

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AMENDMENT FOR STAKEHOLDERS

As described in the National Model Executive Summary, comprehensive school counseling as outlined by the ASCA National Model, guides school counselors in the development of school counseling programs that best serve all students.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

Caregivers, the press, administrators, and the general public may wonder what school counselors do on a daily basis. Gone are the days of school counselors sitting in their offices simply handing out college applications, making schedule changes for students who want to drop a class, or waiting for a crisis to occur. Today's school counselors are vital members of the education team. School counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes. They lead, advocate, and collaborate to promote equity and access for all students by connecting their school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan. Comprehensive school counselors help **all students** in the areas of academic achievement, career, and social and emotional development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.

HOW CAN A SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS?

Appropriate school counseling duties include providing direct and indirect student services.

WHAT DO DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

- Sitewide school counseling classroom lessons based on the Oklahoma Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success
- Small-group counseling
- Individual student academic planning and goal setting
- Short-term counseling to students

WHAT DO INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

- Referrals for long-term support
- Collaboration with caregivers, teachers, administrators, and community for student success
- Advocacy for students at student-focused meetings
- Data analysis to identify student issues, needs, and challenges

USE OF TIME

School counselors should spend a minimum of **80%** of their time providing direct and indirect student services.

WHY SHOULD OUR DISTRICT IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING?

School counselors are certified educators with a minimum of a master's degree. The master's degree in counseling ranges from 33 credit hours to 60 credit hours, with some programs requiring up to 700 internship hours. This extensive training makes school counselors uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, career, and social and emotional development needs. Utilizing school counselors to change schedules, coordinate testing, or other administrative duties is not a useful application of their extensive skill set in counseling.

[A number of recent journal articles](#) have researched and examined the impact of school counselors and school counseling programs on PK-12 student outcomes. The research articles support the value of comprehensive school counseling for students in the domains of academic development, college and career readiness, and social and emotional development when school counselors are utilized correctly.

HOW CAN DISTRICTS SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING?

SCHOOL COUNSELOR AND PRINCIPAL PARTNERSHIPS:

The school counselor and principal relationship is a dynamic and organic relationship that evolves over time in response to a school's ever-changing needs. The goal is to use the strength of the relationship to collaboratively lead school reform efforts to increase achievement for all students. The desired outcome of an effective school counselor and principal relationship is to raise achievement levels for all students and ensure equity in educational outcomes. [Research](#) suggests that **communication, collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared vision** are the key elements to an effective partnership. School counselors and principals benefit from prioritizing a consistent time to meet weekly to discuss goals.

DISTRICT-LEVEL LEADERSHIP:

[School counseling directors/coordinators](#) provide leadership, advocacy, and collaboration at the school, district, and state levels to ensure the development, implementation, and assessment of school counseling programs that benefit **all students**. District leadership trained in school counseling provides the needed support to ensure school counselors receive ongoing and relevant professional development, support during ethical dilemmas or crises, and more. Meeting monthly with district-level leadership and school counselors from across the district in professional learning communities is beneficial.

District-level school counseling leadership also provides direction to school administrators to ensure the appropriate use of school counselors. This collaborative effort ensures **all students** are served by a comprehensive school counseling program.

If a district is unable to provide district-level leadership with a background in school counseling, it is recommended that the district assign and compensate a lead school counselor who is well-versed in comprehensive school counseling to fill the void. Additionally, pairing new school counselors with a mentor school counselor in the district can be incredibly beneficial.



EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

“The importance of district leadership that is informed about effective school counseling and believes in the role of a school counselor cannot be understated. District leadership is imperative to provide oversight, processes, procedures, instruction, professional development, and support for a district’s school counselors. Developing the consistency needed to create a comprehensive school counseling program must come from the district’s administrative level so that schools and counselors can operate on the same page and provide equity to students. Additionally, district level leadership is needed in order to advocate for the appropriate role of a school counselor so that they can effectively perform their roles and support students.”

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