

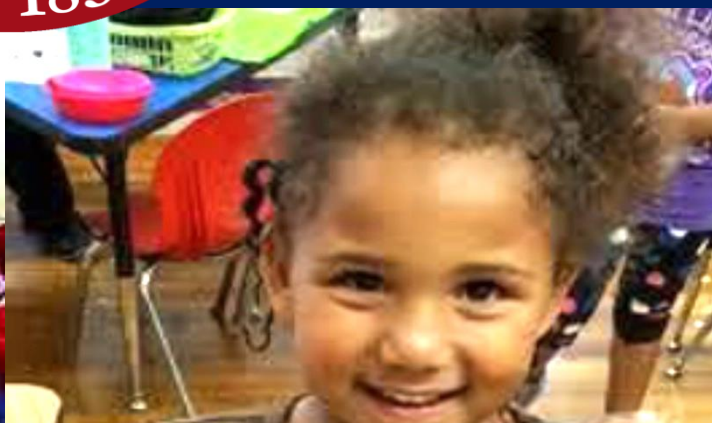
SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Comprehensive
School
Counseling Plan



2020-
2021

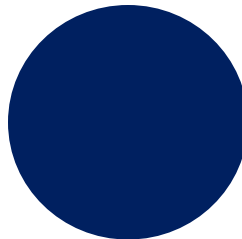
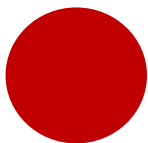


EVERYBODY COUNTS.

EVERYBODY LEARNS.

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FOUNDATION

The Schenectady City School District Comprehensive School Counseling plan is rooted in the belief that a School Counselor's work is student centered, antiracist and collaborative at its core. Our organizational framework highlights how we are fulfilling the New York State requirements for School Counseling. This document outlines our philosophy and beliefs; how our vision is aligned with the district's vision and finally the steps that we will take to ensure that our mission is fulfilled. Within our Comprehensive School Counseling Program is a framework for the systematic development, implementation, and evaluation of our school counseling program. The comprehensive school counseling plan was designed in a way that:

- Acknowledges the work of school counselors as self-reflective advocates for all students
- Creates a results-based counseling program that support diverse student populations
- Helps to close achievement and opportunity gaps
- Re-examines current processes to be reimagined through an antiracist lens
- Aims to reach all students through the use of best practices that support and assess academic, career, and social/emotional progress
- Is guided by developmentally appropriate, antiracist, culturally responsive and goal-oriented student competencies

The American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Model for School Counseling Programs incorporates the national standards, the comprehensive process and results-based accountability, while considering the developmental needs of every student. Each of these areas will address how the school counseling program will utilize responsive services, guidance curriculum, student planning, and systems of support, while using an anti-racism lens. By the end of this document, we will have outlined and defined the ways in which student and professional competencies will be addressed and assessed. The overall management of the program will be provided through agreements on implementation; use of a school counselor's time as well as a pacing guide that will focus both on in-school support for all students, and parental involvement. Data will be collected around student outcomes and all decisions will be made within a data driven framework and through an anti-racist lens to assure equity.

An Advisory Council, which consists of school staff, students, parents and a member of The Board of Education, will use an anti-racism lens to provide oversight, by utilizing disaggregated data to evaluate outcomes and guide continuous improvements.



The four main components of the school counseling model that will be outlined below include:

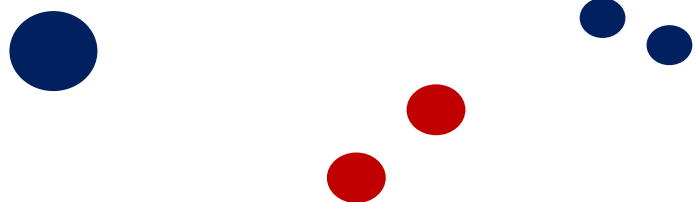
1. **Definition:** We will define student competencies by aligning our professional standards to the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for student success, as well as the standards set by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). In addition, we will frame how our professional practice is guided by ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors as well as how the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies help school counselors develop, implement and assess our school counseling program results.
2. **Delivery:** Serves to define the methods that our school counselors will use to provide activities and services to students and for students. This component consists of two broad categories: Direct and Indirect student services. **Direct Services** are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. It will communicate a leveled scope and sequence of curriculum, direct services for all grade levels, as well as a timeline of what student competencies are being taught, and when. **Indirect Services** are services provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors interactions with others, and include the many ways in which school counselors are essential partners on data teams, school-based support teams and so forth.
3. **Management:** To effectively deliver school counseling planned activities, strategies and interventions and to address all students' developmental needs, The School Counseling Program must be effectively and efficiently managed. As the ASCA National Model provides organizational tools and assessments designed to guide, target, structure and construct a school counseling program to get results, we will be utilizing their guidance. Essentially, our plan revolves around what students need, allows for analysis of data and subsequent action plans that are created based on that data. Part of our management is to revisit our comprehensive plan often, using it as a touchstone so that the questions of when and why certain activities will take place, who will implement them, and on what authority the school counseling program is delivered are answered. Clear expectations and purposeful interaction with all stakeholders in the school district results in a school counseling program that is integrated into the total educational program, and ultimately increases student growth and development. The management section of the plan aligns closely with the delivery components.
4. **Accountability:** To achieve the best for students, our school counselors along with the advisory council and administration will assess their program to determine its effectiveness on a global level at least annually. School counselors will engage in data review related but not limited to attendance, behavior and course access and course passing to inform potential improvements to the school counseling program design. For more direct delivery analysis and student outcomes, data analysis will be conducted through the teaming protocols in the school building following the action research theory that our district adheres to. Ultimately, data should be shared out annually in order to demonstrate benefit from the school counseling plan for students. In schools, action research refers to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical methods designed to determine organizational, academic, or instructional gaps and vulnerabilities. This level of data analysis helps school counselors team with colleagues to develop practical solutions that can be efficiently implemented with fidelity and progress monitored over time.

PHILOSOPHY, MISSION AND MISSION

At the heart of our work and actions are our philosophy around school counseling, our beliefs in the work and our vision of the action steps needed to fulfill our obligation to the students and families of the Schenectady City School District. We believe that school counselors should play a vital role in supporting a student's academic success, social-emotional health and overall well-being. We believe all school counselors should be culturally responsive, as well as, racially, culturally and linguistically self-aware.

Counselors should consistently use an anti-racist lens, and work collaboratively with students, families, teachers and the community, in order to provide equitable educational opportunities. We acknowledge that consideration should be given to all students' ethnic, cultural, racial, sexual orientation and special needs when planning and implementing the school counseling program. Race, disability, and socioeconomic status should not have a negative impact on student achievement, as every student has the capacity to achieve their personal, academic and career goals. As students have a right to a safe and healthy environment in which to learn, we will engage in practices utilizing an antiracist lens, ensuring that all students can access effective counseling services and support.

School Counselors will advocate that all students have dignity and worth and will remove any barriers in order for them to reach full academic and personal potential, working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure their success. All decisions will be based on informed, data-driven decision-making processes. All school counseling curriculums will be delivered to students systematically and will be developmentally appropriate, and focus on antiracism and social and emotional growth. The goal of the guidance curriculum will be to form mindsets and behaviors that students will need for postsecondary readiness and success, and to create a safe and positive school climate in which students can thrive. This will support the work of closing existing achievement and opportunity gaps, especially in marginalized populations that we serve. Our intent is that our School Counseling Plan is comprehensive, culturally responsive, and is facilitated through an anti-racism lens that will result in improved student achievement, attendance and social emotional growth that aligns with the Schenectady City School District Strategic Plan. Specifically, we are aligned with the aspects of College, Career and Civic Readiness.



COUNSELING VISION STATEMENT

The School Counselors in Schenectady City School District believe every student has a right to a safe and healthy environment, and that our primary role is to support effective teaching, learning, social-emotional health and wellbeing. As counselors, we consider all students' individual strengths and see student's ethnic, cultural, racial, socioeconomic, sexual orientation and special needs experiences as assets and not deficits when implementing our school counseling program.

- The School Counseling Program is designed to reach every student through a comprehensive and preventative design utilizing an antiracist lens. The program monitors student progress through the use of both process and outcome data.
- All school counselors in Schenectady City School District will work collaboratively with stakeholders to provide a comprehensive culturally responsive school counseling curriculum that supports the academic, personal/social, and career development of every student.
- The School Counseling Program will have a measurable positive impact on attendance, student behavior, and course passing/credit attainment, in accordance with building and district goals.

COUNSELING MISSION STATEMENT

- By providing a comprehensive and developmental K-12 counseling program in a safe, nurturing learning environment we support the overall Schenectady City School District Strategic Plan. Our program addresses the academic, personal/social and career development of all students, in a trauma-sensitive and anti-racist context that helps to ensure that students feel safe physically, socially, and emotionally, so that they can attend to learning. We are heavily invested in the work of College and Career and Civic Readiness, which aligns with the District Strategic Plan.
- School Counselors are self-reflective advocates who provide support to maximize student potential and academic achievement while serving the needs of a diverse student population. In collaboration with all educators, families and the community, school counselors create a support system through individual and small-group counseling, responsive services and leadership.
- As a result of The School Counseling Program, students will acquire skills and knowledge for college and career readiness and become civically minded members of society.

DEFINITION

A Comprehensive School Counseling Program is results oriented, antiracist, comprehensive, developmentally pro-active, culturally competent and meets the needs of all students. In order to provide a comprehensive program, counselors must be skilled in leadership, advocacy, collaboration and data analysis.

All school counselors are held to high standards of continuous self-reflection and collaboration when it comes to the planning and implementation of our comprehensive school counseling program. Students and their families are at the core of every decision and service provided.

ANNUAL GOALS

Program goals are developed annually in alignment with the vision, mission and the goals of the district, school and department. The goals will serve to guide the curriculum and corresponding action plans. A draft of yearly goals are developed for each counselor at the beginning of the school year. Annual goals are created within the SMART framework; **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely**. Progress monitoring of goals and subsequent programming decisions are data driven; and enveloped within the **Improvement Science Model** (Plan; Do; Study; Act).

Student Competencies: School counselors use the following standards with a culturally responsive assets based approach to assess student growth and development, guide the development of strategies and activities and create a program that helps students achieve their highest potential. To operationalize the standards, school counselors select competencies that align with the specific standards and become the foundation for classroom lessons, small groups and activities addressing student developmental needs. The competencies directly reflect the vision, mission and goals of the comprehensive school counseling program and align with the district's strategic plan. Student competencies also complement the 5 competencies outlined by CASEL. Please see the attached Scope and Sequence arranged by levels.

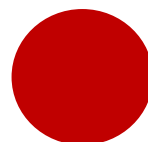
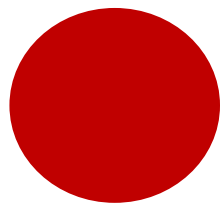
- **Academic Development** – Standards guide the school counseling program in implementing culturally responsive strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn. This will support students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school across the lifespan. We will support students in completing school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college. Students will also leave our schools understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.
- **Career Development** – By the time they graduate, students will have acquired the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self, as it relates to a positive identity and to make informed career decisions. They will employ strategies to achieve

future career goals with success and satisfaction as well as understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

- **Personal / Social Development** – Our work in this area, across the grade levels, will focus on supporting students by using a culturally responsive anti-racist approach in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect themselves and others. They will be able to make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals. Our students will also demonstrate an understanding of safety and survival skills. (American School Counselor Association).

Professional Competencies

The Schenectady School Counselor will reference the ASCA School Counselor Competencies as an outline of the knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes necessary to plan, organize, implement and evaluate their comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs. School counselors will also adhere to the American School Counseling Association Code of Ethics. During the 2020-2021 school year counselors in Schenectady will begin professional development around antiracism, and will actively review processes and procedures to ensure equity for all students. In addition, Schenectady City School District Counselors will begin to examine and unravel their own biases through a commitment to ongoing professional development; personal growth and individual reflection. Professional development will also encompass how best to evaluate and make data informed decisions.



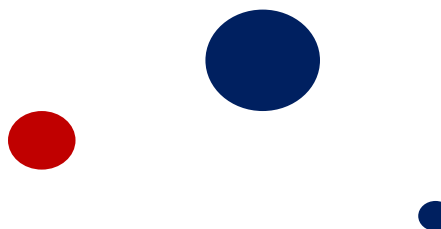
DELIVERY

The delivery system defines **how** the comprehensive model will be implemented. It includes individual student planning, delivery of the school counseling curriculum at all levels, responsive and proactive services as well as system support. Our responsibility is to make sure all our delivery systems are adapted to ensure culturally responsiveness, anti-racism and equity.

Culturally Responsive Individual Student Planning

Counselors monitor students' progress so that students may achieve success in academic, personal/social, and career areas. There will be a systematic delivery of individual student planning sessions on an annual basis which traditionally begins in grade 6 and continues through the high school years. These sessions, which begin in middle school, result in Student Success Plans for each student through the collaborative efforts of school counselors, the advisor-advisee system, parents, teachers, and administrators. This may be accomplished through: *Individual or Small Group Appraisal*: Work with students in analyzing and evaluating abilities, interests, skills, and achievement.

- **Individual or Small Group Advisement**: Work directly with students on achieving success in personal/social, academic, and career areas.
- **Case Management**: Monitor individual student progress related to academics, behavior and social emotional development.
- **Placement/ Course access**: Collaborate with families, students and school faculty in determining the best educational setting for students as they meet their academic and social goals. This area will be of focus this year at the Middle and High School levels as we begin to review our enrollment data in specific course work and secondary completion trajectories. In November of 2019, the New York State Department of Education Office of Instructional Support provided guidance on equitable course access with a focus on providing equity to all coursework for historically marginalized student groups. They recommended the following: providing a course sequence and foundation-building in earlier grades that make later advanced coursework a viable option; creating multiple access points to advanced courses; using only enrollment access criteria that are educationally necessary; offering a robust set of student supports that help all students succeed in advanced courses; and publishing materials that encourage all students to participate in advanced courses and making these materials available in multiple languages.



Culturally Responsive and Anti-Racism School Counseling Curriculum



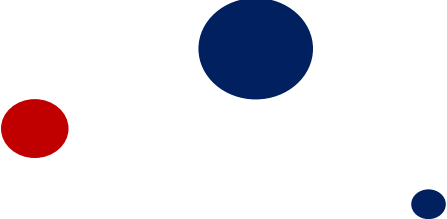
The culturally responsive anti-racism counseling curriculum provides developmental activities that address academic, career and personal/social needs of students K-12.

This is accomplished by:

- **Classroom Activities:** School counselors co-present lessons in the classroom (Tier 1) according to the calendar outlined in the management section of the comprehensive plan.
- **Group Activities:** School counselors conduct small group activities outside of the classroom to address students' particular needs (Tier 2) as determined by data and student needs (for example restorative circles).
- **Interdisciplinary Activities:** School counselors collaborate with school faculty to implement curriculum across content areas.

Responsive Services

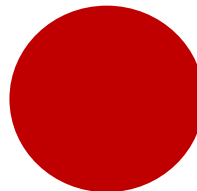
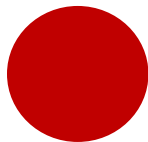
School counselors provide support and interventions to meet the needs of students. This is accomplished through:

- **Individual and Small Group Counseling:** Counseling is provided for students experiencing social, emotional, personal, or academic difficulties.
 - **Crisis Counseling:** Short term counseling that is provided to students, families or staff as an immediate intervention to a crisis.
 - **Referrals:** School Counselors connect students and families to appropriate resources as needed.
 - **Consultation:** School Counselors collaborate with families, school staff and community agencies to develop interventions for students.
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System Support

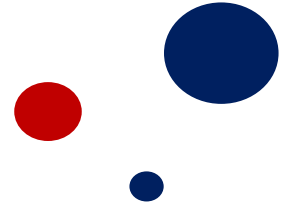
School counselors along with administrators assess the effectiveness of the counseling program on an ongoing basis through data analysis and action research. This is accomplished through:

- **Teaming:** School counselors participate in district wide and building committees.
- **Professional Development:** School counselors regularly participate in training, conferences, and meetings to update knowledge and skills. For the 20-21 academic year, a focus will be had on antiracist systems and equity.
- **Program Promotion:** School Counselors provide orientation and information regarding the programs to the greater community via websites, counseling newsletters and presentations.
- **Program Management and Evaluation:** School counselors regularly collect and analyze data to evaluate the program and continuously update program activities as directed by student data outcomes.



MANAGEMENT

Intertwined with the delivery system is the our management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure that the Schenectady school counseling program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school's needs.



Clear expectations and purposeful culturally responsive interactions with all stakeholders' results in a school counseling program that is integrated into the total educational program, and ensures student growth and development. The management section addresses management agreements, who and when implementation of the guidance curriculum will be delivered; the essential use of data in planning and an outline for the advisory council. Below each area is defined.

Management agreements ensure effective implementation of the delivery system to meet student needs. The counseling staff and administrators make management decisions based on the school's need and data analysis.

Program implementation: Each counseling department level in collaboration with the building principal will decide how students will be assigned to counselors to ensure that each student has access to the counseling program. In addition, counselors will allocate time to:

- deliver guidance lessons,
- provide individual student planning for course access at the secondary levels,
- provide responsive services, and
- manage system support.

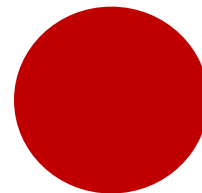
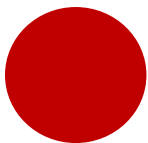
Use of Time: District counselors recognize the value of delivery of services to students. It is recommended that school counselors spend 80% of their time in **Delivery of Services to Students**. The remaining time is spent for Assessing, Managing & Defining. During the school year, counselors will monitor their time and determine the percentage of time spent in each component of the school counseling program.

Use of Calendars: Monthly and quarterly calendars are used by counselors to guide program delivery. The Schenectady School Counseling Department's annual calendars reflect the school's mission and the vision of having a comprehensive school counseling curriculum. The annual calendar and Scope and Sequence provides a framework for the school counseling programs and helps guide the counselors in their individual daily and weekly calendars with attention to cultural differences.

Use of Disaggregated Data: A Comprehensive School Counseling Program is data driven and founded on action research. School counselors plan, implement, align and evaluate activities. To do this school counselors:

- Plan - analyze students' needs, achievements, and/or related data.
- Do – Implement evidence based activities aligned with student needs.
- Study - evaluate process, perception, and results data at each level (Middle, and High School)
- Act - use data to plan for desired outcome.

Advisory Council: As noted above, an advisory council is a diverse representative group of persons appointed to both advise and evaluate the school counseling program. Our advisory council will be diverse personally and professional as they review program goals, student competencies and subsequent results, and participate in making recommendations to enhance the comprehensive plan over time. This will be done through an anti-racist lens.



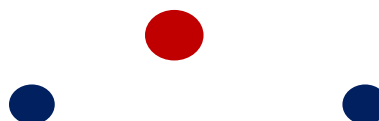
ACCOUNTABILITY

To achieve the best results for students, both the Advisory Council and the Schenectady School Counselors will regularly evaluate their program to determine its effectiveness in achieving equitable outcomes. The School Counseling Program components may be accessed through Data Analysis, Program Results and Evaluation and Improvement.

Data Analysis - Counselors collect, analyze, and report data by specific student groups that traditionally have been marginalized to ensure that decisions about student access to instruction and learning are driven by multiple points of data. Data that may be analyzed, includes but is not limited to, student self-report and reflections, aptitude and achievement data, student needs and strengths assessments, family input, and faculty and administrative input. As noted above, significant consideration will be conducted by analyzing the current equity practices as outlined by the New York State Guidance on Equitable Course Access through their Office of Curriculum and Instruction (2019). During the time of COVID-19, we will also analyze data around engagement, attendance and course passing as students are primarily engaged in learning through a virtual modality.

Program Results - Counselors analyze the school counseling program using information collected through process, perception, or outcomes data samples. This data will be used to inform decisions related to program improvements. The Schenectady School Counseling Advisory Group will concurrently review the programs to identify trends and areas of success and areas in need of improvement as noted above.

Evaluation and Improvement – Program evaluation and improvement will include completion of the school counseling program annual review process with all stakeholders.



APPENDICES

[School Board Policy 8230](#)

[ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#)

- [K-12 College and Career Readiness Standards for Every Student](#)
- [CASEL competencies](#)

[ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#)

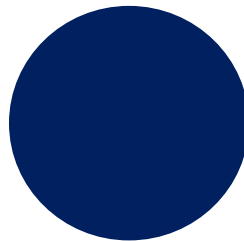
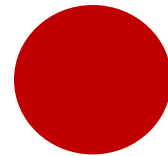
[ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#)

[Framework for a School Counseling Program](#)

[Scope and Sequence of Counseling Activities](#)

Timelines/Calendars

- [High Schools](#)
- [Middle Schools](#)



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