



# ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

## Mindsets

*School counselors believe:*

- M 1. Every student can learn, and every student can succeed.
- M 2. Every student should have access to and opportunity for a high-quality education.
- M 3. Every student should graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities.
- M 4. Every student should have access to a comprehensive school counseling program.
- M 5. Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving school counselors, students, families, teachers, administrators, community leaders and other stakeholders.
- M 6. School counselors are leaders in the school, district, state and nation.
- M 7. Comprehensive school counseling programs promote and enhance student outcomes.
- M 8. School counselors' background, experiences, knowledge, attitudes, skills, interests, values and beliefs determine their sense of identity and influence relationships with their students.

## Behaviors

*School counselors demonstrate the following standards.*

Foundational Skills	Direct and Indirect Student Services	Program Management and School Support
B-FS 1. Apply developmental, learning and counseling theories	B-SS 1. Design and implement the school counseling core curriculum	B-PS 1. Demonstrate understanding of educational systems, legal issues, policies, research and trends in education
B-FS 2. Create school counseling program beliefs, vision and mission statements aligned with school and district	B-SS 2. Facilitate individual student planning	B-PS 2. Design, implement and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program
B-FS 3. Use ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors standards to drive the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program	B-SS 3. Provide responsive services	B-PS 3. Identify achievement, attendance, behavior, opportunity or resource gaps
B-FS 4. Apply legal and ethical principles of the school counseling profession	B-SS 4. Make referrals to appropriate professionals	B-PS 4. Develop and implement action plans aligned with program goals and student data
B-FS 5. Apply professional standards and competencies	B-SS 5. Consult to support student achievement and success	B-PS 5. Report program results to the school community
B-FS 6. Understand the impact of culture on student success and opportunities	B-SS 6. Collaborate with families, teachers, administrators and education stakeholders for student achievement and success	B-PS 6. Use time according to national recommendations
B-FS 7. Develop school counseling program goals	B-SS 7. Demonstrate leadership in a comprehensive school counseling program	B-PS 7. Establish agreement with principal about the school counseling program
	B-SS 8. Demonstrate advocacy in a comprehensive school counseling program	B-PS 8. Use appropriate school counselor performance appraisal process
	B-SS 9. Create systemic change through implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program	

# Behavior Competencies

## Foundational Skills

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### **B-FS 1. Apply developmental, learning and counseling theories**

- a. Use human development theories to have an impact on developmental issues affecting student success
- b. Use learning theory to support student achievement and success
- c. Use organization theory to facilitate advocacy, collaboration and systemic change
- d. Use counseling theories and techniques that work in schools (rational emotive behavior, reality, cognitive-behavioral, Alderian, solution-focused, person-centered and family systems)
- e. Use counseling theories and techniques in different settings, such as individual planning, group counseling and classroom lessons
- f. Use multicultural and social justice theories to promote equity and access for all students
- g. Use theories and principles of career planning and college admissions, including financial aid and athletic eligibility
- h. Use principles of multitiered approaches within the context of a comprehensive school counseling program

### **B-FS 2. Create school counseling program beliefs, vision and mission statements aligned with school and district**

- a. Analyze personal, district and state beliefs, assumptions and philosophies about student success, specifically what they should know and be able to do
- b. Compose a personal beliefs statement about students, families, teachers, school counseling programs and the educational process consistent with the school's educational philosophy and mission
- c. Analyze a school's particular educational beliefs, vision and mission
- d. Create a school counseling vision statement describing a future world where student outcomes are being successfully achieved, stating the best possible outcomes desired for students that are five to 15 years away and aligned with the school and district vision
- e. Create a school counseling mission statement aligned with the school, district and state mission that is specific, concise, clear and comprehensive; emphasizes equity, access and success for every student; and indicates long-range results desired for all students
- f. Communicate the vision and mission of the school counseling program to all appropriate stakeholders

### **B-FS 3. Use ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success standards to drive the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program**

- a. Select ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success standards to address student needs demonstrated in data
- b. Prioritize student Mindset & Behavior standards aligned with the school's goals
- c. Create competencies aligned with the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success and the Common Core State Standards or other state-specific standards

### **B-FS 4. Apply legal and ethical principles of the school counseling profession**

- a. Practice within the ethical principles of the school counseling profession in accordance with the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors

## Behavior Competencies

- b. Adhere to the legal aspects of the role of the school counselor
- c. Adhere to the unique legal and ethical principles of working with minor students in a school setting
- d. Adhere to the ethical and statutory limits of confidentiality
- e. Fulfill legal and ethical obligations to families, administrators and teachers
- f. Resolve ethical dilemmas by employing an ethical decision-making model in accordance with the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- g. Model ethical behavior
- h. Engage in continual professional development and use resources to inform and guide ethical and legal work

### **B-FS 5. Apply professional standards and competencies to promote professional development**

- a. Stay current with school counseling and education research and best practices
- b. Use personal reflection, consultation and supervision to promote professional growth and development
- c. Conduct and analyze self-appraisal and assessment related to school counseling skills and programming
- d. Develop a yearly professional development plan demonstrating how the school counselor advances relevant professional standards and competencies

### **B-FS 6. Understand the impact of culture on student success and opportunities**

- a. Demonstrate respect for differences in customs, communications, traditions, values and other traits among students based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, physical or intellectual disability and other factors
- b. Explain how students' cultural, social and economic background may affect their academic achievement, behavior, relationships and overall performance in school
- c. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of cultures within their student population to understand student behavior in their proper cultural context
- d. Maintain and communicate high expectations for every student, regardless of cultural, social or economic background
- e. Use students' cultural knowledge, identity, experiences and learning styles to make learning more appropriate and effective
- f. Explain the dynamics of cross-cultural communications and demonstrate the ability to communicate with persons of other cultures effectively
- g. Explain the importance of family and the influences of culturally diverse families on student achievement and performance
- h. Collaborate with administrators, faculty and staff in their school and district to ensure a culturally responsive curriculum and student-centered instruction
- i. Advocate for institutionalizing cultural knowledge and understanding among all faculty and staff in their school and district to serve diverse student populations better
- j. Understand their own limitations

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### **B-FS 7. Develop school counseling program goals**

- a. Analyze school data to identify achievement, attendance and/or behavior focus for program goals
- b. Write goals in measurable format such as the SMART goal format

## Direct and Indirect Student Services

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### **B-SS 1. Design and implement the school counseling core curriculum**

- a. Use student, school and district data to identify developmental needs to be addressed through the school counseling core curriculum
- b. Evaluate cultural and social trends when developing and choosing school counseling core curriculum
- c. Identify appropriate curriculum aligned to the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success
- d. Create lesson plans identifying what will be delivered, to whom it will be delivered, how it will be delivered and how impact on process, perception and outcome data will be evaluated
- e. Select evidence-based materials to meet student needs and school goals or select/develop other materials if evidence-based materials do not exist
- f. Model classroom management and instructional skills
- g. Use a variety of technology in the delivery of lessons and activities
- h. Encourage staff involvement to ensure the effective implementation of the school counseling core curriculum
- i. Analyze results attained from lessons and activities

### **B-SS 2. Facilitate individual student planning**

- a. Develop strategies to implement individual student planning, such as strategies for appraisal, advisement, goal-setting, decision-making, social skills, transition and postsecondary planning
- b. Help students establish and achieve academic, career and social/emotional goals
- c. Publicize career opportunities, labor market trends and global economics
- d. Use career assessment techniques to help students understand their abilities and career interests
- e. Help students understand the importance of postsecondary education
- f. Help students and families navigate postsecondary admissions processes
- g. Help students understand the relationship of academic performance to the world of work, family life and community service

### **B-SS 3. Provide responsive services**

- a. Demonstrate the ability to provide individual and small-group counseling for students during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change or other situations impeding student success
- b. Define the role of the school counselor and the school counseling program in the school crisis plan
- c. Demonstrate appropriate response and intervention strategies to meet the needs of the individual, group or school community before, during and after crisis response
- d. Identify and involve appropriate school and community professionals as well as the family in a crisis situation

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### **B-SS 4. Make referrals to appropriate professionals**

- a. Maintain current referral resources to use with students, staff and families to effectively address issues
- b. Maintain a list of current community agencies and service providers for student referrals
- c. Communicate the limits of school counseling and the continuum of mental health services, including prevention and intervention strategies to enhance student success as a part of the school counseling program and diagnoses and therapy as outside the scope of school counseling

### **B-SS 5. Consult to support student achievement and success**

- a. Model strategies that support student achievement and can be used by families, teachers, other educators and community organizations
- b. Apply appropriate counseling approaches to promoting change among consultees within a consultation approach
- c. Work with education stakeholders to better understand student needs and to identify strategies promoting student achievement

### **B-SS 6. Collaborate with families, teachers, administrators and education stakeholders for student achievement and success**

- a. Partner with families, teachers, administrators, community leaders and other education stakeholders to promote educational equity, student achievement and success
- b. Demonstrate understanding of the similarities and differences between consultation, collaboration, counseling and coordination strategies
- c. Demonstrate understanding of the potential for dual roles with families and other caretakers
- d. Facilitate in-service training or workshops for other stakeholders to share school counseling expertise
- e. Supervise school counseling interns consistent with the principles of the ASCA School Counseling Professional Standards and Competencies
- f. Create statements or other documents delineating the various roles of student service providers, such as school social worker, school psychologist or school nurse, and identify best practices for collaborating to affect student success
- g. Establish and convene an advisory council for the comprehensive school counseling program
- h. Determine appropriate education stakeholders who should be represented on the advisory council
- i. Develop effective and efficient meeting agendas
- j. Explain and discuss school data, school counseling program assessment and school counseling program goals with the advisory council
- k. Record advisory council meeting notes, and distribute as appropriate
- l. Analyze and incorporate feedback from the advisory council related to school counseling program goals as appropriate

### **B-SS 7. Demonstrate leadership in a comprehensive school counseling program**

- a. Demonstrate understanding of sources of power and authority and formal and informal leadership
- b. Apply a model of leadership to a comprehensive school counseling program

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- c. Use leadership skills to facilitate vision and positive change for the comprehensive school counseling program
- d. Serve as a leader in the school and community to promote and support student success
- e. Identify and demonstrate professional and personal qualities and skills of effective leaders

### **B-SS 8. Demonstrate advocacy in a comprehensive school counseling program**

- a. Model school counselor advocacy competencies to promote school counseling program development and student success
- b. Share benefits of advocacy with school and community stakeholders
- c. Advocate responsibly for school board policy and local, state and federal statutory requirements in students' best interests
- d. Explain appropriate and inappropriate school counseling and non-school-counseling activities
- e. Create and implement a plan to challenge the non-school-counseling tasks assigned to school counselors
- f. Participate in school counseling and education-related professional organizations

### **B-SS 9. Create systemic change through implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program**

- a. Act as a systems change agent to create an environment promoting and supporting student success
- b. Identify the impact of school, district and state educational policies, procedures and practices supporting and/or impeding student success
- c. Develop a plan to overcome personal and institutional resistance to change

## Program Management and School Support

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### **B-PS 1. Demonstrate understanding of educational systems, legal issues, policies, research and trends in education**

- a. Explain the organizational structure and governance of the American educational system as well as cultural, political and social influences on current educational practices
- b. Explain educational systems, philosophies and theories and current trends in education, including federal and state legislation
- c. Identify the impact of school, district and state educational policies, procedures and practices supporting and/or impeding student success
- d. Explain and/or inform the process for development of policy and procedures at the building, district, state and national levels
- e. Explain the history of school counseling to create a context for the current state of the profession and comprehensive school counseling programs
- f. Use education research to inform decisions and programming
- g. Use current trends in technology to promote student success

### **B-PS 2. Design, implement and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program**

- a. Create a rationale for a comprehensive school counseling program
- b. Explain the benefits of a comprehensive school counseling program for all stakeholders, including students, families, teachers, administrators, school boards, department of education, school counselors, school counselor educators, community stakeholders and business leaders

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- c. Explain the nature of academic, career and social/emotional counseling in schools and the similarities and differences among school counseling and other fields of counseling, such as mental health, marriage and family, substance abuse counseling, social work and psychology, within a continuum of care
- d. Analyze student, school, district and state data to inform the design of effective school counseling programs and interventions
- e. Conduct a school counseling program assessment and analyze results to inform the design of the school counseling program
- f. Create the organizational structure and components of an effective school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model
- g. Compare current school counseling program implementation with the ASCA National Model and identify areas for program improvement
- h. Analyze data to evaluate program effectiveness and determine program needs
- i. Identify, evaluate and participate in fair-share responsibilities

### **B-PS 3. Identify achievement, attendance, behavior, opportunity or resource gaps**

- a. Collect and analyze process, perception and outcome data to identify areas of success or achievement, attendance, behavior and opportunity gaps between and among different groups of students
- b. Review, disaggregate and interpret student achievement, attendance and behavior data to identify and implement interventions as needed
- c. Use data to identify policies, practices and procedures promoting student success
- d. Use data to identify policies, practices and procedures creating systemic barriers
- e. Use data to demonstrate a need for systemic change in areas such as course enrollment patterns; equity and access; and achievement, opportunity and/or information gaps
- f. Create goals based on student, school and/or district data to close the achievement, opportunity and/or information gaps
- g. Review progress toward program goals
- h. Use data to demonstrate the value the school counseling program adds to student achievement

### **B-PS 4. Develop and implement action plans aligned with program goals and student data**

- a. Design and implement school counseling core curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans aligning with school and school counseling program goals and student data
- b. Determine appropriate students for the target group of action plans based on student, school and district data
- c. Identify appropriate ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors standards addressing the identified need of action plans
- d. Select evidence-based curriculum and/or activities to accomplish objectives or select/develop other materials if evidence-based materials do not exist
- e. Identify appropriate resources needed
- f. Explain anticipated intended impact on academics, attendance and behavior and program results for action plans
- g. Demonstrate understanding of basic research sampling, methodology and analysis concepts to understand research outcomes and conduct action research

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### **B-PS 5. Report program results to the school community**

- a. Demonstrate understanding of concepts of program results and accountability within a comprehensive school counseling program
- b. Collaborate with members of the school counseling team and with the administration to decide how school counseling programs are evaluated and how results are shared
- c. Use presentation skills to share results of action plans and activities with administrators, advisory councils, programs teachers, families and school boards

### **B-PS 6. Use time according to national recommendations**

- a. Demonstrate understanding of the distinction between direct and indirect student services
- b. Assess and analyze use of time in direct and indirect student services and program management and school support to determine how much time is spent in school counseling program components, and consider best use of time compared with student needs as identified through student data and program goals
- c. Create a rationale for school counselor's use of time to focus on the goals of the comprehensive school counseling program
- d. Organize and manage time to effectively implement a comprehensive school counseling program using skills including scheduling, publicizing and prioritizing time
- e. Create annual and weekly calendars to plan activities reflecting school counseling program goals

### **B-PS 7. Establish agreement with principal about the school counseling program**

- a. Complete management templates for the school counseling program with other members of the school counseling staff
- b. Present school counseling management templates to the principal and negotiate a management plan for the comprehensive school counseling program
- c. Explain and model the appropriate role of the school counselor and the organization of the school counseling program
- d. Explain school counseling program goals, their basis in student data and their alignment with the school improvement plan
- e. Advocate for the appropriate use of school counselor time based on national recommendations
- f. Finalize the annual school counseling agreement after presentation to and discussion with the principal

### **B-PS 8. Use appropriate school counselor performance appraisal process**

- a. Explain and advocate for appropriate school counselor performance appraisal process based on school counselor standards and implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program
- b. Explain how school counseling activities fit within categories of a performance appraisal instrument