school counselors and business, industry, labor, and other community partners including community mental health and social service agencies
- Enhances the role of the school counselor as a resource person
- Facilitates the development of students as active, responsible citizens
- Increases opportunities for business, industry, labor, and other community partners including community mental health and social service agencies to actively participate in the total school program
- Enhances students' academic performance as well as their social/emotional and career development
- Supplies a future workforce that has decision-making skills, pre-employment skills, and increased worker maturity

Benefits for School Counselors

- Enhances students' academic performance as well as their social/emotional and career development
- Places school counseling in the mainstream of the total educational system
- Provides clearly defined organizational structure
- Reduces and strives to eliminate non- school counseling tasks
- Offers the opportunity to reach all students
- Provides a systemic way to plan, design, implement, evaluate, and enhance the district's comprehensive school counseling program
- Outlines clearly defined responsibilities for helping students master school counseling content, develop personal plans of study, and assisting students with their individual concerns
- Provides the way to meet school counseling program standards found in *Alabama Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Plan*.

Delivery System

School counselors function in a manner consistent with the educational philosophy and mission of the local education agency (LEA) and the individual school. As a member of the educational team, each school counselor has unique responsibilities for helping all students meet their needs. School counselors provide a comprehensive counseling and guidance program for students; consult and collaborate with teachers, parents, and staff to enhance their effectiveness in helping students; and follow the Minimum Requirements for Comprehensive School Counseling and Guidance Programs in Alabama. Fair share responsibilities assigned to school counselors should not be above and beyond those of other certified staff members and should not interfere with the timely delivery of counseling and guidance services (*Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public School Schools*, 2015 Draft.)

Organizational Framework, Activities, and Time

1. Baldwin County Public Schools will implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that:
 - a. Ensures that each counselor develops and follows a planned calendar of activities;
 - b. Ensures that 100 percent of each counselor's time is spent in providing guidance services through the four program delivery components: School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support; and
 - c. Ensures that each counselor participates annually in a planned professional development program designed to strengthen identified needs of the counseling and guidance program and/or the counselor as well as to foster ethical standards.
2. Baldwin County Public Schools will provide for performance-based evaluation of counselors. The elements of this evaluation must conform to the duties and responsibilities of the counselor as stated in the *Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Alabama Public Schools* (the State Plan), Bulletin 2003, No.89.
3. Baldwin County Public Schools will make provisions for new counselors to attend the Alabama State Department of Education Counselor Academy as a part of approved professional development conferences, and will also encourage experienced school counselors to participate in this professional development opportunity.
4. Baldwin County Public Schools will establish a Counseling and Guidance Advisory Committee to assist in the development and implementation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program.

Competencies

5. Baldwin County Public Schools will implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that ensures that every student has the opportunity to achieve the minimum competencies at each appropriate grade level.

Structural Components

6. Baldwin County Public Schools will provide counseling and guidance services performed by certified school counselors for all students in Grades K-12 at a ratio designated by professional and state approved accrediting organizations.
7. Baldwin County Public Schools will implement a comprehensive school counseling and guidance program and ensure that appropriate personnel are appointed at the LEA level to coordinate and monitor the delivery of counseling and guidance services to all students.

Resources

8. Baldwin County Public Schools will provide facilities that are easily assessable and allow for the implementation of a comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Minimum facility requirements for delivery of counseling and guidance services include facilities that:
 - a. Provide private office(s) properly equipped with locked files for counseling records.
 - b. Provide private telephone line(s) for confidential telephone conversations.
 - c. Are adequate in size for conducting small-group counseling and classroom-guidance activities.
 - d. Ensure adequate space for reception areas and for organizing and displaying guidance materials.
 - e. Provide appropriate planning time and staff support to effectively implement the comprehensive counseling and guidance program.
9. Baldwin County Public Schools will provide resource materials that are relevant to the program, appropriate for the community, and of sufficient quantity to be useful.

Guidance Curriculum

The school guidance core curriculum includes structured experiences presented systematically through classroom and group activities from kindergarten through grade twelve in the three domains of academic, career, and personal/social development. The curriculum is a planned sequential program of guidance activities that serves to enhance the instructional program and focuses on increasing student achievement. The curriculum emphasizes decision making; self-understanding; study skills; and career exploration, preparation, and planning.

Examples of school guidance curriculum delivery options within this component may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Group Activities. School counselors conduct small group counseling sessions outside the classroom to respond to student identified interests or needs. Small group counseling may be either immediate-response or extended counseling.

Instruction. School counselors facilitate, co-lead, or assist in the delivery of guidance curriculum activities. These activities may be conducted in the classroom, in the guidance center, or in other school facilities. Professional school counselors assist teachers in the delivery of classroom units that lead to acquisition of competencies in the areas of effective, social, academic, and employability skills for each student in developmentally appropriate ways.

Workshops. School counselors conduct workshops and information sessions for parents/guardians to address the needs of the school community and to reflect the school counseling and guidance curriculum.

Topics for school counseling and guidance curriculum activities within this component may include, but are not limited to, career awareness and exploration, career development skills, communication skills, decision-making skills, goal setting/planning, peer relationships, personal safety, personal/social development skills, preventive programs, self-concept, and study skills.

Individual Student Planning

Individual student planning includes counseling activities that provide every student with equal access for opportunities to plan, monitor, and manage his or her academic, career, and personal/social development. Individual student planning emphasizes test results interpretation to identify student interests, achievement levels, and aptitudes. Academic counseling includes post-secondary education, career/technical education, and career planning. Examples of individual student planning delivery options within this component may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Individual or Small Group Advisement. School counselors help students acquire self-appraisal skills and educational, career, and labor market information. This information assists students in planning for personal, academic, and career goals. School counselors recognize the critical need to enlist teachers and parents or guardians in helping students make academic and career choices.

Individual or Small Group Appraisal. School counselors help students assess and interpret individual abilities, interests, skills, and achievements. The utilization of appropriate assessment information becomes an important aspect of individual development of immediate and long-range plans.

Placement and Follow-Up. School counselors advise students in making transitions by supplying information and by assisting in providing access to appropriate resources.

Topics for individual student planning activities may include advisor/advisee programs, assessment results interpretation, career awareness and exploration, career and technical education programs, college and career readiness, goal setting, interest inventories, role playing, school success, social/soft essential skills, student recognition, and transition. In addition, legislative and other graduation requirements require school counselors serving Grades 8-12 to guide students in the development and annual revision of the high school four-year educational plan and the development of a career planning portfolio of study. Selection of the high school four-year educational plan shall be approved in writing by the parents/guardians and become part of the educational/career planning portfolio; if the parent/guardian signatures are not obtained, documentation of attempts to acquire signatures should be maintained.

Responsive Services

Responsive services include counseling or referral activities that meet the immediate needs and concerns of students. Responsive services include personal counseling, crisis counseling, problem solving, agency referrals, and consultation. Examples of responsive services delivery options within this component may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Consultation. School counselors serve as student advocates by consulting with students, parents or guardians, educators, and community agencies regarding strategies to help students and families. Advocacy may include participation in student study teams and student management teams.

Personal Counseling. Counseling is provided in small group or individual settings for students experiencing difficulties dealing with relationships, personal concerns, or developmentally appropriate tasks. Personal counseling assists students in identifying problems, causes, alternatives, and consequences leading to informed decision making.

Crisis Counseling. Counseling and support services are provided to students and families facing emotional crises as outlined in the school crisis management plan. Crisis counseling is normally short-term and temporary, using appropriate referral sources if necessary.

Peer Facilitation. Counselors may train students as peer mediators, conflict managers, tutors, and mentors. Programs should adhere to the ethics standards and practices established by the National Peer Helpers Association.

Referrals. Counselors use referral sources to enhance the services provided through the school counseling and guidance program. These referral sources may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Mental health agencies
- Employment and training programs
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Juvenile services
- Social services
- Grief counseling
- Deployment

Baldwin County Public Schools' counselors strive to include activities that meet the immediate needs and concerns of individual students whether those concerns involve individual or group counseling, information dissemination, crisis intervention, peer mediation, consultation, or referral. When cases are identified that require outside, emergency, long-term, and/or intensive treatment, the counselors work closely with the school nurses, school social workers, school resource officers, the juvenile court system, local mental health providers, and the Baldwin County Department of Human Resources. Some of the local agencies that are used for student referral include Alta Pointe Health Services, Bay Pointe Hospital, Beacon Behavioral Hospital, Compass to Life Services, Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation, The Bridge, Baldwin Youth Services, and the Drug Education Council.

System Support

System support includes guidance management activities that maintain and enhance the total counseling and guidance program. Responsibilities in this area include staff relations, community relations, task forces, professional development, support teams, test interpretation, data analysis, and curriculum development. This component provides appropriate support to academic programs. Examples of system support delivery options within this component may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Professional Development. Counselors are regularly involved in updating professional knowledge and skills. This may involve participating in regular school in-service training, attending professional meetings, completing post-graduate course work, and contributing to professional journals.

Inservice. Counselors attend system and school in-service training to ensure counseling skills are updated in the areas of curriculum development, technology, and data analysis. Counselors may provide in-service instruction in school guidance curriculum and areas of special concern to the school and community.

Consultation, Collaboration, and Teaming. Counselors provide important contributions to the school system by consulting, partnering, collaborating, and teaming.

Public Relations. Counselors design activities to orient the staff and community about the comprehensive school counseling and guidance program.

Community Outreach. Counselors forge partnerships with local businesses, industries, and social service agencies. Community outreach requires counselors to be knowledgeable about community resources, employment opportunities, and local labor market information.

Consultation with Staff. Counselors consult regularly with teachers and professional staff members in order to receive feedback on emerging needs of students and to provide information and support to staff.

Curriculum Development Support. Counselors participate in the ongoing review and revision of academic curriculum materials as related to data analysis, student advocacy, post-secondary education, and career/technical education planning.

Advisory Committees. Counselors form counseling and guidance advisory committees at both the system and the individual school level. Counselors actively serve on community committees or advisory councils that influence other programs to generate support for system and individual school counseling and guidance programs.

Program Management and Operations. Planning and management tasks include the support of activities conducted in the school counseling and guidance program and responsibilities expected of a member of the school staff. Budget, facilities, policies and procedures, and research and resource development are elements of management activities.

Research and Evaluation. Some examples of counselor research and evaluation include *Educator Effectiveness* or other personnel guidance evaluations, program evaluations, data analysis, follow-up studies, professional development, and updating of resources.

Fair Share Responsibilities. Fair share responsibilities may include such tasks as bus duty, playground duty, class/club sponsorship, and taking tickets at sports events. Non-guidance responsibilities assigned to counselors should not be above and beyond those of other certified staff members and should not interfere with the delivery of guidance services.

In Baldwin County Public Schools, the system support component activities are two-fold. The first includes those activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the preceding three program components. Activities in this component include program development, program evaluation and assessment, parent education, materials development, and testing and community relations. The second aspect of the system support component includes activities that support other programs in the school. Those activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Building Test Coordinator
- RTI Coordinator/Member
- Building Leadership Team Member
- Continuing Improvement Plan Committee Member
- School Section 504 Coordinator/Member
- IEP Team Member
- LEA Representative
- Problem Solving Team (PST) Member
- Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Team Member
- AP Coordinator

At some schools, counselors schedule students, assist administrators and teachers with identifying student needs, serve on school and curriculum committees, assist with lunchroom and bus duty, etc. The counselors conduct classroom guidance assessments and utilize that data to analyze its impact. They collaborate with teachers in determining the factors that are impeding the success of students and conduct follow-up assessments of the students. The counselors play a role in identifying at-risk students. At-risk students are identified by evaluating their academic record, discipline referrals, attendance, and state assessment data.

School counselors in Baldwin County Public Schools are involved with many community agencies and programs. Some of these agencies and programs include the following:

- Baldwin County Child Advocacy Center
- United Way
- Compass II Life
- Department of Human Resources
- Coastal Alabama Community College
- Prodissee Pantry
- Backpack Program
- Alta Pointe Health Services

- Bay Pointe Hospital
- Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation
- The Bridge
- Baldwin Youth Services
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Women's Care Medical Center
- Drug Education Council

When funding is made available, the counselors continue professional growth by attending workshops, in-services, conferences, meetings, and completing classes to maintain certification with the Alabama State Department of Education, the National Board of Certified Counselors, and the National Board of Certified School Counselors. School counselors are strongly encouraged to hold membership in the Alabama Counseling Association, as well as the American School Counselor Association.

Structural Components

In order to ensure that the Baldwin County Schools' Counseling and Guidance Program is an integral part of the total school system and community, a comprehensive developmental counseling and guidance program is implemented at each school level (K-12) and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to maintain, enhance, and evaluate the district's counseling and guidance program. An advisory committee provides input and support for the program. Each school's counseling department has a certified school counselor that is also assisted by their advisory committee.

Advisory Committee

The district advisory committee for the Baldwin County Public School System consists of representative stakeholders of the school counseling and guidance program, including students, parents and/or guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, school board members, as well as business and community representatives. The advisory committee reviews program goals, competencies, and results, and participates in making recommendations to the school counseling and guidance department, principal, and superintendent.

Counseling and Guidance Department Organization

At the beginning of the school year, counselors meet with principals regarding the counseling and guidance program. If there are two or more counselors in the school, specific/equitable duties and student caseloads are assigned. Each LEA should have a counseling coordinator to work with principals and counselors to ensure that program planning, design, implementation, and evaluation take place in a timely, effective, and equitable manner.

All schools must provide counseling and guidance services to students in grades K-12 from certified school counselors at a ratio designated for the type of school. Adequate support personnel should be available to counselors to ensure effective program delivery.

Coordinator's Role

Coordination and direction of the LEA's comprehensive counseling and guidance program is critical. Counseling and guidance coordinators provide necessary support for comprehensive school guidance program development, implementation, and evaluation of procedures that enhance the effectiveness of the school system's comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Counseling and guidance coordinators serve as facilitators, leaders, supporters, and advisors. Counseling and guidance coordinators provide leadership to ensure the credibility of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program for faculty, staff, and the community.

Principal's Role

Administrative support is critical to full implementation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Principals, as chief administrators in schools, are ultimately responsible for the success of all

instructional programs, including the school counseling and guidance program. Principals understand the role of school counselors and provide the necessary support for counselors to fulfill that role. Such support includes the provision of adequate facilities, materials, and clerical staff to allow counselors to use their specialized training in an effective manner. Principals provide input into program development and encourage and support participation of all school personnel in the implementation of the counseling and guidance program.

Counselors' Role

Counselors assume the leadership role for managing and implementing the comprehensive counseling and guidance program in their school. Counselors are responsible for the systematic delivery and evaluation of structured developmental counseling and guidance services to all students. Counselors work directly with students, individually and in small groups, to deal with unique or problem-centered concerns that require more privacy or attention than can be accommodated in structured guidance activities. Counselors serve students indirectly by acting as consultants to administrators, teachers, parents, and others to help them understand and respond to the developmental, emotional, and social needs of students. Counselors coordinate various activities within the school that are related to student welfare. Appropriate referrals, placements, and follow-ups are activities that are particularly pertinent to counseling.

Elementary School Counselors

Elementary school counselors assist students with learning the skills and attitudes necessary to be successful in school. They emphasize to students that the classroom is their workplace and that communication, decision-making, interpersonal, and career awareness skills are important to their success.

Middle School Counselors

Building upon those skills taught at the elementary level, a major focus of middle school counselors is to provide services that address the career, personal/social, and educational needs and concerns of students. Counselors at this level facilitate the expansion of career awareness and exploration activities to assist in the development and utilization of short and long-range educational and career plans.

High School Counselors

High school counselors work with students in acquiring guidance competencies that form the foundation for the next educational and occupational levels. The counselors assist students in developing realistic educational and career plans based on a clear understanding of themselves, their needs, interests, skills, and abilities.

Teachers' Role

Teachers play a vital role in the planning and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling and guidance program. As professionals who have the greatest contact with students, teachers are in the best position to recognize and help provide for the developmental and individual needs of students. Through appropriate communication and referral, teachers facilitate the interaction between students and counselors. Teachers demonstrate support for the program by providing adequate opportunities for student-counselor contact. Teachers contribute directly to the school counseling and guidance program by

helping counselors deliver programs that facilitate the academic, career, and personal/social development of students. Teachers strengthen and follow through on concepts presented to help students retain the knowledge, skills, and understanding established through the program. Teacher support, input, and expertise make it possible for the school counseling and guidance program to become an integral part of the total educational program.

Guidance Resources

Appropriate guidance resources are required for each of the four program delivery components: School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support. These resources include equipment and materials, staff expertise, and community resources. Resource materials must be relevant to the program, appropriate for the diversity of the school and community, and of sufficient quantity to be useful. All counselors should be provided the necessary equipment and materials to implement the comprehensive counseling and guidance program.

Materials, Supplies, and Equipment

- Materials are relevant to the program and appropriate for the community.
- The school counselor consults with the advisory committee and the local school 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.

Facilities

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

Technology

- School counselors use technology daily in their work, including the Internet, word processing, student database systems, and presentation software.
- School counselors use technology to help students perform career and advanced educational searches for use in their education development plans.
- School counselors evaluate transcripts for students using the Power School program.
- School counselors use data regarding their school population to work with the principal, teachers, and the advisory committee in making recommendations to improve academic achievement.
- School counselors receive ongoing training in appropriate areas of technology advancement and updates.
- Some school counselors maintain an up-to-date counseling website with pertinent information for students and parents.
- 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.
- School counselors communicate with teachers, administrators, central office, outside agency representatives, and other counselors via e-mail.

Use of Time

The Baldwin County Public Schools' counselors utilize the Alabama State Department of Education's recommended distribution counseling time as a guide in determining the adequate percentage of service to be provided in each program area. The counselors keep daily records that document time and activities performed. These records allow counselors and administrators to determine the actual amount of time spent in each of the four program delivery components and in non-school counseling activities. By analyzing this data, adjustments can be made to better utilize counselor time so that the greatest amount of time is spent in direct service to students.

Suggested Distribution of Total Counselor Time*

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
	<i>Percentage Rate</i>		
School Guidance Curriculum	35-45	25-35	15-25
Individual Student Planning	5-10	15-25	25-35
Responsive Services	30-40	30-40	25-35
System Support	10-15	10-15	15-20
Total	100	100	100

*Reprinted with permission, Gysbers, N.C., and Henderson, P. (2000). *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program*, (3rd ed.), Alexandria, Va.: American Counseling Association.

Program Goals

The goals of the Baldwin County Public Schools' District Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program are defined as follows:

The **Academic Domain** states that students will:

1. Acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and throughout life.
2. Complete school with academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.
3. Understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

The **Career Domain** states that students will:

1. Acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
2. Employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.
3. Understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

The **Personal/Social Domain** states that students will:

1. Acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
2. Make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.
3. Understand safety and survival skills.

Guidance Curriculum Scope and Sequence

The following competencies for Alabama students at each grade-level cluster level (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) are linked directly to the nine national standards as presented in the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*. The competencies describe the attitudes, knowledge, and an effective school counseling and guidance program.

Counselors should determine the student competencies and the corresponding indicators (listed below each competency) to be utilized in planning and developing the school guidance curriculum and the individual student planning components appropriate for specific grade-level cluster levels within the school program. Guidance activities must be outcome-based and linked to the appropriate indicators.

The following chart is a tool to be used to assist counselors in planning the overall guidance curriculum. The solid dots highlight the grade-cluster level where each competency indicator is introduced. The competency indicators are intended to be cumulative; therefore, the hollow dots highlight the grade-cluster level(s) in which the competency indicator may be expanded or reinforced. Careful analysis of the scope and sequence of the local school guidance curriculum ensures that all students master all competency indicators by the end of Grade 12.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

Competency A:A1		Improve Academic Self-Concept			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
A:A1.1	articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners		●	○	○
A:A1.2	display a positive interest in learning	●	○	○	○
A:A1.3	take pride in work and achievement	●	○	○	○
A:A1.4	accept mistakes as essential to the learning process		●	○	○
A:A1.5	identify attitudes and behaviors leading to successful learning			●	○
Competency A:A2		Acquire Skills for Improving Learning			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
A:A2.1	apply time-management and task-management skills			●	○
A:A2.2	demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning		●	○	○
A:A2.3	use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed	●	○	○	○
A:A2.4	apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance			●	○

Competency A:A3		Achieve School Success			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
A:A3.1	take responsibility for their success	●	○	○	○
A:A3.2	demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other students		●	○	○
A:A3.3	develop a broad range of interests and abilities			●	○
A:A3.4	demonstrate dependability, productivity and initiative		●	○	○
A:A3.5	share knowledge		●	○	○

Standard B: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.

Competency A:B1		Improve Learning			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
A:B1.1	demonstrate the motivation to achieve individual potential		●	○	○
A:B1.2	learn and apply critical-thinking skills		●	○	○
A:B1.3	apply the study skills necessary for academic success at each level	●	○	○	○
A:B1.4	seek information and support from faculty, staff, family and peers			●	○
A:B1.5	organize and apply academic information from a variety of sources			●	○
A:B1.6	use knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance			●	○
A:B1.7	become a self-directed and independent learner		●	○	○
Competency A:B2		Plan to Achieve Goals			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
A:B2.1	establish challenging academic goals in elementary, middle/junior high and high school		●	●	●
A:B2.2	use assessment results in educational planning			●	○
A:B2.3	develop and implement annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement			●	●
A:B2.4	apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting			●	○
A:B2.5	use problem-solving and decision-making skills to assess progress toward educational goals			●	○
A:B2.6	understand the relationship between classroom performance and success in school	●	○	○	○
A:B2.7	identify postsecondary options consistent with interests, achievement, aptitude and abilities			●	○

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Competency A:C1		Relate School to Life Experience			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
A:C1.1	demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time and family life		●	○	○
A:C1.2	seek co-curricular and community experiences to enhance the school experience			●	○
A:C1.3	understand the relationship between learning and work	●	○	○	○
A:C1.4	demonstrate an understanding of the value of lifelong learning as essential to seeking, obtaining and maintaining life goals			●	○
A:C1.5	understand that school success is the preparation to make the transition from student to community member			●	○
A:C1.6	understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities		●	○	○

CAREER DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN

Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Competency C:A1		Developing Career Awareness			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
C:A1.1	develop skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information			●	○
C:A1.2	learn about the variety of traditional and nontraditional occupations	●	○	○	○
C:A1.3	develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests and motivations	●	○	○	○
C:A1.4	learn how to interact and work cooperatively in teams		●	○	○
C:A1.5	learn how to make decisions		●	○	○
C:A1.6	learn how to set goals		●	○	○
C:A1.7	understand the importance of planning			●	○
C:A1.8	pursue and develop competency in areas of interest			●	○
C:A1.9	develop hobbies and vocational interests	●	○	○	○
C:A1.10	balance between work and leisure time		●	○	○

Competency C:A2		Develop Employment Readiness			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
C:A2.1	acquire employability skills such as working on a team and problem-solving and organizational skills			●	○
C:A2.2	apply job readiness skills to seek employment opportunities				●
C:A2.3	demonstrate knowledge about the changing workplace				●
C:A2.4	learn about the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees				●
C:A2.5	learn to respect individual uniqueness in the workplace				●
C:A2.6	learn how to write a resume				●
C:A2.7	develop a positive attitude toward work and learning	●	○	○	○
C:A2.8	understand the importance of responsibility, dependability, punctuality, integrity and effort in the workplace			●	○
C:A2.9	utilize time- and task-management skills	●	○	○	○

Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.

Competency C:B1		Acquire Career Information			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
C:B1.1	apply decision-making skills to career planning, course selection and career transition			●	○
C:B1.2	identify personal skills, interests and abilities and relate them to current career choice	●	○	○	○
C:B1.3	demonstrate knowledge of the career-planning process			●	○
C:B1.4	know the various ways in which occupations can be classified		●	○	○
C:B1.5	use research and information resources to obtain career information			●	○
C:B1.6	learn to use the Internet to access career-planning information			●	○
C:B1.7	describe traditional and nontraditional career choices and how they relate to career choice		●	○	○
C:B1.8	understand how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training			●	○
Competency C:B2		Identify Career Goals			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
C:B2.1	demonstrate awareness of the education and training needed to achieve career goals	●	○	○	○
C:B2.2	assess and modify their educational plan to support career				●
C:B2.3	use employability and job readiness skills in internship, mentoring, shadowing and/or other work experience			●	○
C:B2.4	select course work that is related to career interests			●	○
C:B2.5	maintain a career-planning portfolio			●	○

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

Competency C:C1		Acquire Knowledge to Achieve Career Goals			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
C:C1.1	understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success	●	○	○	○
C:C1.2	explain how work can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction		●	○	○
C:C1.3	identify personal preferences and interests influencing career choice and success			●	○
C:C1.4	understand that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and acquiring new skills			●	○
C:C1.5	describe the effect of work on lifestyle			●	○
C:C1.6	understand the importance of equity and access in career choice		●	○	○
C:C1.7	understand that work is an important and satisfying means of personal expression	●	○	○	○
Competency C:C2		Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
C:C2.1	demonstrate how interests, abilities and achievement relate to achieving personal, social, educational and career goals		●	○	○
C:C2.2	learn how to use conflict management skills with peers and adults	●	○	○	○
C:C2.3	learn to work cooperatively with others as a team member		●	○	○
C:C2.4	apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning situations such as internships, shadowing and/or mentoring experiences			●	○

PERSONAL/SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Competency PS:A1		Acquire Self-Knowledge			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
PS:A1.1	develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person	●	○	○	○
PS:A1.2	identify values, attitudes and beliefs	●	○	○	○
PS:A1.3	learn the goal-setting process		●	○	○
PS:A1.4	understand change is a part of growth	●	○	○	○
PS:A1.5	identify and express feelings	●	○	○	○
PS:A1.6	distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior	●	○	○	○
PS:A1.7	recognize personal boundaries, rights and privacy needs	●	○	○	○

Competency PS:A1		Acquire Self-Knowledge (Continued)			
PS:A1.8	understand the need for self-control and how to practice it	●	○	○	○
PS:A1.9	demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups		●	○	○
PS:A1.10	identify personal strengths and assets		●	○	○
PS:A1.11	identify and discuss changing personal and social roles		●	○	○
PS:A1.12	identify and recognize changing family roles	●	○	○	○
Competency PS:A2		Acquire Interpersonal Skills			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
PS:A2.1	recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities	●	○	○	○
PS:A2.2	respect alternative points of view		●	○	○
PS:A2.3	recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences	●	○	○	○
PS:A2.4	recognize, accept and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity	●	○	○	○
PS:A2.5	recognize and respect differences in various family configurations	●	○	○	○
PS:A2.6	use effective communication skills	●	○	○	○
PS:A2.7	know that communication involves speaking, listening and nonverbal behavior	●	○	○	○
PS:A2.8	learn how to make and keep friends	●	○	○	○

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Competency PS:B1		Self-Knowledge Application			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
PS:B1.1	use a decision-making and problem-solving model		●	○	○
PS:B1.2	understand consequences of decisions and choices	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.3	identify alternative solutions to a problem	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.4	develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.5	demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.6	know how to apply conflict-resolution skills	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.7	demonstrate a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.8	know when peer pressure is influencing a decision	●	○	○	○
PS:B1.9	identify long- and short-term goals			●	○
PS:B1.10	identify alternative ways of achieving goals			●	○
PS:B1.11	use persistence and perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills		●	○	○
PS:B1.12	develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals			●	○

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Competency PS:C1		Acquire Personal Safety Skills			
		K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
PS:C1.1	demonstrate knowledge of personal information (telephone number, home address, emergency contact)	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.2	learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety and the protection of rights of the individual	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.3	learn about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.4	demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy		●	○	○
PS:C1.5	differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help		●	○	○
PS:C1.6	identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.7	apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.8	learn about the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.9	learn how to cope with peer pressure		●	○	○
PS:C1.10	learn techniques for managing stress and conflict	●	○	○	○
PS:C1.11	learn coping skills for managing life events			●	○

Minimum Requirements for School Counseling And Guidance Programs in Alabama

School counselors function in a manner consistent with the educational philosophy and mission of the Baldwin County Public School System and the local school. As a member of the educational team, each counselor has special responsibilities for helping all students meet their needs. Baldwin County School counselors provide a comprehensive counseling and guidance program for students; consult and collaborate with teachers, parents, and staff to enhance their effectiveness in helping students; and follow the Minimum Requirements for Comprehensive School Counseling and Guidance Programs in Alabama.

Organizational Framework, Activities, and Time

1. Every school system and school must implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that:
 - a. Ensures that each counselor develops and follows a planned calendar of activities;
 - b. Ensures that 80 percent of each counselor's time is spent in providing guidance services through the four program delivery components: School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support; and
 - c. Ensures that each counselor participates annually in a planned professional development program designed to strengthen identified needs of the counseling and guidance program and/or the counselor as well as to foster ethical standards.
2. Every school system and school must provide for performance-based evaluation of counselors. The elements of this evaluation must conform to the duties and responsibilities of the counselor as stated in the *Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Alabama Public Schools* (the State Plan), Bulletin 2003, No.89.
3. Every school system and school should make provisions for new counselors to attend the Alabama Department of Education Counselor Academy as well as encourage experienced counselors to attend this professional development opportunity.
4. Every school system and school must establish a Counseling and Guidance Advisory Committee to assist in the development and implementation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program.

Competencies

5. Every school system and school must implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that ensures that every student has the opportunity to achieve the minimum competencies at each appropriate grade level.

Structural Components

6. All schools must provide counseling and guidance services performed by certified school counselors for all students in Grades K-12 at a ratio designated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) for the type of school.
7. Every school system and school must implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program and ensure that a person is appointed at the system level to coordinate and monitor the delivery of counseling and guidance services to all students.

School Guidance Curriculum

8. Every school system and school must implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that:
 - a. Ensures that each counselor engages in counseling with students in small groups to influence responsible student behavior and to enhance academic achievement; and
 - b. Ensures that each counselor implements a planned sequential program of large-group guidance activities designed to teach students the competencies identified in the three domains of Academic Development, Career Development, and Personal/Social Development in a fashion that enhances the instructional program and focuses on increasing student achievement.

Individual Student Planning

9. Every school system and school must implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that:
 - a. Ensures that each counselor engages in counseling with students in individual settings that facilitate responsible student behavior and enhance student academic achievement;
 - b. Ensures that each Grades 8-12 counselor guides students in the development and annual revision of a high school four-year educational plan and requires students to maintain an educational/career planning portfolio of study based on legislative and other graduation requirements. (The selection of the high school four-year educational plan shall be approved in writing by the parents or guardians and become part of the educational/career planning portfolio.);
 - c. Ensures that each counselor demonstrates accurate and appropriate interpretation of assessment data and the presentation of relevant, unbiased information; and

- d. Ensures that each counselor provides equal access and appropriate placement for all students by utilizing test data and other available information that identifies interests, achievement levels, and aptitudes.

Responsive Services

- 10. Every counselor must assist in the early identification of students at risk of school failure and must facilitate in the delivery of preventive and interventive services.
- 11. Every counselor must consult with students, parents, teachers, community agencies, and others (nurses, attendance officers, school psychologists, school social workers) regarding strategies to help students achieve personal and academic advancement.

System Support

- 12. Every school system and school must implement a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that:
 - a. Ensures that each counselor organizes and manages the counseling and guidance program to provide equal access and the most effective delivery of services to students, staff, parents, and the community;
 - b. Conducts systematic evaluations and follow-up studies to determine the need for program revision;
 - c. Promotes awareness of the program components to students, staff, and the community; and;
 - d. Ensures that each counselor coordinates guidance services with all aspects of the school program in conjunction with other school staff and community resources.

Resources

- 13. Every school system and school must provide facilities that are easily accessible and allow for the implementation of a comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Minimum facility requirements for delivery of counseling and guidance services include facilities that:
 - a. Provide private office(s) properly equipped with locked files for counseling records,
 - b. Provide private telephone line(s) for confidential telephone conversations,

- c. Are adequate in size for conducting small-group counseling and classroom-guidance activities, and
 - d. Ensure adequate space for reception areas and for organizing and displaying guidance materials.
14. Every school system and school must provide resource materials that are relevant to the program, appropriate for the community, and of sufficient quantity to be useful.

Accountability

Accountability and evaluation of school counselors and the school counseling and guidance programs are integral components of quality programs. Alabama's comprehensive school counseling and guidance programs should be data driven. Data should be collected to validate certain counseling and guidance activities as well as to determine if any change in student perception and behavior has occurred as a result of counseling and guidance activities. The monitoring of student progress and program progress in addition to performing personnel evaluations requires the collection of data that support and link school counseling and guidance programs to students' academic success.

Counselor/Principal Administrative Conference

The counselor/principal administrative conference is one of the single most important documentation outcomes that includes students, staff, parents, and the counselor's own professional development. The annual administrative conference is a formal discussion between school counselors and the administrator in charge of a school counseling program. The discussion can increase an administrator's understanding of a school counseling program and includes information such as the following:

- The school counseling program priorities.
- How school counseling goals align with the school's goals.
- How school counselors currently use their time and how they would like to use their time in the future.
- Ratios and caseload.
- Direct and indirect services to be delivered.
- Advisory council dates and members.
- Plans for professional development.
- The school counselor's role on committees or other professional work.

Calendars

Each school's guidance and counseling department must develop and publish an annual calendar of school counseling events to inform students, parents, teachers, and administrators of what, when, and where school counseling activities will be held.

School counselors use the annual calendar to prioritize and communicate school counseling program priorities. The school counseling program has one annual calendar that includes all major school counseling activities delivered or coordinated by the school counselor(s). It may include activities such as:

- School counseling classroom lessons
- Back-to-School Night
- Open House
- Student/parent/teacher meeting days
- Career or college nights
- Evening activities provided through the school and/or the community

Each school counselor is responsible for creating a weekly calendar that provides a detailed plan of the school counselor's activities for the week. Although the weekly calendar is somewhat flexible due to crises or immediate student needs that may occur unexpectedly, this calendar serves as a plan for program implementation on a daily basis.

Annual Results Reports

Annual results reports are designed to ensure school counseling programs are assessed for effectiveness and to inform decisions related to program improvement. These reports are an essential component of a data-informed school counseling program. There are two types of annual results reports: Classroom and Small Group results reports and Closing-the-Gap results reports.

Analyzing data from these reports contributes to a more-informed approach to addressing student needs and to more focused and effective activities and interventions. These reports align with the action plans typically created for the beginning of a school year and developed as part of the Manage component of the ASCA National Model.

Monitoring Student Progress

Student Data

Using student, school, and system data to monitor student progress ensures that each student receives the necessary support to be successful in school. School counselors must be proficient in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement and related data. Student progress is monitored through three types of data: student-achievement data, achievement-related data, and standards-and competency-related data.

Student-achievement data measures academic progress. Data includes:

- Standardized test data
- Grade point averages
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) Program scores
- Graduation rate
- Grade level (at or above) in reading, math, and other content areas
- Successful completion of all courses
- Promotion and retention rates
- Completion of specific academic programs (academic honors, Career/Prep)

Baldwin County Public Schools' counselors are responsible for keeping a record of potential at-risk students (PST/RTI). A number of factors are used to determine if a student is at-risk. Such factors include, but are not limited to, course grades, daily attendance, classroom discipline, course failures, and College and Career Readiness status.

Achievement-related data measures those areas shown to be correlated to academic success. Data includes:

- In-school and out-of-school suspension and expulsion rates
- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug violations
- Attendance rates, including tardies to school/class, check-outs, and truancy
- Parent or guardian involvement
- Extracurricular participation rate
- Homework completion rates

Standards-and competency-related data measures student mastery of the competencies delineated in the comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Data includes:

- Percentage of students having a four-year plan on file
- Percentage of students participating in job shadowing
- Percentage of students seeing and attaining academic goals
- Percentage of students applying conflict resolution skills

Disaggregated Data

Ensuring academic success for every student includes counselor-initiated activities designed to meet the needs of under-served, under-performing, and under-represented populations. School counselors examine student academic achievement data and develop outcome-based interventions designed to help students

succeed. School counselors must be able to separate data by variables to determine if there are any groups of students who may not be performing as well as others.

The counselors in the Baldwin County Public Schools have input into the school's Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) each year. The CIP addresses "closing the achievement gap" activities.

Data Over Time

Collecting immediate, intermediate, and long-range data allows the school counselor to gain a true picture of the impact of the school counseling and guidance program. Immediate data measure the impact of knowledge, skills, and attitude change as a result of counselor activity or intervention. Intermediate data measure the application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes over a short period of time. Long-range data are longitudinal and examine trends from year to year.

Assessing the current school counseling and guidance program reveals how well the program is meeting the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students. School counselors should determine student needs that are unique to their school and community.

Monitoring Program Progress

Program Evaluations

Evaluation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program is a vital element in determining the effectiveness of the school program. An evaluation of the counseling and guidance program using process data, perception data, and results data measures the degree to which students have acquired the skills and knowledge defined by the competencies and the Minimum Requirements for School Counseling and Guidance Programs in Alabama. Each curriculum plan utilized in the Baldwin County Public Schools' Counseling and Guidance Program includes the above-mentioned components.

Process Data (What did the counselor do and for whom?)

Process data includes an evaluation of the number of students served, how many groups and classroom visits were conducted, what activities were completed, etc.

Perception Data (What do students think they know, believe, or can demonstrate?)

Perception data is collected through the pre/post assessments, tests, or skills demonstration opportunities (role plays, evaluation/feedback forms).

Results Data (What was changed or learned as a result of the activity?)

Results data is derived from the observed impact on the students' ability to utilize their knowledge, attitudes, and skills to effect behavior change.

Student Results Evaluations

Results evaluations are used to show change in student behavior and student learning. The results evaluations and reports can be used to ensure the program is carried out as planned; to ensure that every student is served; to ensure that developmentally appropriate materials are used; to analyze the program's effectiveness; to improve the program, etc.

Program Audits

The Baldwin County Public Schools' counselors are expected to periodically (at least annually) audit their counseling and guidance program. The primary purpose for the audit is to guide future actions within the program and to improve future results for students.

Personnel Evaluations

Baldwin County Public Schools' counselors will be evaluated using the Standards for Success program. The local principals are responsible for conducting the counselor evaluations.

Career and Technical Education

ASCA and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education noted that school counselors can explain career technical education options to students in the framework of career clusters and programs of study to inform student planning (Conneely et al., 2009). Mobley et al. (2017) added that students are often more motivated to stay in school when enrolled in career-focused education. School counselors improve their service to their students when they understand career technical education offers numerous benefits, including rigorous programs of study, academic and career technical education curriculum and productive relationships within the business community. These advantages serve as effective means that school counselors can use to help all students make informed career decisions. Comprehensive school counseling programs provide a way for school counselors to help students understand all of their options that lead to the world of work, including career technical education courses, through organized and structured appraisal and advisement (ASCA Position Statement, 2018).

****See the Career Clusters chart on page 38**

Students in the Baldwin County Public School System utilize career exploration programs such as Kuder, which allows them to participate in career exploration through web-based software that explores careers and planning. As early as the seventh grade, students are able to complete career interest surveys, which delineate students' career interests at multiple grade levels and raise their awareness of the academics required to pursue the fields of interest. Additionally, students are able to participate in virtual career explorations, which allows them to become familiar with descriptions and expectations for different careers and career clusters by viewing videos related to a variety of possible careers.

Each school year, students in the eighth grade from Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington, and Wilcox Counties have an opportunity to participate in the SAWDC (South Alabama Workforce Development Council) Worlds of Opportunity Career Expo. Through their participation in this stellar event, students are able to engage in a hands-on, interactive career exploration experience led by business professionals from 12 key South Alabama industries. Specifically, students are able to participate in real-world simulations of available career options in these various worlds: Aerospace and Aviation, Computer & Information Technology, Construction, Energy, Engineering & Design, Healthcare, Hospitality & Tourism, Public Service, Safety, Manufacturing, Shipbuilding & Repair, and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

Career guidance services in career and technical education help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to identify options, explore alternatives, and succeed in society. Through the classroom guidance lessons taught, students are better prepared for the changing workplace of the 21st century by:

- Teaching labor market changes and complexity of the workforce;
- Broadening knowledge, skills, and activities;
- Improving decision making skills;
- Increasing self-esteem and motivation;
- Building interpersonal effectiveness;
- Maximizing career opportunities;
- Improving employment marketability and opportunities;
- Promoting effective job placement;

- Strengthening employer relations.

School counselors have multiple opportunities to involve students in education and training that integrates academic and career education. Consequently, they are able to encourage students' greater participation in post-secondary education, as well as directing them to the workforce placement. By so doing, services are provided to all students, which not only promotes program outcomes and performance measures, but also supports the business and economic development of Baldwin County and surrounding areas.

When providing career and technical education to students, several key components should be included. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A planned sequence of activities and experiences to achieve specific competencies such as self-appraisal, decision making, goal setting, and career planning.
- Accountability (outcome oriented) and program improvement (based on results of process/outcome evaluations)
- Effective management needed to support comprehensive career guidance services.
- A team approach where certified counselors are central to the program.
- Strong professional development activities so counselors can regularly update their professional knowledge and skills.
- Different approaches to deliver the program such as outreach, assessment, counseling, curriculum, program and job placement, follow-up, consultation, and referral
- Requires career development and activities for special populations
- Encourages elimination of sex bias and stereotyping

Today's Skills for Tomorrow's Careers

Alabama State
Department of Education

What is Perkins V?

Perkins V is federal legislation that was signed on July 31, 2018, by President Trump to fund opportunities to improve Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Perkins V:

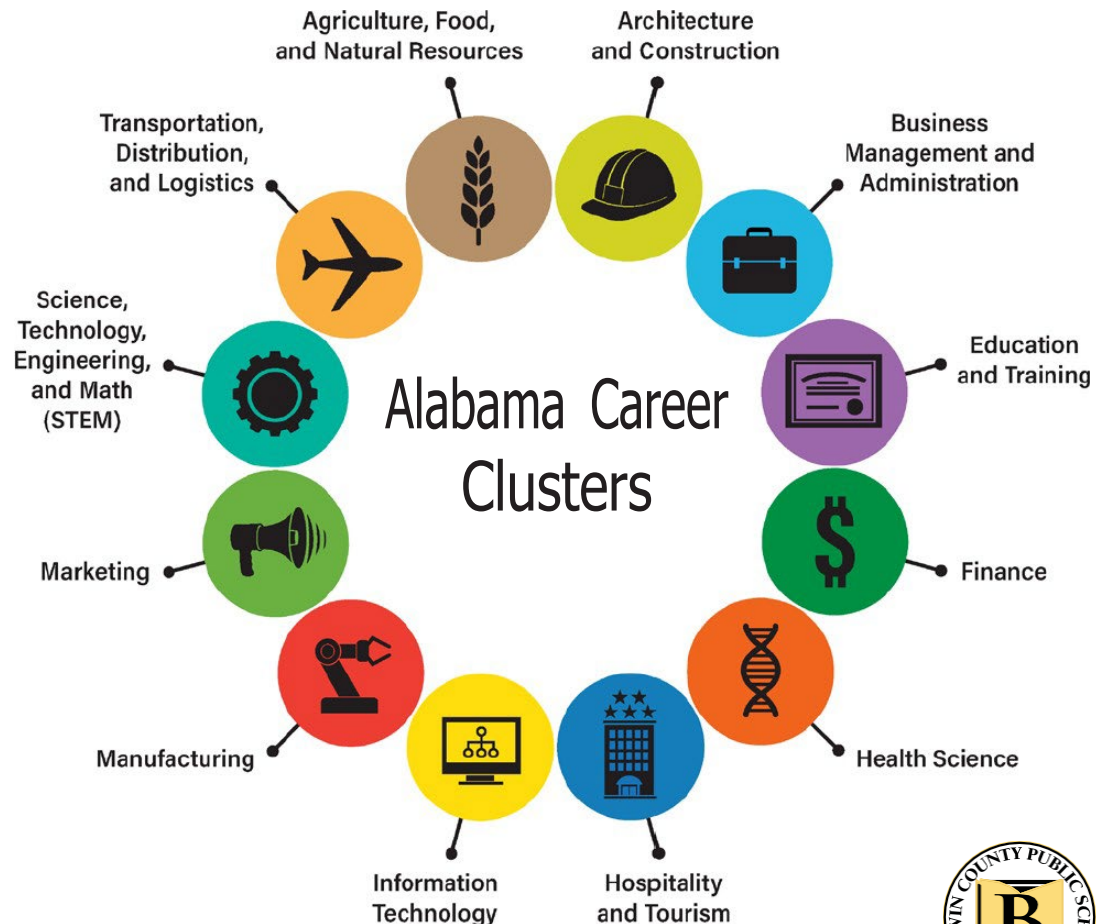
- builds on current success;
- requires data-driven decision making;
- increases stakeholder involvement;
- revises accountability indicators;
- enhances efforts to serve special populations; and
- encourages innovation.

What are Career Clusters?

There are 16 national career clusters that provide standardization across an ever-evolving labor market. These clusters provide a framework to empower students to choose the CTE pathway that can lead to success in their academic and career endeavors.

Secondary and postsecondary institutions in Alabama may offer programs in any of the 16 clusters. Each cluster has merit, yet when placed against Alabama workforce data, 12 clusters best fit the workforce needs of Alabama. These 12 clusters will drive the pathways and programs of study to be supported, developed, or improved by Perkins V funds.

Empowering Alabama Learners



(Adopted 1984; revised 1992, 1998, 2004, 2010, 2016, 2022) Effective July 1, 2022

Preamble

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a professional organization supporting school counselors, school counseling students/interns, school counseling program directors/supervisors and school counselor educators. These standards are the ethical responsibility of all school counseling professionals.

School counselors have unique qualifications and skills to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that addresses pre-K–12 students' academic, career and social/emotional development needs. School counselors are leaders, advocates, collaborators and consultants who create systemic change to ensure equitable educational outcomes through the school counseling program. School counselors demonstrate the belief that all students have the ability to learn by advocating for and contributing to an education system that provides optimal learning environments for all students.

All students have the right to:

- Be respected and treated with dignity.
- A physically and emotionally safe, inclusive and healthy school environment, both in-person and through digital platforms, free from abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination and any other forms of violence.
- Equitable access to a school counseling program that promotes academic, career and social/emotional development and improves student outcomes for all students, including students historically and currently marginalized by the education system.
- Equitable access to school counselors who support students from all backgrounds and circumstances and who advocate for and affirm all students regardless of but not limited to ethnic/racial identity; nationality; age; social class; economic status; abilities/disabilities; language; immigration status; sexual orientation; gender identity; gender expression; family type; religious/spiritual identity; and living situations, including emancipated minor status, wards of the state, homelessness or incarceration.
- Information and support needed to enhance self-development and affirmation within one's group identities.
- Critical, timely information, beginning with pre-K through grade 12, on how college/university, career and technical school, military, workforce and other postsecondary options can have an impact on their educational choices and future opportunities.
- Privacy that is honored to the greatest extent possible, which at times may be limited by school counselors' balance of other competing interests (e.g., best interests of students, the safety of others, parental rights) and adherence to laws,

policies and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality and disclosure in the school setting.

Purpose

In this document, ASCA specifies the obligation to the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the highest standards of integrity, leadership and professionalism. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors were developed in collaboration with school counselors, state school counselor associations, school counseling district and state leaders, and school counselor educators across the nation to clarify the profession's norms, values and beliefs.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Serve as a guide for the ethical practices of all individuals serving in a school counseling capacity, including school counselors, school counseling students/interns, supervisors/directors of school counseling programs and school counselor educators regardless of grade level, geographic area, population served or ASCA membership.
- Provide support and direction for self-assessment, peer consultation and performance appraisal regarding school counselors' responsibilities to students, parents/guardians, colleagues and professional associates, school district and employees, communities and the school counseling profession.
- Inform all educational stakeholders, including but not limited to students, parents/guardians, teachers/staff, administrators, community members, legal professionals and courts of justice, regarding the ethical practices, values and expected behaviors of the school counseling professional.

A. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

A.1 Supporting Student Development

School counselors:

- a. Have a primary obligation to the students, who are to be treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals.
- b. Foster and affirm all students and their identity and psychosocial development.
- c. Support all students and their development by actively working to eliminate systemic barriers or bias impeding student development.
- d. Provide culturally responsive instruction and appraisal and advisement to students.
- e. Provide culturally responsive counseling to students in a brief context and support students and families/guardians in obtaining outside services if students need long-term clinical/mental health counseling.

- f. Do not diagnose but recognize how a student's diagnosis and environment can potentially affect the student's access, participation and ability to achieve academic, postsecondary and social/emotional success.
 - g. Acknowledge the vital role and rights of parents/guardians, families and tribal communities.
 - h. Respect students' and families' values, beliefs and cultural background, as well as students' sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and exercise great care to avoid imposing personal biases, beliefs or values rooted in one's religion, culture or ethnicity.
 - i. Are knowledgeable of local, state and federal laws, as well as school and district policies and procedures affecting students and families and strive to protect and inform students and families regarding their rights.
 - j. Advocate for equitable, anti-oppressive and anti-bias policies and procedures, systems and practices, and provide effective, evidence-based and culturally sustaining interventions to address student needs.
 - k. Involve diverse networks of support, including but not limited to educational teams, community and tribal agencies and partners, wraparound services and vocational rehabilitation services as needed to best serve students.
 - l. Maintain appropriate boundaries and are aware that any sexual or romantic relationship with students (whether legal or illegal in the state of employment) is a grievous breach of ethics and is prohibited regardless of a student's age or consent. This prohibition applies to both in-person and electronic interactions and relationships.
- f. Keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand confidential information be revealed or a breach is required to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to the student or others. Serious and foreseeable harm is different for each minor in schools and is determined by a student's developmental and chronological age, the setting, parental/guardian rights and the nature of the harm. School counselors consult with appropriate professionals when in doubt as to the validity of an exception.
 - g. Recognize their primary ethical obligation for confidentiality is to the students but balance that obligation with an understanding of parents'/guardians' legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children's lives. School counselors understand the need to balance students' ethical rights to make choices, their capacity to give consent or assent, and parental or familial legal rights and responsibilities to make decisions on their child's behalf.
 - h. Collaborate with and involve students to the extent possible and use the most appropriate and least intrusive method to breach confidentiality if such action is warranted. The child's developmental age and the circumstances requiring the breach are considered and, as appropriate, students are engaged in a discussion about the method and timing of the breach. Consultation with professional peers and/or supervision is recommended.
 - i. Request of the court that disclosure not be required when the school counselor's testimony or case notes are subpoenaed if the release of confidential information may potentially harm a student or the counseling relationship.
 - j. Protect the confidentiality of students' records and release of personal data in accordance with prescribed federal and state laws and district and school policies.
 - k. Recognize the vulnerability of confidentiality in electronic communications and only transmit student information electronically in a way that follows currently accepted security standards and meets federal, state and local laws and school board policy.
 - l. Convey a student's highly sensitive information (e.g., a student's suicidal ideation) through personal contact such as a phone call or visit and not less-secure means such as a notation in the educational record or an email. Adhere to federal, state and local laws and school board policy when conveying sensitive information.
 - m. Advocate for appropriate safeguards and protocols so highly sensitive student information is not disclosed accidentally to individuals who do not have a need to know such information. Best practice suggests a very limited number of educators would have access to highly sensitive information on a need-to-know basis.
 - n. Advocate with appropriate school officials for acceptable encryption standards to be utilized for stored data and currently acceptable algorithms to be utilized for data in transit.
 - o. Avoid using software programs without the technological capabilities to protect student information based upon legal specifications and currently acceptable security standards.
 - p. Advocate for physical and virtual workspaces that are arranged to protect the confidentiality of students' communications and records.

A.2. Confidentiality

School counselors:

- a. Promote awareness of school counselors' ethical standards and legal mandates regarding confidentiality and the appropriate rationale and procedures for disclosure of student data and information to school staff.
- b. Inform students of the purposes, goals, techniques, rules and procedures under which they may receive counseling. Disclosure includes informed consent and clarification of the limits of confidentiality.
- c. Recognize that informed consent requires competence, voluntariness and knowledge on students' part to understand the limits of confidentiality and, therefore, can be difficult to obtain from students of certain developmental levels and special-needs populations. The school counselor should make attempts to gain assent appropriate to the individual student (e.g., in the student's preferred language) prior to disclosure.
- d. Are aware that even though attempts are made to obtain informed consent, it is not always possible. When needed, school counselors make decisions on students' behalf that promote students' welfare.
- e. Explain the limits of confidentiality in developmentally appropriate terms through multiple methods, such as student handbooks; classroom lessons; verbal notification to individual students; and school counseling department websites, brochures and social media accounts.

A.3. Comprehensive School Counseling Program

School counselors:

- a. Provide students with a culturally responsive school counseling program that promotes academic, career and social/emotional development and equitable opportunity and achievement outcomes for all students.
- b. Collaborate with administration, teachers, staff and stakeholders for equitable school improvement goals.
- c. Use data-collection tools adhering to standards of confidentiality as expressed in A.2.
- d. Review and use school and student data to assess and address needs, including but not limited to data on strengths and disparities that may exist related to gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability and/or other relevant classifications.
- e. Deliver research-based interventions to help close achievement, attainment, information, attendance, discipline, resource and opportunity gaps.
- f. Collect and analyze participation, ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors and outcome data to determine the progress and effectiveness of the school counseling program.
- g. Share data outcomes with stakeholders.

A.4. Academic, Career and Social/Emotional Planning

School counselors:

- a. Collaborate with a community of stakeholders to create a culture of postsecondary readiness.
- b. Provide and advocate for all students' pre-K–postsecondary career awareness, exploration, and postsecondary planning and decision-making to support students' right to choose from the wide array of career and postsecondary options, including but not limited to college/university, career and technical school, military or workforce.
- c. Identify and examine gaps in college and career access and address both intentional and unintentional biases in postsecondary and career counseling.
- d. Provide opportunities for all students to develop a positive attitude toward learning, effective learning strategies, self-management and social skills and an understanding that lifelong learning is part of long-term career success.
- e. Address their personal biases related to students' postsecondary choices.
- f. Address any inequitable systemic policies and practices related to students' postsecondary choices.

A.5. Sustaining Healthy Relationships and Managing Boundaries

School counselors:

- a. Engage in professional roles and relationships with students and stakeholders that foster wellness and student success.

- b. Recognize that establishing credibility, rapport and an effective working alliance with some students and stakeholders may be facilitated by developing relationships that extend beyond the school day and building (e.g., attending community events, advocating for community improvement for and with students and stakeholders, joining community enhancement organizations).
- c. Assess potential risks and benefits prior to extending relationships beyond the school building and school hours (e.g., attending students off-site extracurricular activities, celebrations honoring students, hospital visits, funerals).
- d. Document the nature of relationship extensions, including the rationale, potential benefit and possible consequences for the student and school counselor.
- e. Act to eliminate and/or reduce the potential for harm to students and stakeholders in any relationships or interactions by using safeguards, such as informed consent, consultation, supervision and documentation.
- f. Prevent potential harm to students and stakeholders with whom the school counselor's judgment may be compromised (e.g., family members, children of close friends) by helping facilitate the provision of alternative services or resources when available.
- g. Adhere to legal, ethical, district and school policies and guidelines regarding relationships with students and stakeholders.
- h. Refrain from the use of personal social media, text and email accounts to interact with students unless sanctioned by the school district. Adhere to legal, ethical, district and school policies and guidelines when using technology with students and stakeholders.
- i. 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.
- j. Strive to avoid a conflict of interest through self-promotion that would benefit the school counselor personally and/or financially (e.g., advertising their products and/or services).

A.6. Appropriate Collaboration, Advocacy and Referrals for Counseling

School counselors:

- a. Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, including students, school faculty/staff and parents/guardians, when students need assistance, including when early warning signs of student distress are identified.
- b. 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 referrals 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.

- c. Connect students with services provided through the local school district and community agencies and remain aware of state laws and local district policies related to students with special needs, including limits to confidentiality and notification to authorities as appropriate.
- d. Develop a plan for the transitioning of primary counseling services with minimal interruption of services. Students retain the right for the referred services to be conducted in coordination with the school counselor or to discontinue counseling services with the school counselor while maintaining an appropriate relationship that may include participation in other school support services.
- e. Refrain from referring students based solely on the school counselor's personal beliefs or values rooted in one's religion, culture, ethnicity or personal worldview. School counselors maintain the highest respect for student cultural identities and worldviews. School counselors pursue additional training and supervision when their values are discriminatory in nature (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, reproductive rights, race, religion, ability status). School counselors do not impose their values on students and/or families when making referrals to outside resources for student and/or family support.
- f. Attempt to establish a collaborative relationship with outside service providers to best serve students. Request a release of information signed by the student and/or parents/guardians before attempting to collaborate with the student's external provider.
- g. Provide internal and external service providers with accurate and meaningful data necessary to adequately assess, counsel and assist students.
- h. Ensure there is not a conflict of interest in providing referral resources. School counselors do not refer or accept a referral to counsel students from their school if they also work in a private counseling practice.

A.7. Group Work

School counselors:

- a. Offer culturally sustaining small-group counseling services based on individual student, school and community needs; student data; a referral process; and/or other relevant data.
- b. Provide equitable access to participation in groups, including alleviating physical, language and other obstacles.
- c. Assess student needs to determine if participating in the group is appropriate for the student.
- d. Inform parents/guardians of student participation in and the purpose of the small group.
- e. Facilitate short-term groups to address students' academic achievement, postsecondary and career exploration, and social/emotional well-being.
- f. Use data to inform group topics, establish well-defined expectations and measure the outcomes of group participation.
- g. Reflect on group outcomes and determine adjustments that may improve future group interventions.

- h. Communicate the aspiration of confidentiality as a group norm, while recognizing and working from the protective posture that confidentiality for students in small groups cannot be guaranteed.
- i. Select topics for groups with the clear understanding that some topics are not suitable for groups in schools (e.g., incest survivorship, eating disorders, dating violence) and accordingly take precautions to protect members from harm as a result of interactions with the group.
- j. Facilitate culturally sustaining groups from the framework of evidence-based or research-based practices.
- k. Practice within their competence level and develop professional competence through training and supervision.
- l. Provide necessary follow-up and/or referrals to additional resources for group members.

A.8. Student Peer-Support Program

School counselors:

- a. Share the student peer-support program's goal and purpose with stakeholders.
- b. Safeguard the welfare of students participating in peer-to-peer programs under their direction.
- c. Strive to protect the confidentiality of students receiving peer support services by not sharing or disclosing personal information (e.g., special education services, academic information).
- d. Work to select peer helpers who reflect the diversity of the population to be served.
- e. Facilitate equitable access, representation and cultural sustainability in peer-support programs.
- f. Develop, train and supervise students in school counseling peer-support programs, using culturally relevant frameworks that promote inclusion and belonging.
- g. Inform peer-support students about when students need to report information to a responsible adult at school.

A.9. Serious and Foreseeable Harm to Self and Others

School counselors:

- a. Inform parents/guardians and school administration when a student poses a serious and foreseeable risk of harm to self or others. This notification is to be done after careful deliberation and consultation with appropriate professionals, such as other school counselors, the school nurse, school psychologist, school social worker, school resource officer or child protective services. Even if the danger appears relatively remote, parents/guardians must be notified. The consequence of the risk of not giving parents/guardians a chance to intervene on behalf of their child is too great.
- b. Recognize the level of suicide risk (e.g., low, medium, high) is difficult to accurately quantify. If required to use a risk assessment, it must be completed with the realization that it is an information-gathering tool and only one element in the risk-assessment process. When reporting risk-assessment

results to parents/guardians, school counselors do not negate the risk of harm to self even if the assessment reveals a low risk, as students may minimize risk to avoid further scrutiny and/or parental/guardian notification. The purpose of reporting any risk-assessment results to parents/guardians is to underscore the need for parents/guardians to act, not to report a judgment of risk.

- c. Collaborate with school administration to ensure a student has proper supervision and support. If parents/guardians will not provide proper support, the school counselor takes necessary steps to underscore to parents/guardians the necessity to seek help and, at times, may include a report to child protective services.
- d. Provide culturally responsive mental health resources to parents/guardians.
- e. Report to administration and/or appropriate authorities (e.g., law enforcement) when a student discloses a perpetrated or a perceived threat to another person's physical or mental well-being. This threat may include but is not limited to verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, dating violence, bullying or harassment. The school counselor follows applicable federal and state laws and school and district policy.

A.10. Marginalized Populations

School counselors:

- a. Advocate with and on behalf of students to ensure they remain safe at home, in their communities and at school. A high standard of care includes determining what information is shared with parents/guardians and when information creates an unsafe environment for students.
- b. Actively work to establish a safe, equitable, affirming school environment in which all members of the school community demonstrate respect, inclusion and acceptance.
- c. Identify and advocate for resources needed to optimize and support academic, career and social/emotional development opportunities.
- d. Collaborate with parents/guardians when appropriate and strive to establish consistent, constructive two-way communication in their preferred language to ensure students' needs are met.
- e. Understand and advocate for all students' right to be treated in a manner that honors and respects their identity and expression, including but not limited to race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language and ability status, and to be free from any form of discipline, harassment or discrimination based on their identity or expression.
- f. Advocate for the equitable right and access to free, appropriate public education for all youth in which students are not stigmatized or isolated based on race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing, socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.
- g. Advocate for access to and inclusion in opportunities (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, gifted and talented, honors, dual enrollment) in which students are

not stigmatized, isolated or excluded based on race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing, socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.

- h. Actively advocate for systemic and other changes needed for equitable participation and outcomes in educational programs when disproportionality exists regarding enrollment in such programs by race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing, socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.
- i. Recognize the strengths of students with disabilities as well as their challenges and provide best practices in supporting their academic, career and social/emotional needs.

A.11. Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Bias and Hate Incidents

School counselors:

- a. Recognize that bullying, discrimination, bias and hate incidents rooted in race, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity are violations of federal law and many state and local laws and district policies.
- b. Advocate for schoolwide policies, protocols and training for response to bullying, harassment and bias incidents centered in safety, belonging and justice.
- c. Advocate for accessible, effective tools for students or community to report incidents of bullying, hate or bias.
- d. Report all incidents of bullying, dating violence or harassment to the administration, recognizing these behaviors may fall under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 or other federal and state laws as illegal and require administrator intervention.
- e. Recognize that bias incidents are not only potentially traumatizing for students but can lead to significant damage and disruption of the school environment. Facilitate and monitor schoolwide prevention of bullying, harassment, discrimination, hate and bias through active practices that support a positive school climate, culture and belonging.
- f. In response to a hate or bias incident (e.g. discrimination, explicit bias, hate speech), collaborate with administrative teams to ensure safety, provide support for targeted students, facilitate effective communication, provide education, connect students to resources and promote healing and recovery within the school community.
- g. In developmentally appropriate ways and in the context of the incident, support victims, and encourage growth and provide tools for accountability and change (e.g. restorative practices) in perpetrators, and promote healing in the school community while deferring to administration for all discipline issues or any other violation of federal and state laws or district and school policies.
- h. Actively respond to incidents of bias or hate, demonstrating a commitment to equity and promoting a safe, inclusive school community.

A.12 Child Abuse

School counselors:

- a. Report to the proper authorities, as mandated by the state, all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect, recognizing that certainty is not required, only reasonable suspicion. School counselors are held to a higher standard regarding their absolute duty as a mandated reporter to report suspected child abuse and neglect.
- b. Develop and maintain the expertise to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. Advocate for training to enable students and staff to have the knowledge and skills needed to recognize the signs and to whom they should report suspected child abuse and neglect.
- c. Take reasonable precautions to protect the privacy of students for whom abuse or neglect is suspected from those who do not have a legitimate need to know.
- d. Know current state laws and the school system's procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect and methods to advocate for students' physical and emotional safety following abuse/neglect reports.
- e. Connect students who have experienced abuse and neglect with services provided through the local school district and community agencies.

A.13. Student Records

School counselors:

- a. Abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which defines who has access to students' educational records and allows parents/guardians the right to review the records and challenge perceived inaccuracies in their child's records.
- b. Advocate for the ethical use of student data and records and inform administration of inappropriate or harmful practices.
- c. Recognize the difficulty in adhering to FERPA's definition of sole-possession records.
- d. Recognize that sole-possession records and case notes can be subpoenaed unless there is a specific state statute for privileged communication expressly protecting student/school counselor communication.
- e. Recognize that electronic communications with school officials regarding individual students, even without using student names, are likely to create student records that must be addressed in accordance with FERPA and state laws.
- f. Establish a reasonable timeline for purging sole-possession records or case notes. Suggested guidelines include shredding paper sole-possession records or deleting electronic sole-possession records when a student transitions to the next level, transfers to another school or graduates. School counselors do not destroy sole-possession records that may be needed by a court of law, such as notes on child abuse, suicide, sexual harassment or violence, without prior review and approval by school district legal counsel. School counselors follow district policies and procedures when contacting legal counsel.

A.14. Evaluation, Assessment and Interpretation

School counselors:

- a. Use only valid and reliable research-based tests and assessments that are culturally sensitive, in the student's preferred language and free of bias.
- b. Adhere to all professional standards and regulations when selecting, administering and interpreting standardized assessment tools, and only use assessment instruments that are within the scope of practice for school counselors and for which they are licensed, certified, competent and trained to use.
- c. Follow confidentiality guidelines when using paper or electronic assessment instruments and programs.
- d. Consider the student's developmental age, language skills, home language and competence level when determining an assessment's appropriateness.
- e. Use multiple data points, both quantitative and qualitative whenever possible, to provide students and families with complete and accurate information to promote students' well-being.
- f. Provide interpretation, in the student's preferred language, of the nature, purpose, results and potential impact of assessment/evaluation measures in terms students and parents/ guardians can understand.
- g. Monitor the use of assessment results and interpretation, and take reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information.
- h. Use caution when selecting or using assessment techniques, making evaluations and interpreting the performance of populations not represented in the norm group on which an instrument is standardized.
- i. Conduct and disseminate the results of school counseling program assessments to determine the effectiveness of activities supporting students' academic, college/career and social/ emotional development through accountability measures, especially examining efforts to close opportunity gaps.

A.15. Technical and Digital Citizenship

School counselors:

- a. Advocate for equitable access to technology for all students.
- b. Demonstrate appropriate selection and equitable use of culturally sustaining technology and software applications to enhance students' academic, career and social/emotional development. Attention is given to the legal and ethical considerations of technological applications, including confidentiality concerns, security issues, potential limitations and benefits, and communication practices in electronic media.
- c. Take appropriate and reasonable measures to maintain the confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of computers, social media, facsimile machines, telephones, voicemail, answering machines and other electronic technology.
- d. Promote the safe and responsible use of technology in collaboration with educators and families.

- e. Promote the benefits and clarify the limitations of various appropriate technological applications.
- f. Use established and approved means of communication with students, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and help educate students about appropriate communication and boundaries.
- g. Understand challenges with confidentiality when using email and establish protocols and boundaries for responding to emails.
- h. Advocate for the use of virtual learning tools that include safeguards and protocols protecting highly sensitive student information.
- i. Advocate against alert tools or apps requiring constant monitoring by school personnel. These tools are not aligned with the nature and function of school counseling.
- b. Respect the rights and responsibilities of custodial and noncustodial parents/guardians and, as appropriate, establish a collaborative relationship to facilitate and advocate for students' maximum growth in the areas of academic, career and social/emotional development.
- c. Promote equity and inclusion through culturally affirming and sustaining practices honoring the diversity of families. Recognize that all parents/guardians, custodial and noncustodial, are vested with certain rights and responsibilities for their children's welfare by virtue of their role and according to law.
- d. Inform parents of the school counseling program's mission and standards in academic, career and social/emotional domains that promote and enhance the learning process and outcomes for all students.
- e. Adhere to the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment when using universal screeners, surveys or needs assessments by informing parents/guardians prior to their use in accordance with school district policies and local, state and federal law.
- f. Engage a diverse sample of parents/guardians and caregivers to provide opportunities for meaningful contributions to the school counseling program.
- g. Adhere to federal, state and local laws; district policy; and ethical practice when assisting parents/guardians experiencing family difficulties interfering with their student's welfare.
- h. Inform parents/guardians of the confidential nature of the school counseling relationship between the school counselor and student, while recognizing parents/guardians have inherent legal rights to student information.
- i. Respect the privacy of parents/guardians in accordance with the student's best interests.
- j. Provide parents/guardians with accurate, comprehensive and relevant information in a caring manner as appropriate and consistent with legal and ethical responsibilities to the students and parents/guardians. Exercise due diligence in a timely, efficient manner to communicate concerns that affect the students' safety and welfare.
- k. Follow the directions and stipulations of the legal documentation in divorce, separation or custody cases, maintaining focus on the student. Adhere to clear boundaries and a position of neutrality when working with parents/guardians.

A.16. Virtual/Distance School Counseling

School counselors:

- a. Adhere to the same legal and ethical standards in a virtual/distance/hybrid setting as in face-to-face settings.
- b. Recognize, acknowledge and problem-solve the unique challenges and limitations of virtual/distance/hybrid school counseling.
- c. Establish procedures, in collaboration with school administrators and other support staff, for students to follow in both emergency and nonemergency situations when the school counselor is not available.
- d. Recognize and address the limitation of virtual/distance/hybrid school counseling confidentiality, which may include unintended viewers or recipients.
- e. Inform both students and parents/guardians of the benefits and limitations of virtual/distance/hybrid school counseling.
- f. Educate students on how to participate in the electronic school counseling relationship to minimize and prevent potential misunderstandings that could occur due to lack of verbal cues and inability to read body language or other visual cues that provide contextual meaning to the school counseling process and relationship.
- g. Recognize the challenges in virtual/distance/hybrid settings of assisting students considering suicide, including but not limited to identifying their physical location, keeping them engaged on the call or device, contacting their parents/guardians and getting help to their location.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS, SCHOOL AND SELF

B.1. Responsibilities to Parents/Guardians

School counselors:

- a. Recognize, honor and respect the importance of parents/guardians when providing services to students in a school setting and collaborate with students' parents/guardians as appropriate.

B.2. Responsibilities to the School

School counselors:

- a. Develop and maintain professional relationships and systems of communication with faculty, staff and administrators to support students.
- b. Design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that are integral to the school's academic mission, informed by analysis of student data, based on the ASCA National Model.
- c. Advocate for a school counseling program free of non-school-counseling assignments identified by "The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs."

- d. Exercise leadership to create systemic change to create a safe and supportive environment and equitable outcomes for all students.
- e. Collaborate with appropriate officials to remove barriers that may impede the effectiveness of the school and/or the school counseling program in promoting equitable student outcomes.
- f. Provide support, consultation and mentoring to professionals in need of assistance when appropriate to enhance school climate and student outcomes.
- g. Inform appropriate officials, in accordance with federal and state law and school and district policy, of conditions that may be potentially disruptive or damaging to the school's mission, personnel and property, while honoring the confidentiality between students and school counselors to the extent possible.
- h. Advocate for administrators to place licensed/certified school counselors who are competent, qualified and hold a master's degree or higher in school counseling from an accredited institution.
- i. Advocate for equitable school counseling program policies and practices for all students and stakeholders.
- j. Advocate for the use of vetted, bilingual/multilingual translators to represent languages used by families in the school community and support broader cultural communication and engagement.
- k. Affirm the abilities of all students and advocate for their learning needs, supporting the provision of appropriate accommodations and accessibility.
- l. Provide culturally responsive information to families to increase understanding, improve communication, promote engagement and improve student outcomes.
- m. Promote culturally sustaining practices to help create a safe and inclusive school environment with equitable outcomes for all students.
- n. Adhere to educational/psychological research practices, confidentiality safeguards, security practices and school district policies when conducting research.
- o. Use school and community resources to promote equity and access for all students.
- p. Use inclusive language in all forms of communication and ensure students and stakeholders have access to materials in their preferred languages when possible.
- q. Collaborate as needed to provide optimum services with other school and community professionals with legitimate educational interests (e.g., school nurse, school psychologist, school social worker, speech-language pathologist), following all local, state and federal laws.
- r. Strive to address and remedy the work environment and conditions that do not reflect the school counseling profession's ethics, using advocacy and problem-solving skills.

B.3. Responsibilities to Self

School counselors:

- a. Have earned a master's degree or higher in school counseling or the substantial equivalent from an accredited institution.
- b. Maintain membership in school counselor professional organizations to stay up to date on current research and to maintain professional competence in current school counseling issues and topics.
- c. Accept employment only for positions for which they are qualified by education, training, supervised experience and state/national professional credentials.
- d. Adhere to the profession's ethical standards and other official policy statements such as ASCA position statements and role statements, school board policies and relevant laws. When laws and ethical codes are in conflict, school counselors work to adhere to both as much as possible.
- e. Engage in routine, content-applicable professional development to stay up to date on trends and needs of students and other stakeholders, and regularly attend training on current legal and ethical responsibilities.
- f. Explore and examine implicit biases and the impact on practice and interaction with students; apply learning to program practice and development.
- g. Develop knowledge and understanding of historic and systemic oppression, social justice and cultural models (e.g., multicultural counseling, anti-racism, culturally sustaining practices) to further develop skills for systemic change and equitable outcomes for all students.
- h. Recognize the potential for stress and secondary trauma. Practice wellness and self-care through monitoring mental, emotional and physical health, while seeking consultation from an experienced school counseling practitioner and/or others when needed.
- i. Monitor personal behaviors and recognize the high standard of care a professional in this critical position of trust must maintain on and off the job. School counselors are cognizant of and refrain from activity that may diminish their effectiveness within the school community.
- j. Apply an ethical decision-making model and seek consultation and supervision from colleagues and other professionals who are knowledgeable of the profession's practices when ethical questions arise.
- k. Honor the diversity and identities of students and seek training/supervision when prejudice or biases interfere with providing comprehensive school counseling services to all pre-K–12 students. School counselors will not refuse services to students based solely on personally held beliefs/values rooted in one's religion, culture or ethnicity. School counselors work toward a school climate that embraces diverse identities and promotes equitable outcomes in academic, career and social/emotional development for all students.
- l. Have an awareness of and make clear distinctions between actions and statements (verbal or written) made as a private individual versus those made as a representative of the school counseling profession and of the school district/school entity.
- m. Respect the intellectual property of others and adhere to copyright laws and correctly cite others' work when using it.

C. SCHOOL COUNSELOR DIRECTORS/ ADMINISTRATORS/SUPERVISORS

School counselor directors/administrators/supervisors support school counselors in their charge by:

- a. Advocating both within and outside of their schools or districts for adequate resources to implement a school counseling program and meet students' needs and the school community's needs.
- b. Advocating for fair and open distribution of resources among programs supervised, using an allocation procedure that is nondiscriminatory, equitable, informed by comprehensive data and consistently applied.
- c. Taking reasonable steps to ensure school and other resources are available to provide staff supervision and training.
- d. Providing opportunities for professional development in current research related to school counseling practices, competencies and ethics.
- e. Taking steps to eliminate conditions or practices in their schools or organizations that may violate, discourage or interfere with compliance with the laws and ethics related to the school counseling profession or equitable outcomes for students.
- f. Monitoring school and organizational policies, regulations and procedures to ensure practices are consistent with the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors.
- g. Using and/or advocating for a performance appraisal instrument aligned with the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies that assesses school counselors' knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- h. Understanding the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the ASCA National Model and the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies.
- i. Providing staff with opportunities and support to develop knowledge and understanding of historic and systemic oppression, social justice and cultural models (e.g., multicultural counseling, anti-racism, culturally sustaining practices) to further develop skills for systemic change and equitable outcomes for all students.
- j. Collaborating and consulting with school counseling graduate programs to support appropriate site placement for supervisees and ensure high-quality training that is essential for school counselor preparation.
- c. Use a model of supervision that is developmental, ongoing and includes but is not limited to promoting professional growth, supporting best practices and ethical practice, assessing supervisee performance and developing plans for improvement, consulting on specific cases and assisting in the development of a course of action.
- d. Engage in culturally affirming supervision, maintain cultural competence and consider cultural and historic factors and power dynamics that may have an impact on the supervisory relationship.
- e. Avoid supervisory relationships with individuals with whom they have the inability to remain objective (e.g., family members or close friends).
- f. Are competent with technology used to perform supervisory responsibilities and online supervision, if applicable. Supervisors protect all electronically transmitted confidential information.
- g. Understand there are differences in face-to face and virtual communication (e.g., absence of verbal and nonverbal cues) that may have an impact on virtual supervision. Supervisors educate supervisees on how to communicate electronically to prevent and avoid potential problems and negative outcomes.
- h. Provide information about how and when virtual supervisory services will be utilized, and provide school counselors with reasonable access to pertinent applications.
- i. Ensure performance evaluations are completed in a timely, fair and considerate manner; base evaluations on clearly stated criteria; and use data when available.
- j. Ensure supervisees are aware of policies and procedures related to supervision and evaluation and provide due-process procedures if supervisees appeal their evaluations.
- k. Understand supervisee limitations and communicate concerns to the university/college supervisor in a timely manner.
- l. Help supervisees select appropriate professional development based on identified needs.
- m. Contact university/college supervisors and consult with school administrators to recommend assistance or dismissal when supervisees are unable to demonstrate competence as a school counselor as defined by the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies. Document recommendations and ensure supervisees are aware of such decisions and the resources available to them.
- n. Recognize and acknowledge the specific roles of school counselor educators, site supervisors and the practicum/internship student. Supervisors ensure that supervisees are able to participate in a variety of academic, college/career and social/emotional activities through individual, group and classroom interventions.

D. SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICUM/ INTERNSHIP SITE SUPERVISORS

Practicum/internship site supervisors:

- a. Are licensed or certified school counselors with an understanding of school counseling programs and school counselors' ethical practices.
- b. Have the education and training to provide school counseling supervision and regularly pursue continuing education activities on both counseling and supervision topics and skills.

E. MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS

When the absence of a settled opinion or conviction exists as to the ethical behavior of a colleague(s), the following procedures may serve as a guide:

- a. School counselors confidentially consult with professional colleagues to discuss the potentially unethical behavior and determine if the situation is an ethical violation.

- b. School counselors discuss and seek resolution directly with the colleague whose behavior is in question unless the behavior is unlawful, abusive, egregious or dangerous, in which case proper school or community authorities are contacted.
- c. School counselors understand mandatory reporting responsibilities in their respective districts and states.
- d. School counselors take appropriate action in the following sequence if the matter remains unresolved at the school, school district, state department of education and/or professional practice/standards commission level:
 1. Contact the state school counselor association's ethics committee if applicable.
 - i. If no such committee exists, contact the state school counselor association leadership.
 - ii. If the issue remains unresolved, proceed to step 2.
 2. Contact the American School Counselor Association. Formal documentation of the steps taken and the response of the complainant and respondent should be submitted in hard copy to the ASCA Ethics Committee, c/o the Executive Director, American School Counselor Association, 1101 King St., Suite 310, Alexandria, VA 22314.

F. ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

When faced with an ethical dilemma, school counselors and school counseling program directors/supervisors use an ethical decision-making model.

- a. Define the ethical dilemma.
- b. Identify potential cultural, religious and worldview factors and power dynamics that are present within a potential ethical dilemma.
- c. Apply the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors and the relevant district policies and procedures.
- d. Consult with appropriate professionals (e.g., supervisors, other student service professionals, school counseling peers, cultural experts).
- e. Consider the student's chronological age and developmental level.
- f. Consider parental/guardian and student rights
- g. Apply the ethical principles of:
 - Beneficence: working for the good of the individual and society by promoting mental health and well-being
 - Autonomy: fostering the right to control the direction of one's life
 - Nonmaleficence: avoiding actions that cause harm
 - Justice: treating individuals equitably and fostering fairness and equality
 - Fidelity: honoring commitments and keeping promises, including fulfilling one's responsibilities of trust in professional relationships

- Veracity: dealing truthfully with individuals with whom school counselors come into professional contact
- h. Determine potential courses of action and their consequences.
 - i. Evaluate the selected action.
 - j. Implement the course of action and analyze the outcome.
 - k. Identify any inconsistencies in school/district policy for potential revision.
 - l. See other ethical decision-making models:
 - Intercultural Model of Ethical Decision Making, Luke et al., (2013)
 - Solutions to Ethical Problems in Schools (STEPS), Stone (2003)
 - Ethical Justification Model, Kitchener (1984)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advocate

a person who speaks, writes or acts to promote the well-being of students, parents/guardians, school and community stakeholders, and the school counseling profession. School counselors advocate to create and maintain equitable systems, policies and practices.

Anti-Racist

one who expresses the idea that race is a social construct and does not biologically exist while supporting policy that eliminates racial inequity and fighting against racism.

Assent

to demonstrate agreement when a student is not competent to give informed consent to counseling or other services the school counselor is providing.

Assessment

collecting in-depth information about a person to develop a comprehensive plan that will guide the collaborative counseling and service provision process.

Bias Incident

use of hateful imagery, language or acts that are often noncriminal in nature motivated by bigotry, prejudice or hate toward individuals because of the targets' perceived disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, nationality, race, sex or sexual orientation.

Boundaries

something that indicates or affixes an extent or limits.

Breach

disclosure of information given in private or confidential communication such as information given during counseling.

Bullying

intentional, repeated harmful acts, words or other behavior such as name calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more children against another. These negative acts are not intentionally provoked by the victims, and for such acts to be defined as bullying, an imbalance in real or perceived power must exist between the bully and the victim. Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual in nature.

Competence

the quality of being competent; adequacy; possession of required skill, knowledge, qualification or capacity.

Confidentiality

the ethical duty of school counselors to responsibly protect a student's private communications shared in counseling.

Conflict of Interest

a situation in which a school counselor stands to personally profit from a decision involving a student.

Consent

permission, approval or agreement; compliance.

Consultation

a professional relationship in which individuals meet to seek advice, information and/or deliberation to address a student's need.

Conventional Parameters

general agreement or accepted standards regarding limits, boundaries or guidelines.

Cultural Sensitivity

a set of skills enabling you to know, understand and value the similarities and differences in people; modify your behavior to be most effective and respectful of students and families; and deliver programs that fit diverse learners' needs.

Culturally Sustaining School Counseling

policies and practices that affirm and embrace cultural pluralism, promote cultural dexterity and actively advocate for equitable systems and outcomes.

Custodial and Noncustodial

physical custody: a phrase used to determine which parent a minor student lives with as a result of a court order. A custodial parent has physical custody of the minor child while a noncustodial parent does not have physical custody of the minor child, as the result of a court order.

Legal custody: both custodial and noncustodial parents have educational rights to their child's records unless noted by court documentation.

Data Dialogues

inquiry with others around student information to uncover inequities, promote informed investigations and assist in understanding the meaning of data and the next steps to have an impact on data.

Data Informed

accessing data, applying meaning to it and using data to have an impact on student success.

Developmental Level/Age

the age of an individual determined by degree of emotional, mental and physiological maturity as compared with typical behaviors and characteristics of that chronological age.

Disclosure

the act or an instance of exposure or revelation.

Diversity

the inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation and the intersection of cultural and social identities.

Dual Relationship

a relationship in which a school counselor is concurrently participating in two or more roles with a student.

Empathy

the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts and experience of another without having the feelings, thoughts and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.

Emancipated Minors

minors who are legally freed from control by their parents/guardians, and the parents/guardians are freed from any and all responsibility toward the children.

Encryption

process of putting information into a coded form to control and limit access to authorized users.

Equity

treated fairly; educational equity occurs when educators provide all students with the high-quality instruction and support they need to reach and exceed a common standard.

Ethics

the norms and principles of conduct and philosophy governing the profession.

Ethical Behavior

actions defined by standards of conduct for the profession.

Ethical Obligation

a standard or set of standards defining the course of action for the profession.

Ethical Rights

the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention or ethical theory.

Feasible

capable of being done, affected or accomplished easily or conveniently.

Gender Expression

the ways in which students manifest masculinity or femininity in terms of clothing, communication patterns and interests, which may or may not reflect the student's gender identity.

Gender Identity

one's personal experience of one's own gender. When one's gender identity and biological sex are not congruent, the student may identify as transgender.

Guardian Ad Litem

a guardian appointed by a court to watch after someone during a case.

Harassment

the act of systematic and/or continued unwanted disturbing or troubling persecution.

Informed Consent

assisting students in acquiring an understanding of the limits of confidentiality, the benefits, facts and risks of entering into a counseling relationship.

Intervention

to provide modifications, materials, advice, aids, services or other forms of support to have a positive impact on the outcome or course of a condition.

Legal Mandates

a judicial command or precept issued by a court or magistrate, directing proper behavior to enforce a judgment, sentence or decree.

Legal Rights

those rights bestowed onto a person by a given legal system.

Mandatory Reporting

the legal requirement to report to authorities.

Minors

persons under the age of 18 years unless otherwise designated by statute or regulation.

Oppression

unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.

Perception

a mental image or awareness of environment through a physical sensation; a capacity for understanding or a result of an observation.

Peer Helper

peer-to-peer interaction in which individuals who are of approximately the same age take on a helping role assisting students who may share related values, experiences and lifestyles.

Peer Support

programs enhancing the effectiveness of the school counseling program while increasing outreach and raising student awareness of services.

Privacy

the right of an individual to keep oneself and one's personal information free from unauthorized disclosure.

Privileged Communication

conversation that takes place within the context of a protected relationship, such as that between an attorney and client, spouses, a priest and penitent, a doctor and patient and, in some states, a school counselor and student.

Professional Development

the process of improving and increasing capabilities through access to education and training opportunities.

Racial Bias

a personal and unreasoned judgment made solely on an individual's race.

Racism

when individuals, systems or institutions show more favorable evaluation or treatment of an individual or group based on race or ethnicity.

Relationship

a connection, association or involvement.

Risk Assessment

a systematic process of evaluating potential risks.

School Counseling Supervisor

a qualified professional who provides guidance, teaching and support for the professional development of school counselors and school counseling candidates.

Serious and Foreseeable Harm

when a reasonable person can anticipate significant and harmful possible consequences.

Sole-Possession Records

records used only as a personal memory aid that are kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record and provide only professional opinion or personal observations. Sole-possession records are exempted from the definition of educational records and FERPA protection.

Stakeholder

a person or group sharing an investment or interest in the students and/or school community (e.g., parents/guardians, school staff, administrators, business and community interest groups, school board members, etc.).

Systemic Change

change affecting the entire system; transformational; change affecting more than an individual or series of individuals; focused upon the dynamic of the environment, not the individual.

Supervision

a collaborative relationship in which one person promotes and/or evaluates the development of another.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

a law that demands that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Universal Screener

gathers information regarding behavioral and mental health issues by either reviewing existing data/input from educators or by asking questions directly of students. Schools receiving federal funding that use a universal screener asking even one question from one of the eight protected areas under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) must obtain active consent from parents/guardians if a student is required to complete the screening and passive consent if the screening is voluntary (U.S. Department of Education, PPRA, 2022).

Virtual/Distance Counseling

counseling by electronic means.

