

Iowa School Counseling Framework

Fall 2025



Department of Education

State of Iowa
Department of Education
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Acknowledgement

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Introduction

The Iowa School Counseling Framework provides a model to guide and assist Iowa's school counselors in the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. Based upon the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, the Iowa Framework is a model considered best practice for the profession. Originally aligned to the ASCA National Model, fourth edition, the Framework has now been updated to incorporate the changes and enhancements introduced in the fifth edition. "School counseling program" means an articulated, sequential K--12 program that is comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, developmental in nature, driven by data, and integral to the school district's curricula and instructional program. The framework initially was launched following 2007 legislation that set standards for school counseling programs in Iowa and required at least one licensed school counselor for each school district with the expectation that districts will move towards one school counselor for every 350 students.

How to Use the Framework

This framework is designed to support school counseling programs that are rooted in accountability and success for each student. It can be used by school counselors, administrators, students, families and stakeholders that support school counseling including but not limited to school boards and community members. Please see the table of contents to navigate to topics of particular interest.

What are the Benefits of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program?

Numerous [research studies](#)¹ have quantified the impact of school counselors on student development and success, as well as on school climate and K–12 education in general. The ASCA grants program has funded several studies measuring school counselors' impact on student outcomes, including the effect of student-to-school-counselor ratios. Other studies, published in [Professional School Counseling](#) and throughout other literature sources support the role of school counselors in student success, including improved ACT and SAT scores, higher rates of informed postsecondary decision-making, fewer disciplinary actions, improved attendance and more.

ASCA combined a number of recent journal articles examining the impact of school counselors and school counseling programs on K-12 student outcomes, into a single collection titled, "[Empirical Research Studies Supporting the Value of School Counseling](#)"². All of the articles are data centered and drawn from national peer-reviewed journals and research reports. These articles support the value of school counseling within the three ASCA Domains and the impact upon students, school districts, and communities.

¹ Impact of School Counseling. "Impact of School Counseling - American School Counselor Association (ASCA), American School Counselor Association, www.schoolcounselor.org/Publications-Research/Research/Impact-of-School-Counseling.

² Empirical Research Studies Supporting the Value of School Counseling, American School Counseling Association, www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/7d00dcff-40a6-4316-ab6c-8f3ffd7941c2/Effectiveness.pdf.

The School Counselor in Iowa

Through work within the three domains of ASCA, school counselors in Iowa, outlined under Iowa Code, have a long history of supporting students, districts and families.

How has History Shaped School Counseling?³

The early history of school counseling was shaped by the need to assist students with movement toward high school graduation and into a career or “vocation. The “guidance counselor” emerged to provide additional support to assist the transition into the world of work. From this initial focus of “vocational guidance” over 100 years ago, the role and function of the school counselor has adapted and changed into a comprehensive model of support for all students with a wider lens.

With international conflict and society changes in the 1940s and 1950s as well as passage of legislation targeting funding for vocational and higher education, the role of the school counselor began to grow outside of the single “vocational” focus. With the establishment of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) in 1952, the further expansion of the role of the school counselor continued.

Over the next several decades, with continued international conflict, economic shifts, changes in education, early school counseling pioneers and work in a handful of states, the training to become a school counselor became more structured and broadened towards a comprehensive and planned model within the educational setting. This expansion included implementation of career development programs and delivery systems as well as considerations surrounding supporting academics.

Fast forward to the end of the 20th Century, several pieces of legislation including the Carl D. Perkins Technical Act Amendments, which included the shift to define “Career Guidance and Academic Counseling,” were passed and continued to expand the role of the school counselor. With the continued changes, the term “guidance counselor” no longer provided an accurate description of the broader role of the school counselor. In 1990, ASCA issued an official statement recommending the use of “school counselor;” signaling a move towards understanding the full focus of the school counselor outside of just “vocational education.”

As the 20th Century ended and the 21st Century began, ASCA published the first ASCA Model further shaping the delivery model, role of the school counselor within the school and the proactive, data-driven approach to supporting students. The model has been revised and adapted four more times since the introduction in 2003 with the latest edition, the fifth, released in 2025.

Does Title Matter? School Counselor v. Guidance Counselor

While historically, the school counselor was focused on “vocational guidance,” giving past merit to the title “guidance counselor,” expansion of the role of the school counselor warrants the updated title. From the reactive and limited connection of a guidance counselor, Iowa’s school counselors are a proactive, data-driven and an integrated part of the school improvement process. ASCA research suggests that the title used influences the perception of the school counselor and impacts views related to competency and scope of work; the research is captured in an infographic titled, [“Guidance Counselors or School Counselors: How the name of the Profession Influences Perceptions of Competence.”](#) While guidance counselor remains the language within some Iowa code language, the updated title of school counselor better reflects the full scope of the school counselor’s duties, and thus is a more accurate term and title. For a side-by-side comparison of the school counselor and guidance counselor role, ASCA Guidance Counselor vs. School Counselor provides a clear overview of the distinction.

³ Historical information adapted from: American School Counselor Association, [“Embrace the Past, Welcome the Future: A Brief History of School Counseling”](#) and [“School Counseling Principles: Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future.”](#)

Iowa Code: School Counseling Administrative Rules

As outlined in [Iowa Administrative Rule](#), beginning July 1, 2007, each school district shall have a qualified school counselor who shall be licensed by the board of educational examiners under chapter 272. Each school district shall work toward the goal of having one qualified guidance counselor for every three hundred fifty students enrolled in the school district.

The state board shall establish in rule a definition of and standards for an articulated sequential kindergarten through grade twelve guidance and counseling program. The program shall be designed to ensure that the guidance counselor can work collaboratively with students, teachers, support staff, and administrators to support the curricular goals of the school by offering responsive services that address the growth and development needs of students and the attainment of student competencies in academic, career, and social areas (updated to reflect March 2023 revision).

Standards for School Counseling Programs

As outlined in [Iowa Administrative Code 281-12.3\(11\)\(a\)\(b\)](#), A qualified school counselor, licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE), who works collaboratively with students, teachers, support staff and administrators shall direct the program and provide services and provide services and instruction in support of the curricular goals of each attendance center. The school counselor shall be the member of the attendance center instructional team with special expertise in identifying resources and technologies to support teaching and learning. The school counselor and classroom teachers shall collaborate to develop, teach, and evaluate attendance center curricular goals.

The program shall be regularly reviewed and revised and shall be designed to provide all of the following:

1. Curriculum that is embedded throughout the district's overall curriculum and is systemically delivered by the school counselor in collaboration with instructional staff through classroom and group activities, and that consists of structured lessons to help students achieve desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental levels;
2. Individual student planning through ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish educational and career goals to develop future plans;
3. Responsive services through intervention and curriculum meeting students' immediate and future needs as occasioned by events and conditions in students' lives and that may require any of the following: individual or group counseling, consultation with parents, teachers, and other educators, referrals to other school support services or community resources, peer helping, and information; and
4. Systemic support through management activities establishing, maintaining, and enhancing the total school counseling program, including professional development, consultation, collaboration, program management, and operations.

Iowa Code: Individual Career and Academic Plan

Beginning in 2016 and updated in 2022, the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) requires each school district to ensure each student reviews and revises an individualized career and academic plan each year beginning in 8th grade and continuing until graduation. ICAP, as outlined in [HF 2392](#), is a series of high-quality career-related activities and experiences that provide a platform for students to engage in the development of self-reflection, career research and exploration of postsecondary opportunities and apply and align their learning with their personal path and goals. While ICAP is not the sole responsibility of the school counselor,

the school counselor's role and training within the [academic](#)⁴ and [career domain](#)⁵ of the ASCA National Model and outlined in the [ASCA student standards](#)⁶, provides a foundation of support for development and implementation of a quality student ICAP process.

ICAP Requirements:

The plan shall, at a minimum, achieve all of the following:

- a. Prepare the student for successful completion of the core curriculum developed by the state board of education pursuant to [Iowa Administrative Code 281-12](#) by the time the student graduates from high school.
- b. Identify the student's postsecondary education and career options and goals.
- c. Identify the coursework and work-based learning needed in grades 9 through 12 to support the student's postsecondary education and career options and goals.
- d. Prepare the student to successfully complete, prior to graduation and following a timeline included in the plan, the essential components prescribed in rule 281—49.4(279).
- e. Prior to graduation, advise the student how to successfully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Progress report. The school district shall report annually to each student enrolled in grades 9 through 12, and, if the student is under the age of 18, to each student's parent or guardian, the student's progress toward meeting the goal of successfully completing the core curriculum and high school graduation requirements adopted by the state board of education pursuant to 281—Chapter 12 and toward achieving the goals of the student's career and academic plan.

ICAP Five Essential Component Requirements:

The district shall engage each student in activities which support the following essential components:

1. Self-understanding: Students shall engage in developmentally appropriate inventories and assessments that promote self-understanding, the connection to work, and engage in meaningful reflective activities about the results.
2. Career information: Students shall research careers based on self-understanding results and engage in meaningful reflection about the findings.
3. Career exploration: Students shall engage in activities that reveal connections among school-based instruction, career clusters, and the world of work and engage in meaningful reflection.
4. Postsecondary exploration: Students shall engage in activities to explore relevant postsecondary education and training options related to career interests and engage in meaningful reflection on the exploration experience.
5. Career and postsecondary decision: Students shall complete relevant activities to meet their postsecondary goals consistent with the plan and stated postsecondary intention.

⁴ "The School Counselor and Academic Development." American School Counselor Association, <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Academic-Development>. Adopted 2017, revised 2023.

⁵ "The School Counselor and Career Development." American School Counselor Association, www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Career-Development. Adopted 2017, revised 2023.

⁶ American School Counselor Association. (2021). ASCA student standards: Mindsets & behaviors for student success: K-12 college-, career- and life-readiness standards for every student. <https://schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/7428a787-a452-4abb-afec-d78ec77870cd/Mindsets-Behaviors.pdf>

District Career and Academic Plan (DCAP)

The school district shall develop a written career guidance plan that outlines the district implementation of each student's ICAP grade eight-12. As part of the required team, a school counselor must be included.

The district plan shall include the following components:

- a. The district shall, at a minimum, describe the following aspects of the district plan.
 - (1) The activities to be undertaken in each grade level to achieve the requirements of rule 281-49.3(279).
 - (2) Integration of the career guidance plan with the district's comprehensive school improvement plan and school guidance counseling program.
 - (3) At the district's discretion, any additional outcomes to be integrated into the career guidance system.
- b. Designation of team. The superintendent of each school district shall designate a team of education practitioners to carry out the duties assigned to the school district under this rule
 - (1) Team composition. The team shall include, but not be limited to, a school administrator, a school counselor, teachers, including career and technical education teachers, and individuals responsible for coordinating work-based learning activities.
 - (2) Duties. The team shall be responsible for the following:
 - i. Implementation of the district plan.
 - ii. Annually reviewing and, as necessary, proposing to the board of directors of the school district revisions to the district plan
 - iii. Coordination of activities which integrate essential components into classroom instruction and other facets of the school district's educational program.
 - iv. Regularly consulting with representatives of employers, state and local workforce systems and centers, higher education institutions, and postsecondary training programs to ensure activities are relevant and align with the labor and workforce needs of the region and state.

Career information and decision-making systems

Each district shall use a career information and decision-making system that meets the minimum requirements established in [Iowa Administrative Code 281-49.6\(3\)](#).

Compliance

The director shall monitor school districts for compliance with the provisions of this chapter through the accreditation process established for school districts under [Iowa Administrative Code 281-12](#).

HF 316

[HF 316](#) amends the educational standards in [Iowa Code 256.11](#) to clarify and expand expectations for career education in the middle grades. Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, [the updated code](#) highlights the importance of introducing career-focused learning starting in grade 5. These activities and experiences are designed to build early career awareness, further develop and identify student's employability skills and support the creation, review and revision of the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) in later grades.

HF 316 Legislative Requirements:

- In grades five and six, career planning and pathways. The career planning and pathways curriculum shall include career investigation, career connections and career intentions to help such students understand career opportunities in order to fully utilize the individualized career and academic plan developed pursuant to section 279.61.
- In seventh and eighth grade, (7) Career instruction, exploration and development, which shall include career investigation, career connections and career intentions.

The Professional School Counselor

School counselors are highly educated, professionally certified individuals who help students succeed in school and plan their career. An integral part of the total education system, school counselors help students form healthy goals, mindsets and behaviors. With the aid of a school counselor, students learn to develop effective collaboration and cooperation skills, to practice perseverance, to develop time management and study skills, and to learn self-motivation and self-direction habits. ([ASCA outlined counselor roles and responsibilities](#)).

How do I Become a School Counselor in Iowa?

The [Iowa Board of Educational Examiners](#) is the body that issues initial licensure as well as renewal of licenses. There are two ways to earn a license in Iowa.

- 1) As an **endorsement on a currently held Iowa Teaching License** - it is strongly encouraged that applicants earn a Master's Degree in School Counseling; however, if the applicant holds a master's in the field of education, the applicant can complete coursework and evidence that coursework and experiences on the checklists below for consideration:
 - a. [K-8 Professional School Counselor](#)
 - b. [5-12 Professional School Counselor](#)
- 2) Through a **Professional Service License (not currently a teacher)** - the applicant must have a master's degree and complete all coursework and experiences through an accredited school counseling program. The applicant then applies for an [Initial Professional Service License](#) that is valid for two years. At the end of the two years (or three in a non-public/non-Iowa school), the applicant can apply to convert to a [Professional Service License](#).

Renewal credits are required for individuals with the Professional Service License or Master Educator license. The school counselor must have four [renewal credits](#) each renewal period (five years). Renewal credits are not required for those on Initial licenses or with a master's degree and have at least 10 years of experience.

Through a Professional Service License (not currently a teacher), the applicant must have a master's degree in school counseling. The applicant then applies for an Initial Professional Service License that is valid for two years. At the end of the two years, the applicant can apply for a Professional Service License.

Additional clarification regarding the options for school counseling licensure as well as how to apply for a conditional license can be found on the Iowa Department of Education [Professional School Counseling License Options webpage](#).

Exceptions to the above rules.

- a) [Class B License](#) - can be granted for those who have completed half the coursework as a school counselor. Holding an Iowa teaching license is required.
- b) [Executive Director Decision](#) - can be granted for those with less than half the coursework as a school counselor completed. They will have one school year to complete half the coursework, then apply for a Class B for two additional years to complete the remainder of the program. Holding an Iowa Teaching license is required.
- c) [Class G License](#) - can be granted for those who have completed 75% of their coursework and experiences as a school counselor.

Current School Counseling Programs in Iowa⁷

[Buena Vista](#)
[Drake University](#)
[Loras College](#)
[Northwestern College](#)

[University of Iowa](#)
[University of Northern Iowa](#)
[Upper Iowa University](#)

What is the Role of the School Counselor?

The ASCA resource, "[The Role of the School Counselor](#)" provides a quality overview aimed providing an context to best understand the many varied ways school counselors support students. A further ASCA resource, "[Who Are School Counselors Infographic](#)" (also available in [Spanish](#)) further clarifies the school counselor role.

For more information, review the various ASCA provided documents regarding specific roles of school counselors:

- [The Essential Role of Elementary School Counselors](#)
- [The Essential Role of Middle School Counselors](#)
- [The Essential Role of High School Counselors](#)
- [The Essential Role of School Counselor Educators](#)
- [The Essential Role of School Counseling Directors/Coordinators](#)

In 2019, EdTrust put together the white paper, "[School Counselors Matter](#)." This paper outlines the critical need for school counselors, especially for underserved students.

[Appropriate and Inappropriate Duties](#) is an additional resource from ASCA to inform all stakeholders on what school counselors could and should be doing. While the school counselor role is designed to support all students, including support for the entire school, counselors can best use their time and skills most effectively when appropriate duties are utilized.

What Are the Ethical Responsibilities of a School Counselor?

School counselors face ethical challenges every day. Whether the counselor is new to the field or has years of experience, ethical challenges will still arise. From confidentiality issues to records maintenance, from duty of care to sexual harassment issues, a school counselor's ethical questions can spring up from every corner. ASCA provides a number of resources and services to help counselors meet these legal and ethical challenges as comprehensively as possible. (ASCA)

[The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) are the basis of ASCA's ethical program. ASCA also has [Ethical Standards for School Counselor Education Faculty](#).

The association also publishes books and journal articles on legal and ethical issues, as well as addressing them in the members-only ASCA Scene. Each issue of [ASCA School Counselor magazine](#) contains an article written by the chair of ASCA's Ethics Committee about a legal or ethical issue.

What are the School Counselor Standards and Competencies?

The [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#) outline the mindsets and behaviors school counselors need to meet the rigorous demands of the school counseling profession and the needs of

⁷ Any updates or changes to the list of approved school counseling programs in Iowa will be reflected on the Iowa Department of Education school counseling website.

pre-K–12 students. These standards and competencies help ensure new and experienced school counselors are equipped to establish, maintain and enhance a school counseling program addressing the ASCA domain areas.

How is the Role of the School Counselor Similar to Other Education Professionals?

School counselors work in partnership with many other education professionals. The [overview of types of counseling/therapy services available](#) provides a high-level view of some of those professionals, the services provided, the scope of services provided, the referral process and the funding streams currently available.

The School Counseling Program

School counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has published “[The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs](#)” which outlines the components of a school counseling program which is aligned with the school or district's mission and vision and is intended to positively impact students and close gaps in the areas of achievement, attendance, and discipline.

What is a Comprehensive School Counseling Program?

The school counseling program, as described in the [ASCA National Model](#), is comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and developmental in nature and is an integral component of the school's mission. Informed by student data and based on the ASCA National Model, school counseling programs are provided by a state-credentialed school counselor and:

- Are delivered to all students systematically
- Include a developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on the mindsets and behaviors all student need for postsecondary readiness and success
- Close achievement and opportunity gaps
- Result in improved student achievement, attendance and discipline

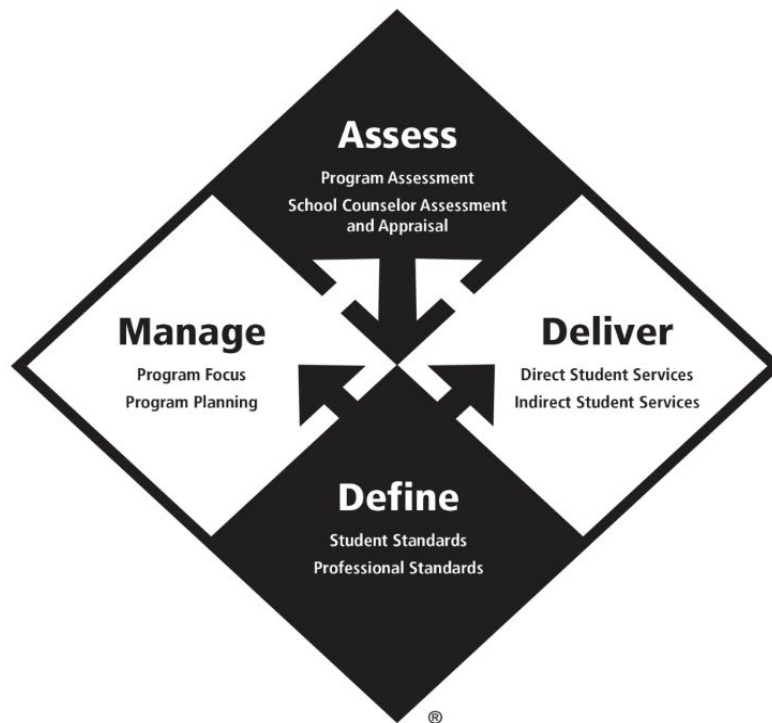
According to Lapan (2012), “When highly trained, professional school counselors deliver ASCA National Model comprehensive school counseling program services, students receive measurable benefit.”⁸

⁸ Lapan, R. (2012). Comprehensive school counseling programs: In some schools for some students but not in all schools for all students. *Professional School Counseling*, 16(2), 84-88.

What is the ASCA National Model?

“The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs” outlines the components of a school counseling program that is integral to the school’s academic mission and is created to have a significant positive impact on student achievement, attendance and discipline.

It is comprised of four components: Define, Manage, Deliver and Assess⁹:



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⁹ The ASCA National Model® and the ASCA National Model diagram are registered trademarks of the American School Counselor Association and can be fully reviewed in the [ASCA National Model Executive Summary](#). Used with permission.

Key Changes in the ASCA National Model, Fifth Edition

The [ASCA National Model, Fifth Edition](#) introduces [meaningful updates](#) that strengthen school counselors' ability to design and deliver effective, student-centered programs. While remaining grounded in the foundational components of a comprehensive school counseling program—integral to a school's mission and focused on improving life-readiness and academic success for every student—the fifth edition brings several important enhancements. These include stronger alignment with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), an expanded emphasis on using data to guide decisions, and greater attention to addressing the needs of underserved student populations. School counselors are called to analyze both achievement data and contributing-factors data—such as attendance, discipline, systemic barriers, and perspectives of students and education partners—to more precisely identify student needs and measure outcomes. In addition, [new ASCA tools](#) have been introduced to further support program design, delivery, and evaluation, ensuring school counseling programs are responsive, equitable, and impactful.

Each of the four components of the model is expanded in the sections below. At the beginning of each section, a quick-reference chart highlights the key changes from the fourth to the fifth edition.

The 4 Components of the ASCA National Model

Define

Fifth Edition Key Changes for Define

Fourth Edition Topic	Fifth Edition Change	Notes
ASCA Student Standards	No Change (2021 version)	
ASCA Ethical Standards	No Change (2022 version)	
ASCA Ethical Standards	Revised, 2025	Beliefs moved here from Manage Component
School Counseling Vision and Mission Statements	No Separate mission and vision statement	Moved from Manage Section School counselors articulate how the school counseling program aligns with the school or district vision and mission statements.

There are three sets of school counseling standards which define the school counseling profession. Through these standards, both new and experienced school counselors are able to develop, implement, and assess their school counseling program, which results in improved student outcomes.

Student Standards

- [ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K–12 College- and Career-Readiness for Every Student](#)

Professional Standards

- [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#)
- [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#)

Manage

Fifth Edition Key Changes for Manage

Fourth Edition Topic	Fifth Edition Change	Notes
Manage	The Manage component includes the most significant updates in the fifth edition.	This chart contains only a portion of the fifth edition changes under Manage. For expanded details and direct ASCA resources, see the Fifth Edition Key Changes document.
School Counseling Vision and Mission Statements	No separate mission and vision statement	Moved to define- no separate vision and mission statement for the school counseling program. School Counselors articulate how the school counseling program aligns with the school district vision and mission statement.
Use of Data: 1. Participation 2. Mindsets and Behaviors 3. Outcomes • Achievement • Attendance • Discipline	Results 1. Access 2. Life-Readiness 3. Academic Success Measured by 1. Participation data 2. ASCA Student Standards data 3. Achievement data	Result: 1. Access 2. Life-Readiness 3. Academic Success Measured by: 1. Participation data- no change 2. ASCA Student Standards data (formerly Mindsets and Behaviors data) 3. Achievement Data (formerly outcome data) There was confusion about what is considered an "outcome." Achievement data is now the third data component and includes measurement of any factors contributing to achievement, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance rates • Discipline rates • Systemic barriers • Student perspective • Education partner

Tools, Templates and Resources to Support Manage

There are a number of components within the program focus and program planning areas that can assist school counselors in managing their school counseling programs. Additional details and examples of program focus elements can be found in the text, [“The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs.”](#)

The templates below can help school counselors to design and implement more effective school counseling programs, focused on student outcomes. The [ASCA Templates website](#) contains all the resources for direct download.

Program Planning

- [School Counseling Data Priorities](#)
- [Achievement Gap Plan and Data Report](#)
- [Lesson Plan and Data Report](#)
- [Small Group Plan and Data Report](#)
- [Annual Administrative Conference](#)
 - Note: Iowa BOEE has approved the use of the adapted Annual Administrator Conference template as the School Counselor Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) for recertification purposes as long as it is adapted to include the same elements required for the IPDP. Counselors can make a [copy of Iowa's adapted administrative conference form](#) for IPDP.
- [Use of Time](#)
- Calendars
 - Annual: Previous template was combined into the ASCA Student Standards Delivery Plan. No Template is provided; Use any format that fits the school/counselor's needs.
 - Weekly/Use of Time Tool: No weekly calendar template; use any format that fits the school/counselor's needs
- Advisory Council
 - [First Semester](#)
 - [Second Semester](#)

Deliver

Fifth Edition Key Changes for Deliver

Fourth Edition Topic	Fifth Edition Change	Notes
Direct Student Services	No Change	Alignment with MTSS highlighted
Indirect Student Services	No Change	Alignment with MTSS highlighted

Within this component, school counselors may be involved in direct student services with students or indirect student services on behalf of students. Whether direct or indirect, the activities should be developmentally appropriate and aligned with the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success. The impact of direct and indirect student services can be measured through data related to student achievement, attendance, and discipline. It is recommended that 80% or more of a school counselor's time be spent in Direct and Indirect Student Services.

Direct Student Services

- Instruction in the three domains of ASCA: Academic, Career and Social/Emotional Development
 - [ASCA Student Standards Delivery Plan](#)
- Appraisal and advisement
- Counseling

Indirect Student Services

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

Assess

Fifth Edition Key Changes for Assess

Fourth Edition Topic	Fifth Edition Change	Notes
School counseling program assessment template	Language alignment	Updated to align with fifth edition language
ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies Assessment	Language alignment	Updated to align with fifth edition language
School Counselor Performance Appraisal Template	Language alignment	Updated to align with fifth edition language

It is best practice for school counselors to regularly assess their programs. This allows them to create the best outcomes for students. In addition, self-evaluation is a part of that practice. There are a variety of tools within this component to guide these activities. Through these tools, school counselors can determine the effectiveness of their program, determine what improvements need to be made, and gather information about how students are different as a result of the school counseling program.

Program Assessment

- [School Counseling Program Assessment](#)

School Counselor Assessment and Appraisal

- [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment](#)
- [School Counselor Performance Appraisal](#)
- [Iowa School Counselor Evaluation Supplement](#)¹⁰

Additional Information on the ASCA National Model

What are the Themes of the ASCA National Model?

There are four themes¹¹ interwoven throughout the model:

- Advocacy
- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Systemic Change

In addition to the four themes, ethics and equity have also been embedded within the ASCA National Model, fifth edition.

¹⁰ Iowa Code requires the school counselor to be evaluated on the 8 teaching standards. However, the Iowa School Counselor Evaluation Supplement crosswalks the standards with the [ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies](#) and thus, is intended to support the administrator and the counselor through the evaluation process. Additionally, it is designed to be a reflective tool to support individual professional growth.

¹¹ These areas are critical for school counselors to maximize positive outcomes for students.

Examples of the ASCA Themes in Action by ASCA National Model Components

ASCA Theme	Define	Deliver	Manage	Assess
Advocacy	School counselors advocate for the highest form of professionalism, integrity, and ethical behavior and adhere to the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors.	School counselors help stakeholders understand the school counselor's role in supporting the ASCA domain areas in a school setting. They also provide clarity between the school counselor's role and other mental health roles within a continuum of care.	<p>A vision statement describes a future where all students achieve positive outcomes.</p> <p>Data is used to advocate both for student needs and for the school counseling program.</p>	<p>Program assessments assist in the identification of areas for improvement and advocacy.</p> <p>School counselors advocate for appropriate appraisal processes aligned with ASCA School Counselor Standards and Competencies. Examples include, the Iowa School Counselor Evaluation Supplement and the Annual Administrative Conference aligned with Iowa Code.</p>
Leadership	School counselors serve as leaders to identify needs and validate what does and does not belong in a school counseling program. This continuity of service is clear and understandable to all stakeholders.	The ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success inform the comprehensive school counseling program in an intentional, thoughtful way.	Having a vision and mission allows for collaborative work toward a shared purpose and goals and aligns the school counseling program with the school/district vision and mission.	School counselors demonstrate a commitment to leadership and continuous improvement by continually assessing the program and identifying areas for growth.
Collaboration	In order to support all students in attaining the ASCA Student Standards, school counselors collaborate with families, educators, businesses and community organizations.	School counselors consult with other school counselors as well as education, counseling, and legal professionals when ethical and/or legal questions arise.	<p>School counselors collaborate with a variety of stakeholders to access, collect, and review data and align student outcome goals with that data.</p> <p>Collaboration is also required to access supplemental information which can help school counselors understand issues in context.</p>	School counselors collaborate with stakeholders to accurately assess their programs and analyze results.

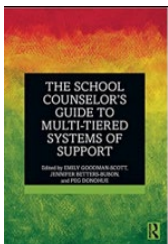
ASCA Theme	Define	Deliver	Manage	Assess
Systemic Change	School counselors engage in efforts to ensure students have access to coursework and opportunities to meet their academic, social/emotional, and career goals. School counselors use the ASCA Student Standards to address systemic issues and advocate for policy change.	School counselors are change agents in promoting conditions which support positive student outcomes. Cultural, social, and environmental influences on student success and opportunities are carefully considered.	The vision is delivered through the school counseling program. Data is used to identify barriers to student success and demonstrate a need for change.	Analyzing results of assessment helps create a culture that promotes systemic change.
Ethics	School counselors are well-versed in ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors and they help guide decision-making within the school counseling program.	A comprehensive school counseling program ensures equitable development for all the ASCA domain areas and provides opportunities for all students. The best available research is employed to drive the school counseling program and ensure that it is evidence-based.	School and student data determine potential needed interventions to close information, attainment, achievement and opportunity gaps. The school counseling program's goals and action plans are aligned with the school and district school improvement goals. Advocacy for roles appropriate for school counselors ensures maximum time and effort toward positive student outcomes.	Program assessments help determine program effectiveness and ensures accountability. When disparities exist within student subgroup outcome data, school counselors prioritize programs and activities to help close the gap and create systemic change.

How Does a School Counseling Program Connect to a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)?

The ASCA positions statement on [“School Counselors and Multi-Tiered System of Supports”](#) provides additional context and information connecting MTSS and a comprehensive, data driven school counseling program.

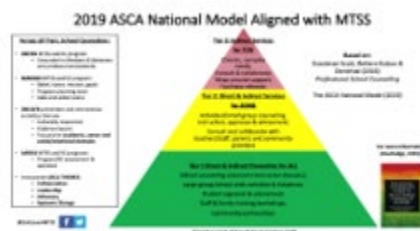
In the ASCA National Model, Fifth Edition, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is given greater emphasis than in the Fourth Edition. The updated model highlights how school counseling programs align with MTSS by delivering universal, targeted, and intensive supports that address both academic and social-emotional needs. It underscores the counselor’s role in using data to identify student needs across tiers, collaborating with educators and families, and ensuring equitable access to interventions. This stronger alignment reflects the evolving practice of embedding school counseling within the broader MTSS framework to maximize student success.

Additional resources that may be helpful in connecting the school counselor’s role within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports include:



The School Counselor’s Guide to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support¹² provides a basis of understanding for the connection and alignment of MTSS and a school counseling program.

“Making MTSS Work,”¹³ an ASCA resource, provides examples of MTSS tier connections, sample forms, data usage and alignment with a comprehensive school counseling program.



2019 ASCA National Model¹⁴ Aligned with MTSS is based on the Goodman-Scott, Betters-Bubon & Donohue, “Professional School Counseling, (2016) and the 2019 ASCA National Model.

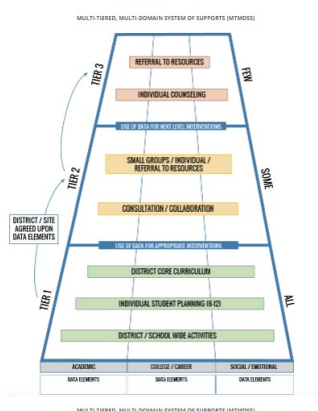
¹² Goodman-Scott, E., Betters-Bubon, J., & Donohue, P. (Eds.). (2019). A school counselor’s guide to Multi-tiered Systems of Support (1st ed.). New York City, NY: Routledge

¹³ Goodman-Scott, E., Betters-Bubon, J., Olsen, J., & Donohue, P. (2020). Making MTSS Work. American School Counselor Association

¹⁴ American School Counselor Association. (2019). The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.



The School Counselor's Role in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support resource is provided by [School Counselors 4 MTSS](#).



Dr. Trish Hatch of [Hatching Results](#) developed the [Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports \(MTMDSS\)](#), which incorporates the three domains of school counseling outlined in the [ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors](#) within the multi-tiered system of support framework. A [video resource](#) provides additional clarification of MTMDSS.

How is the ASCA Model Implemented?

Implementation of the ASCA Model can be somewhat overwhelming for new school counselors or for school counselors who may be building school counseling programs from the ground up. However, the process is made much more manageable by breaking it into parts and implementing in steps. ASCA has created a [phased implementation plan](#) that walks school counselors through the four phases of implementation. The length of time for each phase can vary based on experience, support, and amount of time available to commit to the work.

What is RAMP?

RAMP stands for Recognized ASCA Model Program and is a recognition for schools that are delivering an exemplary school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model Framework. Schools need at least one academic year to collect the data and information needed to apply for RAMP; the application is due annually in October. If a school meets criteria for RAMP, the designation lasts for five years.

To determine if the school is ready to apply for RAMP, the first step would be to complete the [program assessment tool](#) to determine if your program incorporates all components of the ASCA Model and is data informed. If your program is ready to RAMP, ASCA has created a suggested [timeline for application](#) and it is helpful to review the RAMP Rubric as well.

RAMP designation, as well as alignment with the ASCA National Model, is associated with better outcomes for students. Examples of how [RAMP designees addressed equity gaps](#) using the ASCA Model have also been created to aid in the RAMP process.