

SOUTH DAKOTA
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING
PROGRAM MODEL

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INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the continued changes in the field of education, the SD Department of Education presents the third edition of the South Dakota Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model. Due to the new developments in the school counseling field and continued emphasis on accountability, school counselors need to continue to evaluate their program to ensure it is meeting the needs of all students. The guidelines, worksheets, and suggestions contained in this model serve as an evaluation guide for a school counseling program and make the necessary revisions to align it with current standards.

This manual serves as a planning and implementation model. The process involves examination of a current counseling program, identification of student needs, and utilization of data to guide the selection of activities, strategies, and services. The process is used to ensure that students achieve the necessary skills as they progress from prekindergarten through graduation in preparation for the future.

The South Dakota Comprehensive Counseling Model enables school districts to:

- Develop a vision of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a standards-based program.
- Use results of data and program analysis to develop and implement activities, strategies, and services.
- Demonstrate the impact of school counseling programs on student achievement and success.

Professional school counselors are certified/licensed professionals with a masters' degree or higher in school counseling and are uniquely qualified to address the developmental needs of all students. Professional school counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling program that encourages all students' personal/social, academic, career and life planning development and helps all students maximize their achievement.

As an extension of the work of the 20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling initiative, sponsored by the American Counseling Association and American Association of State Boards of Counseling, The ACA School Counseling Task Force has expanded the definition of counseling (ACA, 2010) to describe the work of professional school counselors:

Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, and education and career goals. Through the application of counseling theories and techniques in context, school counselors accomplish these goals by fostering educational and social equity, access, and success. The professional school counselor serves as a leader and an assertive advocate for students, consultant to educators, families and the community and collaborator and team member with teachers, administrators and other school personnel to help each student succeed. (ACA, 2013)

American Counseling Association. (2010). 20/20 consensus definition of counseling. Retrieved from

<http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/20-20-a-vision-for-the-future-of-counseling/consensus-definition-of-counseling>

School counseling is an educational program in and of itself. It is a specialized curriculum that leads students to effectively take charge of their lives and to plan for their futures. For the purpose of this model, school counseling refers to educational services designed to affect the personal/social, academic, and career and life planning development of students.

The delivery of the South Dakota School Counseling Program Model focuses on school counseling curriculum, responsive services and individual planning. These elements are aimed at the developmental and educational needs of all students. Within the counseling program, there is a balanced emphasis of personal/social development, academic development and career planning.

The focus on advancing/teaching/achieving student competencies and meeting student needs is essential to the development and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program and to this program guide. Using students' needs as the primary focus for program development, the South Dakota Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model has been designed for counselors, teachers, and administrators to assist in developing school counseling programs for their schools. By incorporating the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model themes of *leadership*, *advocacy*, *collaboration* and *systemic change*, professional school counselors assume leadership roles in the school and the community. School counselors also promote equity and access to opportunities and rigorous educational experiences for all students.

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FRAMEWORK

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The professional school counselor is a certified/licensed educator holding a master's degree or higher in school counseling who possesses unique qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. Professional school counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student achievement. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools and in district supervisory, counselor education and post-secondary settings. Their work is differentiated by attention to developmental stages of student growth.

Professional school counselors support a safe learning environment and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community. Collaborating with other stakeholders to promote student achievement, professional school counselors address the needs of all students through prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program. To achieve maximum program effectiveness, the American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250.

THE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The comprehensive school counseling program reflects an approach to program foundation, management, delivery and accountability. The model provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students' success. When implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors switch their emphasis from service-centered for some of the students to program-centered for every student. This switch not only answers the question, "What do school counselors do?" but also requires school counselors to respond to the question, "How are students different as a result of what we do?"

A high-quality school counseling program is comprehensive in scope, preventative in design and developmental in nature. A school counseling program organized and administered in this comprehensive approach ensures that every student benefits from the program. All comprehensive school counseling programs, at both the state and local levels, should contain a description of student expectations that result from an effective school counseling program. A useful guide on advocating and promoting this program, as well as highlighting school counseling program benefits is provided in **Appendix A**.

Comprehensive in Scope

School counseling programs which are designed and implemented in a comprehensive fashion focus on what all students need to know and understand in order to be able to be successful. A quality school counseling program is organized around three domains:

academic, career, and personal/social. The emphasis on academic success is paramount for every student. A comprehensive school counseling program assists all students in finding success in school which in turn allows them to become contributing members of our society.

Preventive in Design

A comprehensive school counseling program provides students the opportunity to learn specific skills in a proactive, preventive manner. To provide this quality experience, certified school counselors need to use their time and skills on program delivery and direct counseling services.

Developmental in Nature

Comprehensive school counseling programs meet the needs of students at various growth and development stages. By establishing goals, expectations, support systems, and experiences for all students, school counselors enhance student learning. Student content standards are public statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program.

The South Dakota Counseling Model is based upon the ASCA National Model which:

1. establishes the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of a school;
2. ensures equitable access to the school counseling program for all students provided by a certified school counselor;
3. identifies the knowledge and skills all students might acquire as a result of the preK-12 school counseling program;
4. ensures the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic manner to all students;
5. establishes data-driven decision making;
6. is provided by a certified school counselor.

STUDENT CONTENT STANDARDS

The content of a comprehensive school counseling program is the overall umbrella of services and curriculum provided to students. Content standards are designed around the three domains: Academic, Career, and Personal/Social.

SD MODEL DOMAINS
Academic Development
Career Development
Personal/Social Development

Each student content standard is followed by a student competency and a list of indicators enumerating desired student learning outcomes. Student competencies define the specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should obtain or demonstrate as a result of participating in a comprehensive school counseling program. This listing is not meant to be all-inclusive, nor is any individual program expected to include all of the competencies. The competencies offer a foundation for what a standards-based program

should address and deliver. These can be used as a basis to develop measurable indicators of student performance.

Academic Development

The standards for academic development guide the school counseling program to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize student learning. Academic development includes acquiring attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and throughout life. Important components include employing strategies to achieve school success and understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work.

Career Development

The standards for career development guide the school counseling program to provide a foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge to make successful transitions from school to post-secondary training to the world of work throughout the life span. Employing strategies to achieve future career success, job satisfaction, and an understanding of the relationship between personal qualities, education and the world of work is an integral part of this domain.

Personal/Social Development

The standards for personal/social development provide a foundation for the school counseling program to assist students as they progress through school and into adulthood. Personal/social development contributes to academic and career success. The acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that helps students understand and respect self and others, acquire effective interpersonal skills, understand safety and survival skills and develop into contributing members of our society are key to this domain.

ASCA NATIONAL MODEL THEMES

Professional school counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student achievement. By incorporating the ASCA National Model themes of *leadership*, *advocacy*, *collaboration* and *systemic change*, professional school counselors assume leadership roles in the school and the community and promote equity and access to opportunities and rigorous educational experiences for all students. They work with internal and external stakeholders as part of the comprehensive school counseling program and strive for positive impact that eliminates systemic barriers.

Based on these four themes, the professional school counselor:

- promotes the academic success of every student;
- promotes equity and access for every student;
- takes a leadership role within the counseling department, the school setting and the community;
- understands reform issues and works to close the achievement gap;
- collaborates with teachers, parents and the community to promote academic success of students;
- builds effective teams by encouraging collaboration among all school staff;

- uses data to recommend systemic change in policy and procedures that limit or inhibit academic achievement.

FOUNDATION

Professional school counselors identify personal beliefs as to how all students benefit from the school counseling program and act on these beliefs to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive school counseling program based on a future-oriented vision. Professional school counselors create a mission statement supporting the school's mission and identify specific goals and desired outcomes of students' academic, career and personal/social development.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Beliefs

Beliefs are statements regarding the contribution the program makes to student success and are identified early in the development phase of the program. Not only do beliefs define the direction and structure of the school counseling program but they also create an accurate portrait of the school counseling team. This portrait demonstrates the school counseling team's knowledge, experience, and expectations of the planning, management, delivery, and evaluation of the school counseling program activities.

The South Dakota School Counseling Model believes that a comprehensive school counseling program:

- *is a comprehensive program designed to meet the needs of all children, prekindergarten through grade 12;*
- *is an integral part of students' total educational experience;*
- *is essential to a student's personal growth and development and therefore essential to academic success;*
- *is an equal partner in the education process and promotes the achievement of all students;*
- *is based on standards and student competencies (indicators of success);*
- *will be regularly and systematically evaluated in light of its elements and standards;*
- *provides a link to the total instructional program of the school;*
- *has structured activities based on student needs;*
- *contains measurable student outcomes for all education levels;*
- *provides developmental, preventive, and remedial services;*

- *includes professional development necessary to maintain a quality program;*
- *depends upon the support and collaboration of administrators, teachers, other school personnel, students, and the community;*
- *contains curricular elements which clearly identify the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be acquired through regularly assessed needs of the students;*
- *is coordinated and implemented by certified school counselors;*
- *adheres to the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors.*

Vision **

A vision is future-oriented, builds on previously identified beliefs, provides a foundation for a program and aligns with a mission statement. The vision the South Dakota School Counseling Model is as follows:

South Dakota believes that school counseling programs are an important and integral part of the overall education process.

Since students develop emotionally, socially, and academically, the school counseling program must address issues of growth and development. Growth and learning are developmental; therefore, school counseling must be developmental and sequential.

The PreK-12 developmental program is concerned with all students while recognizing the fact that individuals have needs that will continue to require special attention. As a result, the comprehensive school counseling program is for all students, with the goal of being proactive as well as crisis-oriented.

Mission **

The mission statement is a clear statement of the purpose of the school counseling program and how it relates to the overall mission of the school district. It defines the framework through which services are provided to students.

The mission is to address the needs of all students by helping them to acquire competencies in academic, career, and personal/social development domains. Working together with teachers, administrators, parents and the community, the school counselor will assist all students in becoming successful life-long learners.

****Adapted from the ASCA National Model**

Program Goals **

Goals are the extension of the vision and mission and focus on specific outcomes that fit within the academic, career and personal/social development of students. Goals, based on school data, can range from outcomes on student achievement to attendance, behavior and school safety. Usually program goals are set at the beginning of the school year.

The ASCA National Model recommends utilizing the SMART goal format (Doran, 1981) to set specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time bound goals and specifies a four-pronged approach to goal-setting:

1. Examine school data to identify academic gaps by considering race/ethnicity, gender, age or grade level.
2. Identify activities and interventions as they apply to the three domains (academic, career and personal/social).
3. Select a school improvement plan goal that aligns with the school's accountability goals.
4. Utilize the SMART goals worksheet provided below.

Sample School Counseling Program SMART Goals Worksheet

Specific Issue What is the specific issue based on our school's data?	
Measurable How will we measure the effectiveness of our interventions?	
Attainable What outcome would stretch us but is still attainable?	
Results-Oriented Is the goal reported in results-oriented data (process, perception and outcome)?	
Time Bound When will our goal be accomplished?	

STUDENT COMPETENCIES

ASCA Student Standards

Content standards are designed around the three domains: Academic, Career, and Personal/Social. Each student content standard is followed by the student competency and a list of indicators enumerating desired student learning outcomes. Student competencies define the specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should obtain or demonstrate as a result of participating in a comprehensive school counseling program. This listing is not meant to be all-inclusive, nor is any individual program expected to include all of the competencies. The competencies offer a foundation for what a standards-based program should address and deliver. These can be used as a basis to develop measurable indicators of student performance. For a complete list of the ASCA Student Standards, refer to **Appendix B**.

SD Content Standards and Graduation Requirements

Professional school counselors are encouraged to take into account other student standards that may be applicable and relevant to the comprehensive school counseling program including state and district initiatives, the SD Graduation Requirements, and the state content standards of the various curricular areas.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

ASCA School Counselor Competencies

The newly-developed ASCA School Counselor Competencies address the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are necessary for professional school counselors planning and implementing comprehensive school counseling program. **Appendix C** provides a listing of those competencies that serve not only as benchmarks for necessary competencies in the school counseling field, but also as a guide towards identifying professional development needs.

ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors

Professional school counselors practice ethical principles of the school counseling profession in accordance with the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2010). Although there are several ethical decision-making models, ASCA's Ethical Standards recommend the following nine-steps for guiding decisions.

1. Define the problem emotionally and logically
2. Apply relevant ASCA Ethical Standards and laws
3. Take into account the student's age and development
4. Apply the moral principles
6. Determine possible actions and consequences
7. Evaluate the chosen action
8. Consult
9. Implement the course of action

For a complete listing of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors refer to **Appendix D**.

MANAGEMENT

Professional school counselors incorporate assessments, tools and strategies that are concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school's needs in order to effectively develop, implement and evaluate the comprehensive school counseling program.

ASSESSMENTS

School Counselor Competencies Assessment

This type of assessment aids school counselors in assessing their own knowledge, attitudes and skills that are essential in performing activities that fall under the four components of the school counseling program. A complete listing of the School Counselor Competencies provided in Appendix C allows school counselor to self-assess on a range of competencies, while also identifying needs for professional development. In addition to those competencies, SD school counselors should familiarize themselves with the SD school counselor performance standards, as shown in **Appendix E**.

School Counseling Program Assessment

This type of assessment aids school counselors in evaluating the school counseling program based on the components of the ASCA National Model. It is important to keep in mind that each district will also set local priorities. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school counseling program, school counselors can develop both short-range and long-range goals for improvement that reflect local priorities, in addition to formulating a professional development plan. A complete guide on performing this assessment is provided in **Appendix F**.

Use of Time Assessment

Determining how much time is spent on each of the components of the ASCA National Model, including direct students services, indirect student services, program management and school support, as well as non-counseling tasks, is an important component of effectively managing the school counseling program. The Delivery section of this publication describes what encompasses direct and indirect student services. While school counselors are recommended to spend 80 percent of their time in direct student services and indirect student services, 20 percent of their time is allotted for activities that fall under the program management and school support categories, such as foundation, management and accountability activities. ASCA also allows for a small percentage of the 20 percent allotment to be spent on fair-share duties that enable the smooth operation of the school. It is recommended that school counselors perform this assessment twice annually. A complete guide on performing this assessment is provided in **Appendix G**.

Use of time: Activity Guide for School Counselors

ASCA urges school counselors to advocate for spending their time on duties that are appropriate and aid the overall delivery of the school counseling program, including direct and indirect student services, program management activities, and school support activities. In order to assist school counselors in advocating for appropriate activities and

working with their administrators in eliminating inappropriate activities, we have provided the below guide to help categorize similar activities.

Appropriate Activities for School Counselors	Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual student academic program planning • Counseling students who have personal, academic, or career concerns • Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests • Collaborating with teachers to present school counseling classroom curriculum lessons • Providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management • Analyzing grade-point averages in relation to achievement • Ensuring counseling records are maintained • Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems • Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards • Assisting with data analysis • Providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating paperwork and data entry for all students • Providing long-term counseling to treat psychological disorders • Coordinating and administering cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests • Teaching classes when teachers are absent • Supervising classrooms or common areas • Computing grade-point averages • Clerical record keeping • Assisting with duties in the principal's office • Preparing individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards • Serving as a data entry clerk • Performing disciplinary actions

Adapted from Campbell, C.A. & Dahir, C.A (1997). Sharing the vision: The ASCA national standards for school counseling programs, Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

SD School-Wide Assessments

There are many types of assessments that are integral to a comprehensive school counseling program. Using the School Counseling Program Assessment may assist in curriculum planning and determining student concerns. As students reach the middle and high school years, interests, abilities, and values are also assessed to provide needed information in post high school planning. Academic achievement is assessed throughout grades K-12 in a variety of formats. The following table illustrates the variety of

assessments that can be given within a school setting in the state of South Dakota and the grades in which they are usually administered:

Assessment	Grade Level	Approximate Time of Administration	Optional/Required
Dakota STEP (Accountability Test)	3-8 & 11	April	Required
Dakota STEP Alt (1% Students)	3-8 & 11	February-March	Required
Write to Learn	5, 7, 10	Twice a Year	Required
Career Interest Assessment (available within SDMyLife)	8 and/or 9	Anytime in year	Required
Career Aptitude Assessment (available within SDMyLife)	10	Anytime in year	Required
Personal Learning Plan (PLP) (available within SDMyLife)	8-12	Continuous Update	Required
South Dakota Assessment Portal	Varies	Throughout year	Optional
EXPLORE	8 or 9	October	Optional
PLAN	10	November	Optional
ASVAB	11 and 12	November	Optional
PSAT/NMSQT	11	October	Optional
ACT SAT	11 and 12	Throughout year	One type of assessment may be required for college admission
Remediation/Accuplacer	12	Throughout year	Optional
AP Testing (Advanced Placement)	11 and 12	First and second week in May	If taking an AP course
WAPT	Any new student	When first arriving in district	Required
National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)	TBD Summer 2013	TBD Summer 2013	Required
ACCESS	ELL, LEP, ESP students	February	Required

TOOLS

Annual Agreement

Annual agreements are utilized to facilitate a formal conversation between the school counselor and the school principal regarding the goals of the school counseling program and their alignment with the overall goals of the school. Reaching agreement on program priorities facilitates not only the smooth operation of the school counseling program, but also an understanding of the role of the school counselor. **Appendix I** outlines a template that school counselors can utilize to initiate annual agreement with administration. It is recommended this take place within the first month of the school year.

Advisory Council

An advisory council is formed as a representative group appointed to advise and assist the school counseling program within a school district.

The primary purpose of the council is to set program goals, provide support, offer advice, review present activities, and encourage new activities to meet the goals of the program. The council provides a two-way system of communication between school and the community. This communication is essential to all education programs.

Membership of the advisory council should be chosen to reflect the diversity of the community. It is recommended that the committee be comprised of staff, parents, school board members, and business and community leaders. It is also suggested that the committee be chaired by the School Counselor or School Counseling Program Director. ASCA recommends a minimum size of eight and a maximum size of 20 members. At a minimum, the group should meet two times per year with specific goals and agendas set for each meeting.

Advocacy for a program begins with creating alliances with staff, parents, and the larger community. An advisory council ensures that the school counselor is not working alone in advocating for the program, and aids with garnering support for needed funding and resources. For a step-by-step guide on selecting advisory council members, as well as establishing and determining activities for your advisory council, please refer to **Appendix J**.

Use of Data

Data is an essential component of ensuring all students are getting the benefits of the school counseling program. Achievement, attendance and behavioral data can be utilized to monitor student progress, identify those students in need of services, close achievement gaps, and improve services provided to students.

The ASCA National Model also recommends that school counselors practice disaggregation of data to allow them to examine certain groups of students. Examples of such data are: gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status (free or reduced lunch), course enrollment, language spoken at home, special education, grade level, and teacher assignment. Disaggregated data may reveal patterns especially useful to a school counselor.

SD STARS (SD Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System)

The purpose of SD–STARS is to aid, measure, inform. Counselors and other school personnel will have the ability to access and use high quality data to *aid* in informing instruction and decision-making. Through SD-STARS, students’ outcomes can be *measured* so educators can identify at-risk students, examine achievement gaps, evaluate programs, recognize strengths, and address areas for improvement. The ultimate goal is for stakeholders to develop a more holistic view of our education system and use that picture to *inform* systemic change.

College, Career and Life Ready: Preparing SD Students for Success

The SD Department of Education has made a commitment to focus on a support system to lay the groundwork for student success. The goals identified are as follows:

- Students entering 4th grade will be proficient or advanced in reading
- Students entering 9th grade will be proficient or advanced in math
- The achievement gap for Native American students will be eliminated
- Students will graduate from high school postsecondary and workforce ready

School counselors play an integral role in these state-wide efforts. Underlying these outcomes the SD Department of Education recognizes that the following are imperative to enhancing these efforts.

- High quality standards and instruction
- Effective teachers and leaders
- Environment conducive to learning
- Families that are engaged

More information on these initiatives can be found on the SD Department of Education website at: <http://doe.sd.gov/outcomes/index.aspx>

School Counselor Role in the Common Core Standards

The Common Core State Standards set high quality expectations for students in the areas of English-language arts and math. South Dakota’s assessments are aligned with these standards so it is important that school counselors understand the standards.

The American Counseling Association has created a document to assist school counselors. (**Appendix N**)

Program Results Data

School counselors collect and analyze data that fall into three categories: process, perception and outcome. Process data answers the question “What did you do for whom?” and serves as verification that a certain event has occurred. For example, data that describes how a study skills group was conducted (six meeting times for 45 minutes) and how many students it affected (10 fourth-grade students) fit this category.

Perception data answers the question “What do people think they know, believe or can do?” and can be collected through surveys, needs assessments, program evaluations, etc. They measure either the attainment of competencies, changes in attitudes or beliefs, or

gains in knowledge. For example, an activity evaluation given after the completion of an intervention (e.g. presentation on college application completion) in order to gather participants (college seniors) opinions about the value of that intervention fits this category. The data would describe that 90% of college seniors benefitted from this activity and found value in the information provided.

Action Plans

The school counselor uses action plans to achieve desired results. These plans can apply to every aspect of the school counseling curriculum. An action planning template can be found in **Appendix H**.

Calendars

Calendars of events serve to not only inform students, parents and staff regarding school counseling activities being held, but also to aid the school counselor in developing the comprehensive school counseling program and in ensuring that activities for all students are in place. Both annual and weekly calendars are recommended for use. The annual calendar helps the school counselor in increasing visibility for the school counseling program and can be used for activities such as school counseling classroom lessons, back-to-school nights, career or college nights, etc. Weekly calendars help the school counselor in providing a detailed schedule of activities. In order to help school counselors in South Dakota plan their annual as well as their weekly activities, **Appendix K** has been included as a guide.

RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

Financial Resources

Adequate financial resources are provided for the school counseling program to ensure full implementation. A successful school counseling program requires a commitment of resources both to implement the program and also to maintain and improve the program. A budget detailing the financial support required for the effective operation of the program should be established. The school counseling team can work with the school administration to establish a budget that adequately supports the program. The budget should be reviewed annually, in order to accomplish evolving goals of the staff and advisory committee.

It is recommended that the school counseling program budget be separate from the department or school's administrative and testing budget. Only those items that are relevant to the current school counseling program should be included.

A realistic assessment of required resources can be made by careful development and/or preparation of the program budget. It is recommended that two separate budgets be prepared when implementing a new program:

- The “one-time-only” costs to create the system changes (primarily involved in forming, planning, designing, and implementing)
- The ongoing (annual) costs to maintain and improve the program.

Facilities, Resources, and Equipment

School counseling program facilities, resources, and equipment appropriate to carrying out the full intent of the district's program are provided.

A school counseling office is the “heart” of all school counseling services and program activities. It brings together all of the available resources and materials and makes them accessible to students. The school counseling office may be used for such activities as individual, small group sessions, large group sessions, career exploration, and individual research and planning.

For secondary students, the school counseling office provides information on career planning, job placement, financial aid and scholarship information, post-secondary planning and registration, and issues related to personal and emotional concerns. For elementary students, the school counseling office serves as a place for information and services for personal growth and development. Students and their parents can receive information about the school counseling curriculum, counseling services, and referrals.

The school counseling office also serves as a valuable resource for teachers in program planning and implementation. Resource materials are provided as well as the opportunity for joint curriculum planning with counselors. The counseling staff may also provide/offer professional development workshops for faculty and staff.

The school counseling office works with employers in coordinating employment opportunities for students and for assistance in curriculum design and delivery. The school counseling office serves as a resource for the community in offering workshop sessions on topics such as employment skills and parenting skills.

In providing all of the above services, it is recommended that at a minimum, the facility should include:

- space for individual and group counseling;
- office(s) equipped with locking file cabinets, telephone, and computer;
- a student resource/career center with appropriate materials and resources, accessible after school hours for student and parent use;
- access to classrooms as needed;
- adequate storage space, as well as access to equipment for training.

Professional Staff

Properly credentialed staff for the school counseling program is essential given that school counseling services are delivered as part of a team approach. It requires the involvement of all school staff to deliver a comprehensive program to students. However, it is the certified school counselor that provides direct services to students and is responsible for overall program direction and content.

Since school counseling staff can range from one individual to a hierarchical team, it is recommended that job descriptions be prepared for each position.

The American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor to student ratio of 1:250 to achieve maximum program effectiveness. **Appendix C** provides information on competencies for counselors as well as examples of key activities that can be utilized to job descriptions for counseling staff. As staffing is a local decision, these samples are provided as a resource in designing the personnel requirements for a local program.

Political and Legal Resources

The political resources of a school counseling program include district policy statements, pertinent state and federal laws, state and local Board of Education rules and regulations, and professional association position statements and standards.

A clear and concise Board of Education policy is essential for the successful operation of the program in the school district. A policy represents a statement of support and provides a course of action or guiding principles designed to influence and determine decisions concerning the program.

The endorsement of the local Board of Education is key in proceeding with the implementation of a program. Without its support, it is impossible to move forward with implementing a program.

As the planning and implementation of the program progresses, it is important to make periodic presentations to the Board of Education to keep them apprised on curriculum activities and program data. This advocacy step is important in achieving and maintaining support for a program.

The SD State Board of Education has approved this model. (July 2013)

Management and Support

A comprehensive school counseling program requires a support system through which the program is established, maintained, and improved. This component includes strategies that support the goals of the school system as well as the school counseling program in the following areas:

Research and Development: The development and updating of school counseling learning activities, data analysis, and follow-up studies are examples of research and development tasks.

Political and Legal Resources: The program adheres to policies, procedures, association standards, pertinent state and federal laws, state and local Board of Education rules and regulations, and professional association standards in the development and implementation of its school counseling program.

Professional Development: Counselors and other school counseling staff are continuously updating their knowledge and skills in accordance with the professional development plan.

Staff/Community Public Relations: This component involves the implementation of a marketing/public relations plan for the program. Newsletters, working with local media, and school and community presentations are examples of activities.

Community/Advisory Boards: Serving on developmental curriculum committees and community committees or advisory boards is an important component in forming networks and building program support.

Community Outreach: These activities are designed to help professional school counseling staff become knowledgeable about community resources, employment opportunities, and the local labor market. They may include visiting local businesses/industries and social service agencies on a periodic basis.

Program Management: This area includes the planning and management tasks needed to implement and support program activities such as preparing budgets, facilities design, and staffing.

Teachers as Advisors: The Teachers as Advisors program is based on the premise of providing classroom guidance instruction to all students. In this program, students are assigned to an advisor and stay with that advisor for all four years of high school. All staff serve as advisors to students. Teachers as Advisors programs operate differently in each school – advisory sessions could be daily, weekly, twice a month or even monthly depending on the needs of the school. Grade level curriculum is developed based on school and community needs. The curriculum may contain lessons in goal setting, time management, career objectives, career pathways, community service and cultural diversity. All staff presents the same curriculum.

DELIVERY

DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

School Counseling Curriculum

A school counseling program curriculum that specifies competencies all students should achieve has been developed and implemented. The curriculum provides the content, scope and sequence, and instructional strategies of the school counseling program. It typically consists of competencies for students (organized by domains or areas and specified by grade levels) with structured strategies, activities, or units presented systematically through classrooms, large groups, or school wide events. The purpose of the school counseling curriculum is to provide students with knowledge of growth and development, assist them in acquiring and using life skills, and assist them in making future education and career plans.

The school counseling curriculum is not limited to being taught in one or two subjects, but is included in as many subjects as possible. School counselors teach, team-teach, or support teachers in delivering program curriculum through activities or units. The support of the entire school staff is necessary for its successful implementation. Also critical is that parents be invited to review, provide input and reinforce what is learned in school. Employers and community representatives should play a role in this process by collaborating with counselors and teachers in curriculum delivery.

Program activities and curriculum are developed and delivered in a number of ways:

- **Classroom Activities:** Counselors teach or team-teach with the classroom instructor. The school counseling curriculum, composed of organized objectives and activities, is delivered by teachers or counselors in classrooms or advisory groups. Counselors develop and present special school counseling units which give attention to particular developmental issues or areas of concern in their respective schools and they help prepare teachers to deliver part of the school counseling and counseling curriculum. A master calendar has been provided in the appendices as an example for use in planning learning activities in all school counseling program areas (see **Appendix K**).
- **Group Activities:** Counselors conduct small group activities outside of the classroom in response to students' identified needs or interests.
- **Individual Activities:** One-on-one instruction may occur in response to individualized needs.

Individual Planning

All students, along with their parents/guardians, are provided opportunities to develop, monitor, and manage their educational and career plans. *The focus of individual planning activities is on assisting students in developing life and career plans based on their skills, aptitudes, and abilities.* School counselors serve students and parents as facilitators of

student development. The ultimate goal is for each South Dakota student to graduate from high school and be college, career, and life ready.

As part of the South Dakota 2010 Educational Initiatives, students and their families are involved in working with school staff to create and individualized Personal Learning Plan. Each student's Personal Learning Plan will serve to guide his/her pathway to graduation. South Dakota's Pathways to Graduation information and resources must be incorporated in each student's plan.

The foundation of life and career plans is established during the elementary school years. Self-concept development, the acquisition of learning skills, interpersonal relationship skills development, decision-making, skill building, and awareness and beginning exploration of educational and career possibilities are examples of topics that are learned. This same foundation is reinforced through school counseling and counseling curriculum activities during middle and high school. New information and experiences enable students to develop and manage their plans.

During the middle school years, students' plans focus on high school course selection, taking into account the SD Pathways to Graduation criteria and postsecondary requirements. School counseling curriculum activities continue to support and guide the planning process with the creation of the Personal Learning Plan.

During the high school years, the Personal Learning Plan developed in middle school is reviewed and updated annually in accordance with students' personal, academic, and career goals. Individual planning provides time for work with students and their parents/guardians. School counseling curriculum activities continue to emphasize the development and use of career decision-making, goal-setting, and planning skills. The importance and relevance of basic academic and occupational preparation skills are emphasized.

A Senior Experience may serve as the culmination of the high school experience for many South Dakota students. This project is a high school capstone experience that requires students to demonstrate not only their knowledge, but also their abilities. Students become an "expert" in their chosen topic and showcase the skills and abilities they have gathered through their high school experience. Four major components make up the complete project. These include a portfolio, a product, a paper, and a presentation.

Individual planning is developed and directed by the school counselor. The activities are usually delivered on an individual basis or by working with individuals in small groups or advisement groups. Teachers as Advisors may also assist in this advisement activity. Individual planning is implemented through strategies such as:

- **Individual Appraisal:** Counselors work with students analyzing and evaluating their abilities, interests, skills and achievement. Test information and other data are the basis for assisting students to develop immediate and long-range plans. In addition to assessment data, other sources of appraisal information include interviews, biographical summaries, academic records, anecdotal records, career

portfolios, career plans of study, and records of past experiences including paid and non-paid work experiences.

- **Individual Advisement:** Counselors work with students using personal, academic, career, and labor market information in planning and setting goals. The involvement of students, parents, and the school in the planning of each student's Personal Learning Plan to meet his/her needs is critical. Most schools do not have sufficient counselors to provide each student and parent with individual counseling or at least enough quality time to achieve the desired results. Individualized career school counseling is possible if each teacher, administrator, and counselor becomes a planning advisor.
- **Teachers as Advisors:** Teachers as Advisors can be used to help students plan a program of study and monitor their progress. Counselors may train advisors on how to deliver career information to parents and students in an effective manner. Teachers as Advisors programs have been successful in schools and is a strategy that gives the student more individual attention for their career planning needs. It is also an excellent way to get other faculty involved in helping to deliver the school counseling curriculum.

Responsive Services

Professional school counselors develop confidential relationships with students to help them resolve or cope with problems and developmental concerns. Responsive services are preventions and interventions that meet students' immediate and future needs.

- **Individual Counseling** - is a personal and private interaction between a certified or licensed counselor and a student in which they work together on a problem or topic of interest. A face-to-face, one-to-one meeting with a counselor provides a student maximum privacy in which to freely explore ideas, feelings, and behaviors. School counselors establish trust and build a helping relationship. They respect the privacy of information, and are cognizant of the rights, integrity, and welfare of students. Counselors are obligated by law and ethical standards to report and to refer a case when a person's welfare is in jeopardy. It is a counselor's duty to inform an individual of the conditions and limitations under which assistance may be provided.
- **Small Group Counseling** – is counseling that involves a counselor working with two or more students simultaneously. Group size generally ranges from five to eight members. Group discussions may be relatively unstructured or may be based on structured learning activities. Group members have an opportunity to learn from each other. They can share ideas, give and receive feedback, increase their awareness, gain new knowledge, practice skills, and think about their goals and actions. Group discussions may be problem-centered where attention is given to particular concerns or problems. Discussions may be growth-centered where general topics are related to personal and academic development.

- **Crisis Response** – are services provided to students that aid them in working through critical and emergency situations. These services are designed as an intervention response to address immediate student needs as well as prevent any additional problems that may worsen the situation. School counselors work in accordance to school and district procedures for crisis response when providing these services.

The purpose of responsive services is to intervene on behalf of those students whose immediate personal concerns or problems put their continued academic, career, and/or personal/social development at risk. Although counselors may respond to any concerns presented by students, some topics have been identified as having high priority and/or relevance within the school setting. Topics of priority may include:

- academic success
- suicide/suicidal ideation
- bullying
- child abuse and neglect
- school drop-outs
- severe stress
- substance abuse
- pregnancy
- gang pressure/involvement
- harassment issues

Some responses are preventative: interventions with students who are on the brink of choosing unhealthy or inappropriate solutions to their problems or being unable to cope with a situation. Some responses are remedial: interventions with students who have already made unwise choices or have not coped well with problem situations.

In addition to the above topics, school districts have also identified some recurrent topics or local needs that could benefit from responsive services, including school-based issues such as: attendance, school attitudes and behaviors, peer relationships, study skills, being new to school, emergent issues in intervention or post-intervention of a traumatic event, and violence in school (school safety). Personal issues such as the following have also been identified: career indecision, financial aid, college choice, death of a family member or friend, divorce, abuse, bullying, substance abuse, and harassment issues.

INDIRECT STUDENT SERVICES

School counselors also provide indirect student services to support the achievement of all students. In order to provide these indirect services, school counselors work together with teachers, administrators, parents, school staff, and community members.

Referrals

Knowledge of school and community resources is essential for school counselors as they may need to appropriately refer students and parents for additional assistance.

Additionally, community agencies and service may also be used as referral sources.

Consultation

Consultation helps individuals think through problems and concerns, acquire more knowledge and skill, and become more objective and self-confident. This intervention can take place in individual or group conferences or through staff development activities.

Collaboration

School counselors join forces with educators, parents and the community in order to support the achievement of all students. Through teaming and partnering, school counselors can share resources, work together on advisory councils, and conduct joint presentations. Through serving on committees or advisory boards, school counselors can serve as advocates for student programs and resources. School counselors can also provide informational sessions to parents/guardians relevant to the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students.

ACCOUNTABILITY

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms, professional school counselors report on immediate, intermediate and long-range results indicating how students benefit as a result of the school counseling program. Professional school counselors use data to show the impact of the school counseling program on school improvement and student achievement. Professional school counselors conduct school counseling program audits to guide future action and improve future results for all students. The performance of the professional school counselor is evaluated on basic standards of practice expected of professional school counselors implementing a school counseling program.

DATA ANALYSIS

Schools are environments rich with data. Data can provide the objective information needed to make decisions about program effectiveness. Reviewing data can help us determine how to best meet the needs of students.

School Data Profile Analysis

The school data profile is a summary of progress. This might include data related to achievement, attendance, behavior and safety. Understanding these trends allows school counselors to monitor change and to recognize areas for improvement.

When analyzing data, it can be useful to ask the following questions:

- What strengths/weaknesses are indicated by the data?
- What concerns does the data raise?
- Do achievement gaps exist?
- Are attendance rates an issue or are they being impacted?
- Is student safety an issue?
- What additional data is needed to better understand student needs and the impact of the school counseling program?
- What is the impact of the school counseling program?

Use of Time Assessment Analysis

The ASCA National Model (2012) recommends that school counselors spend eighty percent or more of their time in direct or indirect student service provision. Activities that fall under the category of direct or indirect student services include school counseling curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, referrals, consultation and collaboration. Twenty percent or less of a school counselor's time should be spent in program management tasks such as data collection/analysis, planning and fair-share responsibilities, and meetings.

School counselors are encouraged to complete a use-of-time assessment twice annually to ascertain how they are spending their time. Once completed, it may be helpful to ask the following questions.

- What percentage of time is used for serving students?

- Is time used to the detriment of others?
- Is time used effectively?
- Is time spent toward meeting program goals?

The Use-of Time Assessment can be completed by picking a “typical week” in the fall and then again in the spring and tracking or estimating the number of hours used for direct and indirect service provision during those weeks. This can then be compared to the eighty percent ideal (see **Appendix G**).

PROGRAM RESULTS

A data-driven program equates to an effective program. Data collection provides information which can assist in evaluating student progress. Determining what is effective and what may need improvement is the end product of good data analysis.

Action Plans (outlined in the Management section of the model) detail the means to achieve the set goals. Data can be used to evaluate if goals were achieved and whether student learning or behavior was impacted.

Sharing Results

A very important component of data collection and analysis process is determining how data will be shared with others. Disseminating results is a key component in advocating for the school counseling program. It shows constituents how a school counselor positively impacts.

Regular sharing of results is recommended. Presentations that are short in length but highlight findings assist in promoting the work of the school counselor and the value of the work they do. It is important to remember that changes to student knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors are part of the overall school system effort. School counselors should be able to communicate their role to the overall achievement of students.

EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

There are four key components which should be considered in the school counseling program evaluation: school counselor competencies assessment, school counseling program assessment, school counselor evaluation, and school counseling program goal review

School Counselor Competencies Assessment

ASCA competencies identify the knowledge, attitudes and skills required of a professional school counselor. These competencies assist school counselors in establishing, maintaining, and enhancing a comprehensive program. Such a program is developmental; and results-based addressing the academic, career, and personal/social needs of all students. Practicing school counselors can use the competencies as a checklist for self-evaluation. School counselor education programs can use them as benchmarks for training (See **Appendix C**).

School Counseling Program Assessment

A comprehensive school counseling program should be designed for continuous evaluation and modification. The school counseling program assessment aligns with the four components of the ASCA National Model (See **Appendix F**).

South Dakota School Counselor Annual Professional Evaluation

Professional evaluations are designed based on the role and responsibilities of the school counselor. Those roles and responsibilities are defined by the administration of a school district as well as by the district's school counseling program plan. In 2012, SDSCA formed a work group that created the SD School Counselor Annual Evaluation. It is recommended that school counselors collaborate with their administration to use this evaluation tool. (See **Appendix L**).