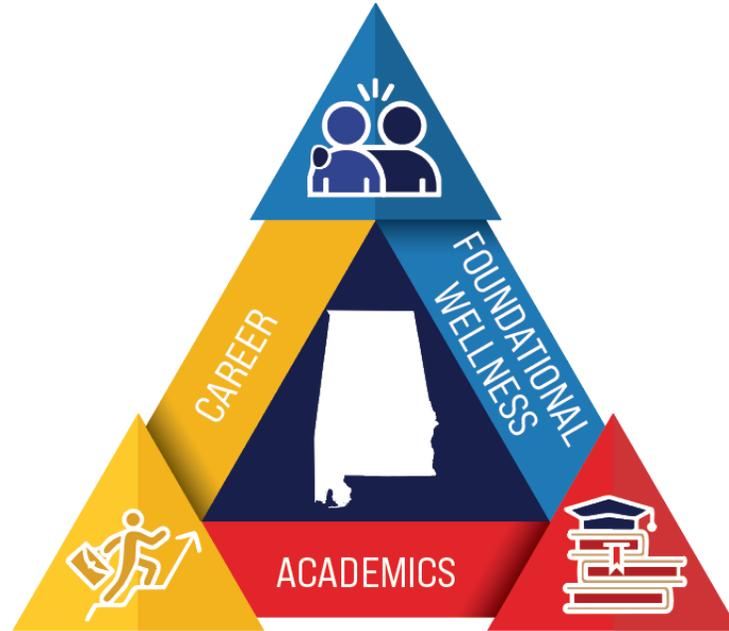


2026 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools



SCHOOL COUNSELING

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Alabama Model

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION'S MESSAGE

Dear Alabama School Counselor:

The 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)* provides a firm foundation for effective, comprehensive school counseling programs at local education agencies (LEAs) and individual school levels. Focusing on the three domains for school counseling programs (academic, career, and foundational wellness development), *The Alabama Model* provides standards and concepts regarding the specific knowledge and skills that students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 gain as a result of their participation in the school counseling program.

This model is intended to serve LEAs, individual schools, and school counselors as the framework for the design and implementation of school counseling programs. This model provides a strong base for building partnerships with students, parents/guardians, educators, and local communities to work together to provide effective school counseling programs. As a result, students will reach a deeper understanding of their individual interests and aptitudes, which will allow them to develop the academic, career, and foundational wellness skills necessary for achieving success in future academic and career goals.

Every child. Every chance. Every day.

Eric G. Mackey, EdD
State Superintendent

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PREFACE

The Alabama State Board of Education mandates and supports exemplary school counselors and school counseling programs in the state's public school systems. The 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)* is a revision of the 2003 *Comprehensive Counseling Model for Alabama Public Schools*. It was developed by Alabama school counseling professionals, educators, school administrators, and community members to provide a framework for developing and implementing effective school counseling programs in Alabama schools.

The 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools* is designed for school counselors to provide a means of structuring and carrying out a school counseling program for both their schools and school districts in adherence to Alabama law.

Content standards in this document are minimum and required (Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-35-4). They are fundamental and specific, but not exhaustive. In developing local curriculum, school systems may include additional content standards to reflect local philosophies and add implementation guidelines, resources, and activities which are beyond the scope of this document.

The Alabama School Counseling Task Force conducted exhaustive research during the development of this model, analyzing counseling programs from other states and published research reports. The Task Force also listened to and read statements from interested individuals and groups throughout the state, responded to feedback from public reviews, and thoroughly discussed issues among themselves. The Task Force reached consensus and developed what members believe to be the best comprehensive school counseling program model for students in Alabama's public schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools* was developed by the Alabama School Counseling Task Force, composed of school counseling professionals from elementary and secondary grades and counseling educators from throughout Alabama. The Task Force began its work in April of 2025 and submitted the document to the Alabama State Board of Education for adoption at its March 2026 meeting.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)* is designed to help schools establish school counseling programs that enable students to become successful in the areas of academic development, career development, and foundational wellness. It recognizes the essential role of a certified school counselor and the school counseling program in education and describes the knowledge and skills students develop through their participation in the program.

The school counselor is the educational leader in the school setting who designs, provides, and oversees services for students at all levels, utilizing *The Alabama Model* to enhance academic development, career development, and foundational wellness. The school counselor operates in conjunction with other professionals who provide guidance and other services to students in various areas, such as classroom teachers, career coaches, school psychologists, school social workers, mental health services coordinators, and other professionals within the school setting. *The Alabama Model* recognizes the importance of these professionals and their roles within the comprehensive school counseling program.

School counselors seek to serve each and every student, thus the student body as a whole. In doing so, they strive to ensure students demonstrate success in their academic, career, and foundational wellness development. Although the bulk of school counselors' work focuses on large groups, they also work with individual students and small groups as outlined under Responsive Services on page 37.

School counselors do not function as mental health therapists; they do not diagnose or provide long-term therapy for behavioral and emotional needs of specific students. Students may receive services from school psychologists and mental health therapists within the school setting only with permission to do so from parents/guardians, in accordance with Alabama law. Such services are provided to a limited number of students in specific circumstances when qualified mental health professionals determine that the services are needed. Mental health professionals work with parents/guardians to determine the most appropriate course of action for the individual student, in compliance with state law. This process is separate from the comprehensive school counseling program.

School counseling programs must continually evolve to meet the needs of students as they prepare for life in a society that is constantly changing. This document is designed to meet current needs and adapt to future conditions; confirm the essential role of the school counseling program; and establish the parameters of the school counselor's role. The school counseling program is invaluable in undergirding students' academic development, career development, and foundational wellness during their formative years, leading to success and fulfillment in their lives after high school.

School counselors, school staff, and parents/guardians all work collaboratively to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to reach their full potential as adults who function effectively, relate well to others, and contribute to society. The school counseling program is an integral part of each school's total educational program. It enables students to move toward actualizing their full potential through the four delivery components: school counseling instruction, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect services. *The Alabama Model* should be used by all Alabama public schools for developing and implementing comprehensive, data-informed, and outcome-based school counseling programs that meet the needs of each and every student.

Guiding Principles

The Alabama Model provides a framework for schools to structure a comprehensive school counseling program guided by the principles listed below.

Each and every student:

- has the right to experience respect and dignity.
- can learn and succeed.
- benefits from active parent/guardian involvement in the student’s educational journey.
- has the right to a rigorous and relevant education that includes the knowledge and skills needed for success.
- deserves access to a school counseling program that is student-centered, systematic, developmentally appropriate, data-informed, and outcome-focused.
- deserves the opportunity to participate in learning activities that help them grow and succeed in academic, career, and foundational wellness development.
- benefits from the expertise of a school counselor who leads the school counseling program in collaboration with program partners to ensure student success.

Mission Statement

The mission of *The Alabama Model* is to support each school in the state in developing a comprehensive school counseling program that provides for the academic, career, and foundational wellness development of each and every student through a sequence of purposeful, standards-based activities from Kindergarten through Grade 12. The school’s comprehensive school counseling program is an essential component of its academic instructional program and is integral to the academic achievement and overall student success. Comprehensive school counseling programs are student-centered and data-informed; they provide outcome-based program accountability measures; and they incorporate and value the contributions of parents/guardians. These programs present opportunities for each student to gain an understanding of self and others, to participate in academic and occupational exploration, and to pursue career-planning opportunities in a safe and supportive environment. School counselors collaborate with students, parents/guardians, and other partners including educators, business and industry, and community members, to empower students to become productive members of society.

Vision Statement

The vision of *The Alabama Model* is a future where each and every student thrives and is equipped with the skills and knowledge to conquer challenges, embrace opportunities, and reach their full potential.

Organization of the Counseling Model

The Alabama Model is a research-based framework to guide local educational agencies (LEAs), individual schools, and individual school counselors in designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive, systematic, and developmentally appropriate school counseling program. It is based upon four interrelated components: foundation, delivery, management, and program accountability. These components serve several purposes.

- The **foundation component** is grounded in the school's goals for student achievement. It includes the knowledge and skills that students should gain from participating in the school counseling program.
- The **delivery system component**, based on the foundation component, describes the activities and methods needed to deliver school counseling services. The delivery system comprises the school counseling instruction program, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect services.
- The **management component** incorporates the processes and tools needed to ensure the school counseling program is well organized and reflective of the school's needs. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of school personnel, including required school counseling skills and proper use of school counselor time.
- The **program accountability component** addresses the collection and use of data that link program delivery to student needs, school improvement, and school counselor professional growth. It includes results reports and program review.

The sections of the model follow the order of the components as listed above.

Program Benefits

The school counseling program, based on *The Alabama Model*, is designed to benefit all program participants and partners. The program can positively impact students, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, school leaders, school counselors, student services personnel, and local boards of education. Beyond the school setting, it serves as an important resource to communities, business and industry, postsecondary institutions, and school counselor educators.

BENEFITS OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

BENEFICIARY	THE PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO...
STUDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure that each and every student has access to the school counseling program ● utilize data to facilitate student achievement and identify strategies for closing the achievement gap ● promote the most appropriate academic path for each and every student ● advocate for each and every student’s needs, rights, and opportunities ● provide the opportunity for each and every student to be college and/or career ready by graduation ● promote foundational wellness to help each and every student develop skills for success
PARENTS/ GUARDIANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● provide visibility into the school counseling curriculum and a mechanism for parent/guardian engagement ● support active engagement, collaboration, and partnerships for student learning and career planning ● invite and coordinate access to school and community resources ● partner and advocate for student academic, career, and foundational wellness development ● provide training and information to support students’ academic, career, and foundational wellness development ● analyze and interpret data regarding student achievement
CLASSROOM TEACHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● promote an interdisciplinary team approach to address students’ needs and educational goals ● increase understanding of the role of the school counselor and the program’s integral role in achieving school goals ● increase collaboration with school counselors ● support the implementation of classroom management strategies ● analyze data to improve school climate and student achievement
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● inform about the integral role, responsibilities, and purposes of a school counselor ● provide a framework for a local school counseling program to promote student success ● analyze data for school improvement
SCHOOL COUNSELORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● foster collaboration to address students’ needs and enhance school climate ● define role and responsibilities within the context of a school counseling program ● provide guidance regarding fair-share responsibilities ● support access to the school counseling program for each and every student ● provide a method for the implementation, management, and evaluation of the program
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● define the roles and responsibilities of positions involved in the school counseling program ● foster collaboration to ensure the success of each and every student

**LOCAL BOARD
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- use data to increase individual student growth
- increase collaboration for utilizing school and community resources
- provide data that support the implementation of a standards-based school counseling program
- ensure that each and every student can access a quality school counseling program led by a certified school counselor
- articulate appropriate certification and staffing ratios as recommended by professional and state-approved accrediting organizations

**COMMUNITY AND
BUSINESS/
INDUSTRY
PARTNERS**

- showcase the school counseling program's success to the community
- provide data about student achievement
- inform about the integral role, responsibilities, and purposes of a school counselor in promoting school-community partnerships
- provide awareness to students about potential employment opportunities with local businesses and industries
- promote access to the workforce for each and every student
- prepare graduates with strong academic skills and career ready practices

**POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS**

- enhance dual enrollment opportunities, increase articulation, and facilitate students' transition to postsecondary institutions
- encourage and support rigorous academic preparation that readies each and every student for the most appropriate postsecondary educational opportunities

**SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

- promote access to postsecondary education for each and every student
- build collaboration between school counselor education programs and schools
- provide a framework for school counseling programs to focus training for students interested in the field
- provide a collaborative model for establishing site-based school counseling fieldwork and internships
- provide opportunities for collaborative research on school counseling programs
- establish a structure for professional development to benefit practicing school counselors

Professional Counseling Skills

Leadership, advocacy, collaboration, sensitivity, agency, and ethics are the six foundational counseling skills embraced by school counselors. These skills should undergird the school counselor's work in meeting the needs of local schools, students, parents/guardians, and communities. The following list introduces and clarifies each skill, but the explanations and examples are not intended to be exhaustive.

- **Leadership:** The school counselor utilizes leadership skills to carry out many tasks, from programmatic duties such as developing, managing, and evaluating the school counseling program to working with students, parents/guardians, community leaders, and other interested parties. As educational leaders, school counselors use their leadership skills to communicate and work effectively and confidently both within and outside of the school.
- **Advocacy:** The school counselor believes that advocacy is a foundational component for student achievement. School counselors aim to support each and every student by promoting programs that benefit students and support families, classroom teachers, and communities. The school counselor advocates on behalf of students, the school counseling program, and the role of the school counselor.
- **Collaboration:** The school counselor allies with many people and program partners to support the needs of each and every student. Collaborative efforts involve teaming and working together with others inside and outside of the school setting to accomplish tasks that assist students, classroom teachers, parents/guardians, school administrators, the community, and other interested parties.
- **Sensitivity:** The school counselor respects the fundamental role parents/guardians play in the upbringing and care of their children, recognizing that students come from various backgrounds and value systems. The school counselor collaborates with parents/guardians to ensure students' continued success, promoting accessibility, transparency, and advocacy as they work together.
- **Agency:** The school counselor considers the total school experience when identifying obstacles to student success. School counselors ask clarifying questions aimed at identifying and meeting student needs, and intentionally seek to identify concerns and create solutions addressing the needs of students and the school.
- **Ethics:** The school counselor upholds the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and respect in their work. School counselors adhere to codes of conduct that include federal and Alabama state law, LEA and school policy, the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics, and professional codes of ethics. If ethical codes conflict with state law, school counselors seek to adhere to both, but recognize and abide by state law if no legal resolution is clear. They seek guidance from legal professionals to guide them in such situations. Through the adherence to these collective sets of ethical standards, school counselors acknowledge the importance of integrity and professionalism in serving Alabama students.

Foundation

The foundation component addresses the philosophy, mission, and vision of the school counseling program, and presents standards indicating what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in the program. The program is based on the school's goals for student achievement and incorporates the standards that indicate what every student should know and be able to do as a result of the program's implementation.

Guiding Principles

The Alabama Model provides guiding principles that inform the direction of comprehensive school counseling programs. These principles are grounded in the values that should serve as the foundation of a school or LEA's program. Each program should create its own guiding principles based on their respective LEA and school values.

Mission and Vision Statements

The Alabama Model also contains mission and vision statements to guide schools and LEAs in developing their own statements. The mission statement seeks to provide clarity to what a program does in its operations. The vision statement builds on the mission statement to provide direction as to the future of what the program wishes to become or produce. Schools and LEAs should utilize their own data, strategic plans, and continuous improvement plans as they formulate their own statements.

Program Standards for Students

School counseling programs throughout Alabama may differ in some respects because they address specific local needs. However, every LEA and individual school must use the standards listed in *The Alabama Model* to develop a comprehensive, outcome-based, and developmentally appropriate school counseling program.

These standards present program content and identify broad areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that all students should develop as a result of participating in the program. The standards, divided by grade bands, are to be used to plan, develop, and deliver the overall school counseling program. It should be noted that the standards listed in the charts must be addressed and overseen by the school counselor. However, direct instruction or delivery may be provided by program partners – the school counselor, teaching staff, or community members, including guest speakers. The scope and sequence of the local school counseling program should be carefully analyzed to enable students to master all standards by the end of Grade 12.

Additional Content and Content Limitations

Local systems may include additional standards, but no standards in *The Alabama Model* may be omitted. School and district administrators may assign school counselors responsibility for additional academic development, career development, and foundational wellness content based on legislative acts and requirements, such as *Erin’s Law* and the *Jamari Terrell Williams Student Bullying Prevention Act*. Systems should adopt implementation guides, resources, and activities which not only fulfill the requirements of the standards but also provide opportunities to go beyond them.

Content prohibitions and restrictions outlined in Alabama laws apply to both classroom teachers and school counselors in the teaching of these standards and other assigned content, unless the language of the law states otherwise. Participation in school counseling services shall adhere to regulations set forth by Alabama law and in the Alabama Administrative Code, Ala. Code § 290-4-5-.08.

Directions for Interpreting the Alabama Standards Charts

The standards set expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade band as a result of participating in the school counseling program. It is expected that students will meet the standards in ways that are appropriate for their developmental level. For instance, academic goals created in Grade 2 will differ from goals set in Grade 8, but in both instances students will be using the underlying skill of goal-setting.

Standards introduced in earlier grade bands are reinforced and practiced in later grade bands even though they are not explicitly stated. For example, Standard 3 in the Grades 3-5 grade band states, “Work through academic challenges, demonstrating resilience and perseverance.” While resilience and perseverance are not specifically mentioned in any standard in higher grade bands, students are expected to continue demonstrating the qualities embedded in this standard and applying them to new academic situations.

The domain title – academic development, career development, or foundational wellness – appears in the heading of each standards chart. The domains serve as the organizers for the content of the counseling program. Domains are subdivided into more specific concepts, which follow the domain names in chart headings.

Standards appear under each of the domains. The standards are assessable statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction and participation in the school counseling program. All standards must be taught. When the word “including” is present in a standard, it should be understood as “including but not limited to.”

Some standards contain examples, which are intended to clarify the intent of the standard. Examples are not exhaustive lists; they represent some among the many examples that could be listed. Examples are not required to be taught.

The glossary (page 56) lists words that are essential for understanding the standards.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Career Awareness

Each content standard completes the stem, "Students will..."

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
15. Identify various workers in their community.	15. Describe personal abilities, skills, interests, and motivations related to potential career interests.	15. Locate, evaluate, and interpret career information related to potential careers.	14. Research requirements for potential careers.
16. Explain why all work is valuable.	16. Participate in career awareness activities. <i>Examples: complete career interest inventories, attend career-themed events</i>	16. Research and identify competencies and skills needed for career options.	15. Describe how different career technical education programs can help students meet graduation requirements and prepare for college or a career.

Grade Band

Domain

Concept

Standard Number

Examples

Standard

Academic Development Standards

Standards in the academic development domain are designed to foster the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow students to achieve academically. The domain focuses on four concept areas: academic confidence, goal-setting, academic skills, and lifelong learning.

To address academic development at the elementary level, school counselors introduce the skills and attitudes required for school success, designing and overseeing the lessons and educational activities that will enable students to achieve the standards mandated in *The Alabama Model*. Lessons may focus on listening, following directions, test-taking, and study skills.

At the middle school level, school counselors help students develop the knowledge and skills that prepare them to choose from a wide range of postsecondary options. This preparation will help students understand the relationship between academics and the world of work and life.

School counselors serving students in Grades 8-12 guide students in the development and annual revision of a personal education plan of study based on career and academic goals. They also help students fulfill legislative and other requirements for graduation. The personal education plan of study is described under Individual Student Planning on page 36.

The selection of courses in the personal education plan of study must be approved in writing annually by the student's parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian's signature is not obtained, attempts to acquire signatures must be documented.

At the high school level, school counselors build on goals established during elementary and middle school, guiding students as they take specific steps toward becoming college and career ready and navigating adult life.

School counselors who work at career and technical centers address standards of the academic development domain through the review of the student's personal education plan of study. This ensures students are participating in appropriate coursework that leads to successful achievement of their academic and career goals.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Academic Confidence

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will…”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
1. Identify and describe classroom behaviors necessary for academic success.	1. Demonstrate classroom behaviors for academic success.	1. Develop personal responsibility for academic success.	1. Demonstrate personal responsibility for academic success.
2. Display a positive interest in learning.	2. Identify and demonstrate the skills needed to be an independent learner.	2. Apply skills for independent learning.	2. Demonstrate ownership, self-advocacy, and initiative in learning.
3. Discuss how making mistakes contributes to learning and leads to an appreciation of one’s own achievements.	3. Work through academic challenges, demonstrating resilience and perseverance.	3. Develop self-advocacy and initiative in learning.	

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Goal Setting

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
4. Define goals and explain why goals are important.	4. Establish achievable academic goals.	4. Develop academic goals and monitor progress toward achieving them.	3. Set goals for postsecondary education, technical training, military service, and/or the workforce.
5. Describe what makes goals achievable.	5. Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to achieve academic goals.	5. Develop a personal education plan of study.	4. Monitor and modify the personal education plan of study.
6. Discuss how performance on assessments shows academic growth.	6. Track assessment results to monitor their own academic growth.	6. Analyze assessment results to inform academic planning.	5. Analyze and discuss assessment data to engage in postsecondary planning. <i>Examples: PreACT, ACT/SAT scores, AP/IB exam results, career aptitude inventories</i>

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Academic Skills

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
7. Perform classroom routines and complete assignments and activities.	7. Practice time management and task management strategies.	7. Utilize time management and task management skills.	6. Adapt and utilize time management and task management skills to meet the expectations of high school.
8. Develop skills for working collaboratively with others.	8. Work collaboratively in academic and social settings.	8. Exhibit skills needed to contribute effectively to collaborative projects and activities.	7. Design, lead, and contribute to collaborative projects and activities.
9. Use communication skills to ask for help when appropriate.	9. Use developmentally appropriate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	9. Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	8. Apply critical thinking skills to solve problems.
10. Identify test-taking strategies.	10. Apply study skills and test-taking strategies.	10. Implement study skills and locate academic resources when needed.	9. Identify and practice skills needed for postsecondary education.
11. Explore and share personal interests related to learning.	11. Identify personal strengths to enhance learning opportunities.	11. Use personal strengths to develop a personal education plan of study.	10. Use personal strengths to evaluate multiple course options and make academic decisions.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Lifelong Learning

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
12. Identify how expectations at school differ from expectations at home, daycare, preschool, or previous grade.	12. Identify new grade level expectations and skills each year, including classroom behavior, academic achievement, and peer collaboration in the classroom.	12. Identify new skills needed for each year of academic progression.	11. Identify new skills needed for postsecondary education and/or the workforce.
13. Identify connections between learning and work.	13. Explain how school success and academic achievement impact future career opportunities.	13. Explain how school success prepares them to transition from student to productive adult.	12. Explain the relationship between high school graduation and future success. <i>Examples: productive citizenship, decreased chances of poverty</i>
14. Identify various roles in the classroom and school community.	14. Identify opportunities to enhance learning within the school and community.	14. Explain how participation in co-curricular and/or community activities enhances learning.	13. Identify co-curricular and/or community activities that align with academic and career interests.

Career Development Standards

Standards in the career development domain are designed to help students explore careers, identify their own interests and aptitudes, develop workplace skills, and create detailed, personalized plans that prepare them for their chosen careers. The domain focuses on three concept areas: career awareness, career goals, and career exploration and planning.

The school counselor designs and oversees the lessons and educational activities that will enable students to achieve the standards mandated in *The Alabama Model*. School counselors work in collaboration with career coaches to implement career education with K-12 students.

In the career development domain at the elementary level, school counselors emphasize early exploration of career and education goals. This domain may be addressed through lessons and activities such as hosting a career day, introducing community helpers, or administering interest inventories.

School counselors at the middle school level help students acquire the skills they need to investigate the world of work, utilizing specific strategies that will help students achieve future academic and career goals with success and satisfaction.

At the high school level, school counselors offer educational opportunities that provide students with a strong academic foundation and an understanding of college and career readiness, with the goal of ensuring that students are prepared to enter the workforce or military service and/or pursue postsecondary studies.

School counselors at career and technical education centers serve as academic and career development specialists, uniquely positioned to help students transition successfully into the workforce or to further their education.

School counselors for Grades 8-12 should guide students in the development and annual revision of the personal education plan of study based on career and academic goals and help students maintain progress toward legislative and other requirements for graduation. The personal education plan of study is described under Individual Student Planning on page 33. The plan must be annually approved in writing by parents/guardians. If a parent's or guardian's signature is not obtained, documentation of attempts to acquire signatures must be maintained.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Career Awareness

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will…”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
15. Identify various workers in their community.	15. Describe personal abilities, skills, interests, and motivations related to potential career interests.	15. Locate, evaluate, and interpret career information related to potential careers.	14. Research requirements for specific careers they are considering.
16. Explain why all work is valuable.	16. Participate in career awareness activities. <i>Examples: complete career interest inventories, attend career-themed events</i>	16. Research and identify competencies and skills needed for career options.	15. Describe how different career technical education programs can help meet graduation requirements and prepare for college or a career.
17. Make decisions and set career goals.	17. Explain how interests and skills relate to career options.	17. Identify hobbies and interests that promote work-life balance.	16. Identify and evaluate financial options to support future college and/or career plans, and choose those that best fit their own goals.
18. Explain that there are career options available for everyone.	18. Identify and describe how their individual interests, work values, and/or skills align with specific types of careers.	18. Explain the importance of the connection between career and civic engagement, including service learning and/or volunteer opportunities.	17. Explain how service-learning, work, and/or volunteer work impacts the community, fosters employment skills, and builds a resumé.
19. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate effectively with peers to achieve group goals in	19. Describe skills needed for success in school and future careers.	19. Identify options for fulfilling college and career readiness graduation requirements.	18. Implement options for fulfilling college and career readiness graduation

a school setting.			requirements.
20. Describe skills and work habits needed by workers in the community.	20. Describe personal, ethical, and work skills needed for success in school and future careers.		

CAREER DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Career Goals

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will…”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
21. Differentiate between <i>work</i> and <i>career</i> .	21. Explain the relationship between educational achievement and career success.	20. Interpret the relationship between educational achievement and career success.	19. Review and modify their personal education plan of study to support career goals.
22. Work cooperatively as a team member.	22. Explain how work can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction.	21. Identify personal preferences and interests influencing career choices.	20. Select coursework that is best related to career interests.
23. Connect community helpers to career clusters.	23. Identify jobs associated with the career clusters, as shown in the <i>Alabama Career Development Model</i> .	22. Develop and maintain a personal education plan of study.	21. Apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning activities. <i>Examples: internships, job shadowing, industry tours, career fairs, apprenticeships</i>
24. Identify skills that help gather information and complete tasks, including asking questions and basic communication skills.	24. Describe how careers differ in terms of workplace settings and requirements.	23. Correlate career choices with earning potential.	22. Give examples of how the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and the acquisition of new skills.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN
Career Exploration and Planning

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will…”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
<p>25. Identify and engage in various work roles within the classroom.</p>	<p>25. Relate current student learning to each of the career clusters.</p>	<p>24. Utilize problem-solving and organizational skills.</p>	<p>23. Demonstrate skills needed for seeking employment. <i>Examples: resumé writing, interviewing, mock interviews</i></p>
<p>26. Explore a variety of careers to begin understanding the roles that workers play in the community.</p>	<p>26. Investigate the knowledge and skills workers need in various careers.</p>	<p>25. Describe how jobs are changing and what skills people will need to succeed in the future. <i>Examples: emerging careers, decline of some professions, applications of technology</i></p>	<p>24. Research and discuss application procedures and admission requirements for postsecondary options.</p>
<p>27. Display a positive attitude toward work and learning, and explain how positive character traits are important for success on the job. <i>Examples: responsibility, honesty</i></p>	<p>27. Utilize employability skills, including teamwork, problem-solving, and organizational skills.</p>	<p>26. Enhance work ethic and employability skills, including responsibility, time management, dependability, and punctuality.</p>	<p>25. Describe the rights and responsibilities of individuals in the workplace and explain how demonstrating respect and fairness and following rules contribute to a positive and productive work environment.</p>

<p>28. Explore the roles and responsibilities of workers around them to learn important job skills.</p>	<p>28. Utilize search engines and other media sources for career planning to discover career options. <i>Example: Alabama Career Planning System</i></p>	<p>27. Complete a personal education plan of study and career interest inventories as part of the career planning process. <i>Example: Alabama Career Planning System</i></p>	<p>26. Review and implement their education plan of study in response to career interests.</p>
		<p>28. Identify career clusters and academic courses that align with their career interests and goals.</p>	<p>27. Explain how ever-changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training.</p>

Foundational Wellness Standards

Standards in the foundational wellness domain are designed to help students develop skills for success in all areas of life. The domain focuses on four concept areas: interpersonal skills, problem-solving and decision-making, character development, and personal responsibility.

Personal safety and responsibility, appropriate interaction with others, and managing choices are covered in this domain. The school counselor designs and oversees the lessons and educational activities that will enable students to achieve the standards mandated in *The Alabama Model*.

Elementary school counselors place strong emphasis on character development, decision-making skills, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationships, laying the foundation for the acquisition of coping skills and problem-solving strategies that continue to be developed at the middle and high school levels.

School counselors at the middle school level provide instruction to equip students with the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills needed to become responsible citizens and productive workers. This instruction helps students understand and respect themselves and others, make decisions, set goals, take necessary actions to achieve goals, and develop coping skills.

At the high school level, school counselors emphasize competency in measuring goal attainment, advocating for self and others, and building professional habits for the workplace. Activities are designed to encourage the development of character, personal responsibility, and decision-making.

School counselors located at career and technical centers assist students in the foundational wellness domain by reinforcing interpersonal skills to work effectively with others and achieve success in the workplace.

School counselors also serve as an integral component of a school's incorporation of character education requirements as established in 1995 by the Alabama legislature, Code of Alabama, Section 16-6B-2(h). The integration of character education contributes to a student's foundational wellness development.

FOUNDATIONAL WELLNESS DOMAIN
Interpersonal Skills

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
29. Identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for various settings.	29. Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior for various settings.	29. Demonstrate behaviors that support academic and social success.	28. Model skills needed for success in social, academic, and career settings.
30. Explain the importance of teamwork.	30. Demonstrate teamwork and cooperation in group settings.	30. Apply teamwork skills in group settings.	29. Demonstrate teamwork skills in social, academic, and career settings.
31. Identify individual differences.	31. Describe and respect differences among individuals.	31. Explain the positive contributions made to society by individuals.	30. Model and promote respect for others in social, academic, and career settings.
32. Describe how communication involves speaking, listening, and nonverbal behavior.	32. Utilize effective communication skills in social and academic settings.	32. Display respect for different points of view.	31. Utilize perspective-taking to collaborate effectively with others.
33. Describe the importance of making and keeping friendships.	33. Demonstrate empathy and the ability to understand the perspective of others.	33. Display active listening and empathy.	32. Demonstrate the ability to choose and develop healthy relationships in a variety of settings.

FOUNDATIONAL WELLNESS DOMAIN
Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
34. Demonstrate when, where, and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions.	34. Identify the steps of the decision-making and problem-solving processes.	34. Evaluate the possible consequences of decisions and choices, and implement strategies to resolve problems.	33. Apply decision-making and problem-solving skills to new challenges.
35. Identify healthy coping skills. <i>Examples: deep breathing, getting a drink of water, counting</i>	35. Demonstrate healthy coping skills for dealing with problems.	35. Differentiate between healthy coping skills and those with adverse effects. <i>Examples: exercise versus vaping, conflict resolution versus fighting</i>	34. Apply healthy coping skills in social, academic, and career settings.
36. Describe ways in which peers can influence the behavior of others.	36. Discuss the influence of peers on behavior.	36. Demonstrate healthy ways to address the impact of peer pressure.	35. Model and promote healthy ways to cope with peer pressure.
37. Identify and set short- and long-term goals.	37. Identify alternative ways of achieving goals.	37. Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals.	36. Evaluate progress toward achieving goals.

FOUNDATIONAL WELLNESS DOMAIN
Character Development

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
38. Identify positive character traits.	38. Demonstrate positive character traits.	38. Explain the importance of showing positive character traits.	37. Model positive character traits daily in social, academic, and career settings.
39. Explain ways in which an individual grows and changes over time.	39. Describe the importance of growth and change.	39. Discuss ways personal and social roles change as an individual increases in age.	38. Evaluate the consequences of choosing not to grow and change.
40. Identify feelings and explain how certain feelings require self-regulation.	40. Identify and implement methods of effective self-regulation.	40. Discuss how one's ability to self-regulate can impact others.	39. Model effective methods of self-regulation.
41. Demonstrate a positive attitude about self.	41. Identify their own personal traits, strengths, and limitations.	41. Engage in activities aligned with their personal traits and strengths.	40. Explain the benefits of pursuing a future aligned with their personal traits and strengths.

FOUNDATIONAL WELLNESS DOMAIN
Personal Responsibility

Each content standard completes the stem, “Students will...”

Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
42. Identify contact information of a guardian and explain how this is a form of personal information.	42. Describe reasons and strategies to protect personal information, including online.	42. Explain the importance of making safe choices online, including social media and gaming platforms.	41. Explain the strategies that they have implemented to stay safe online.
43. Identify the purpose of rules and laws.	43. Describe how rules and laws protect the rights and safety of individuals.	43. Identify the consequences for failing to follow rules and laws.	42. Discuss how failure to follow rules and laws can negatively impact one’s future.
44. Discuss personal rights, responsibilities, and boundaries.	44. Explain the difference between safe and unsafe physical contact.	44. Explain personal boundaries, rights, and safety needs.	43. Demonstrate ways to set boundaries and protect personal safety in a variety of circumstances.
45. Identify resource people in the school and community and explain how to seek their help.	45. Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult help.	45. Identify and demonstrate ways to advocate for self and others.	44. Advocate for the personal safety of themselves and others.
46. Identify and make safe, healthy choices.	46. Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy behaviors, identifying their effects on the body.	46. Explain the detrimental emotional and physical effects of substance use and abuse.	45. Identify school and community support resources available to address substance use and abuse.
47. Identify situations that cause stress.	47. Identify the physical signs of stress.	47. List techniques for managing stress and conflict.	46. Identify resources one can access to address stress and conflict.

<p>48. Explain personal responsibility.</p>	<p>48. Identify ways personal responsibility impacts self and others.</p>	<p>48. Exhibit personal responsibility through actions.</p>	<p>47. Exercise personal responsibility to prepare for postsecondary options.</p>
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Delivery System

School counselors are actively involved in all four aspects of the delivery system – school counseling instruction, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect services. School counselors function in a manner consistent with the educational philosophy and mission of the LEA and the individual school. As a member of the educational team, the school counselor has unique responsibilities for helping meet the needs of each and every student. School counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program for students; consult and collaborate with parents/guardians, classroom teachers, and staff to enhance their effectiveness in helping students; and follow the 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)*.

School administrators and instructional leaders should recognize and respect the time and energy required for a school counselor to implement and oversee a comprehensive school counseling program and be sure that extraneous duties do not interfere with the school counselor’s primary responsibilities. Fair-share responsibilities assigned to school counselors should not exceed those of other certified staff members and should not interfere with the timely delivery of school counseling services.

School counselors shall provide equitable access to counseling services for students enrolled in virtual or hybrid learning environments. Virtual counseling services must align with the standards outlined in *The Alabama Model* and adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, including Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Organizational Framework, Activities, and Time

1. Each LEA and individual school will implement a comprehensive school counseling program which ensures that
 - a. each school counselor develops and follows a planned calendar of activities based on the standards in *The Alabama Model*;
 - b. each school counselor’s time is spent in providing school counseling services through the four program delivery components (school counseling instruction, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect services); and
 - c. each school counselor participates annually in professional development which aligns with the identified needs of the school counseling program and/or the school counselor and fosters ethical principles.
2. Each LEA and individual school will ensure the curriculum and content adopted by the school counseling program are available to parents online. Parent/guardian awareness enhances positive engagement with the school counselor, the school counseling program, and the school as a whole.
3. Each LEA and individual school will implement an evaluation plan for school counselors with criteria that conform to the duties and responsibilities of the school counselor as stated in *The Alabama Model*.
4. Each LEA and individual school will make provisions for newly-assigned school counselors to attend appropriate training provided or approved by the Alabama State Department of Education.

5. Each LEA and individual school will establish a school counseling advisory council to assist in the development and implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program.

Standards

6. Each LEA and individual school will implement a comprehensive school counseling program which ensures that each and every student has the opportunity to master the standards that are assigned at the appropriate grade level.

Structural Components

7. All schools will provide school counseling services performed by certified school counselors for each and every student in Grades K-12 at a ratio designated by professional and state-approved accrediting organizations.
8. Each LEA and individual school should ensure that appropriate personnel are appointed at the LEA level to coordinate and monitor the delivery of school counseling services to each and every student.

Resources

9. Each LEA and individual school should provide facilities that allow for the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. Minimum requirements for delivery of school counseling services include facilities that provide the following:
 - a. private space(s) to ensure confidentiality, properly equipped with locking file cabinets and digitally-secured storage for school counseling records;
 - b. access to dedicated telephone line(s) for confidential conversations;
 - c. secure video conferencing for individual student planning, responsive services, and small-group counseling;
 - d. online space on the LEA or school website where parents/guardians can review adopted school counseling instructional curricula prior to instruction and access school counseling resources or news beneficial to parents/guardians, such as newsletters or information regarding upcoming events;
 - e. adequate space for conducting small-group school counseling and instructional activities;
 - f. accessibility for persons with disabilities;
 - g. adequate space for reception areas and for organizing and displaying school counseling materials; and
 - h. appropriate planning time and staff support to implement the comprehensive school counseling program effectively.
10. Each LEA will design, distribute, and collect required opt-in/opt-out forms in adherence to state policy. Each LEA will distribute the parent/guardian responses to respective school counselors in a timely manner.
11. Each LEA and individual school should provide resource materials that are relevant to the program and appropriate for the community, in sufficient quantities to be useful.

School Counseling Instruction

School counselors facilitate, co-lead, and assist in the delivery of school counseling program activities through developmentally appropriate instruction in the domains of academic development, career development, and foundational wellness. The school counseling program includes structured experiences presented through classroom, group, and schoolwide activities from Kindergarten through Grade 12. The curriculum is a planned, sequential program chosen or developed by the local school or LEA to enhance learning and increase student achievement. A program's curriculum should be grounded in *The Alabama Model's* standards and should ensure consistency and high quality as it supports students' development in all three domains.

School counselors engage in a critical, unique partnership with their students' parents or guardians, who are the partners most intimately involved in helping students reach their full potential. Accessibility, transparency, sensitivity, and clear communication are essential for establishing and maintaining this relationship. The curriculum materials adopted to guide instruction on school counseling program standards are subject to the transparency guidelines set forth in the *2024 Parents' Right to Know Act* and/or subsequent legislation.

A comprehensive school counseling program and its corresponding curriculum are delivered through a variety of methods.

- **Large group or classroom instruction:** School counselors lead, co-lead, or collaborate to deliver broadly applicable lessons to build academic, career, and foundational wellness skills.
- **Small groups:** School counselors facilitate targeted sessions to address specific student needs or interests, either as immediate-response or short-term support.
- **Workshops:** School counselors facilitate informational sessions to help students and enable parents/guardians and other interested parties to support student development and reinforce program goals.
- **Schoolwide events:** School counselors work with program partners, student services personnel, speakers, and guest presenters to expand student learning opportunities.

Topics for school counseling program activities within this component may include (but are not limited to) academic planning, study skills, goal setting, career awareness and exploration, communication skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork and cooperation, and personal responsibility. The chart on the next page outlines the key topics for each level.

SCHOOL COUNSELING EMPHASES

	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
ACADEMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning skills and attitudes for school success ● Using critical thinking and problem-solving skills ● Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preparation for postsecondary options ● Relationship between academics and the world of work ● Strategies to achieve goals ● Develop personal education plan of study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply and enhance knowledge and understanding ● Review and update personal education plan of study
CAREER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Early exploration of career and educational goals ● Identifying personal abilities and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills to explore the world of work ● Strategies to achieve academic and career goals ● Develop personal education plan of study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities for strong academic foundation for careers ● Familiarity with career opportunities and requirements ● Implement, assess, and adjust personal education plan of study based on career goals ● Review and update personal education plan of study
FOUNDATIONAL WELLNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Character development ● Decision-making ● Self-awareness ● Interpersonal relationships ● Coping skills ● Problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Character development ● Respect for self and others ● Decision-making ● Goal-setting ● Actions to achieve goals ● Coping skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Character development ● Decision-making ● Personal responsibility ● Professionalism

Individual Student Planning

School counselors work with students in a variety of settings to provide equal access to opportunities for planning, monitoring, and managing each student’s academic, career, and foundational wellness development. School counselors help students identify aptitudes, career interests, and achievement levels and explore pathway options, including postsecondary education, career/technical education, military service, and the workforce.

Individual student planning activities may focus on career awareness and exploration, career and technical education programs, college and career readiness, goal-setting, interest inventories, skill development necessary for school and postsecondary success, advisor/advisee programs, interpretation of assessment results, or preparation for grade level transitions. School counselors provide input on placement and support students in moving from one grade level or pathway to another. They communicate and collaborate with students and parents/guardians throughout the students’ academic careers, providing academic, career, and foundational wellness resources as needed.

Individual student planning models may include (but are not limited to) the following options:

- **Individual or small-group advisement:** School counselors help students acquire information about educational opportunities, careers, and the labor market.
- **Individual or small-group appraisal:** School counselors help students assess and interpret their abilities, interests, skills, and achievements and guide them in using the results to develop immediate and long-range plans.

Personal Education Plan of Study

Academic counseling is a major component of individual student planning. Beginning in Grade 8, school counselors are legally required to help each student create and monitor a personal education plan of study based on career and academic goals and to assist them in revising it during each succeeding year. A personal education plan of study is a structured roadmap that outlines the courses a student intends to complete during high school. Its purpose is to ensure the student meets all graduation requirements, stays on track to graduate on time, and aligns coursework with college and career goals. The personal education plan of study must be revisited and approved in each academic year through Grade 12 by the student’s parent/guardian. If parent/guardian signatures cannot be acquired, documentation of attempts to obtain signatures must be maintained.

School counselors must offer virtual options for developing and monitoring the personal education plan of study when face-to-face options are unavailable. Virtual advisement sessions must include secure communication and documentation protocols. School counselors should provide parents/guardians with digital access to planning tools and ensure annual approvals can be obtained electronically when necessary.

Responsive Services

Responsive services comprise the identification of factors that may affect a student's chances of success and the delivery of preventive and intervention services to address those needs and concerns. Responsive services include individual and small group counseling, crisis counseling, problem-solving, referrals to community resources, and consultation. These services play a critical role in an LEA's or school's multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework.

School counselors are professionally trained to recognize and respond to students' foundational wellness concerns and crises. They consult with students, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, community agencies, and others regarding strategies to help students achieve personal and academic advancement. By offering appropriate intervention and services, school counselors are able to address barriers to student success.

Responsive services may be delivered virtually when in-person access is not feasible. Virtual crisis counseling must follow the school's crisis management plan and include referral procedures for long-term support. School counselors should maintain clear communication with parents/guardians and document all virtual interventions.

Examples of responsive services delivery within this component may include, but are not restricted to, the following options:

- **Consultation:** School counselors serve as student advocates by consulting with students, parents/guardians, educators, and community agencies regarding strategies to help students and families.
- **Crisis response:** School counseling and support services are provided to students and families facing crises as outlined in the school crisis management plan. Crisis counseling provided by the school counselor is short-term and focused on immediate support, with referrals to appropriate resources for long-term support and services for students and families.
- **Individual counseling:** School counseling is provided in an individual setting for students experiencing difficulties dealing with relationships, personal concerns, and/or developmentally appropriate tasks. Individual school counseling is short-term and assists students in identifying problems, causes, consequences, and alternatives to support informed decision-making.
- **Peer facilitation:** School counselors may train students as peer mediators, conflict managers, tutors, or mentors. Peer support programs should be research- or evidence-based and adhere to recognized best practices.
- **Referrals:** School counselors, in collaboration with program partners, may identify and access community resources to enhance student support services. These referral sources may include employment and training programs, juvenile services, community agencies, social services, and vocational rehabilitation services.
- **Small-group counseling:** School counseling is provided in small-group settings for students with specific needs, concerns, or short-term issues.

Participation in school counseling services shall adhere to regulations set forth in Alabama law and the Alabama Administrative Code, Ala. Code § 290-4-5-.08.

Indirect Services

Indirect services involve management activities that maintain and enhance the total school counseling program. Responsibilities in this area include staff relations, community relations, task forces, professional development, support teams, interpretation of assessment results, data analysis, and curriculum development. This component provides appropriate support to academic programs.

Examples of indirect services delivery options within this component may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- **Advisory councils:** School counselors participate in school counseling advisory councils at both the LEA and the individual school level. In addition, school counselors actively serve on community committees or councils that generate support for school counseling programs in the local school or the LEA.
 - **Community outreach:** School counselors forge partnerships with local entities such as businesses, industries, and social service agencies. Community outreach requires school counselors to be knowledgeable about community resources, employment opportunities, and local labor market information.
 - **Consultation:** School counselors consult regularly with classroom teachers and other staff members, parents/guardians, community agencies, and other program partners in order to learn about the emerging needs of students and to provide information and support.
 - **Curriculum development support:** School counselors participate in the ongoing review and revision of academic curriculum materials as related to data analysis, student advocacy, postsecondary education, and career/technical education planning.
 - **Parent/guardian outreach:** School counselors provide parents/guardians with updates about upcoming topics and experiences in the school counseling program, along with information about services and resources that parents/guardians may find beneficial as they support their child's development.
 - **Public relations:** School counselors design activities and provide communications to inform the staff and community about the comprehensive school counseling program's goals, activities, and accomplishments.
 - **Professional development and leadership:** School counselors enhance professional knowledge through facilitating or participating in school-based in-service training, attending professional meetings, completing postgraduate course work, or contributing to professional journals.
 - **Program management and operations:** School counselors plan and manage school counseling program activities conducted in the school. Developing a budget, maintaining facilities and documentation, implementing policies and procedures, and engaging in research and resource development are elements of the management process. Appropriate planning time is instrumental to the overall success of a school counseling program.
 - **Research and evaluation:** School counselors conduct research and evaluation to ensure program growth, including personnel guidance evaluations approved by the Alabama State Department of Education, program evaluations, data analysis, follow-up studies, professional development, and updating of resources.
 - **Virtual Services:** School counselors should leverage secure platforms to maintain engagement with families and community partners in virtual settings, such as virtual advisory council meetings, online parent workshops, and digital outreach activities.

Management

Management incorporates the processes and tools that ensure the comprehensive school counseling program is well organized. The management system encompasses the structural components of the program, including the advisory councils; organization of the school counseling program; roles of key players in the program; responsibilities of school counselors; available school counseling resources; and use of the school counselor's time.

LEA School Counseling Advisory Council

In order to ensure that the LEA comprehensive school counseling program is an integral part of individual schools and the school community, an LEA school counseling advisory council should be in place. This council is appointed by the LEA school counseling coordinator to provide advice and assistance for the school counseling program within the LEA. It should be composed of program partners and participants, including students, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, school counselors, instructional leaders, school board members, and business and community representatives. Ideally, advisory council membership reflects the community's demographics. The advisory council serves as a liaison between the comprehensive school counseling program and the community. The LEA school counseling advisory council reviews program goals, activities, and results and formulates recommendations to school counselors, instructional leaders, and the superintendent. It is recommended that the council meet at least twice a year.

Individual School Counseling Advisory Council

In addition to the LEA school counseling advisory council, each individual school should establish a school counseling advisory council to advise and assist with the development and implementation of its comprehensive school counseling program as reflected in the LEA advisory council guidelines. The school counselor, in consultation with the school principal, should select the members of this council. The council helps identify student needs, provides program support, and assists with the development and implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program. Council members represent all interested parties of the comprehensive school counseling program (e.g., students, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, school administrators, community resource partners). It is recommended that the council meet at least twice a year.

School Counseling Resources

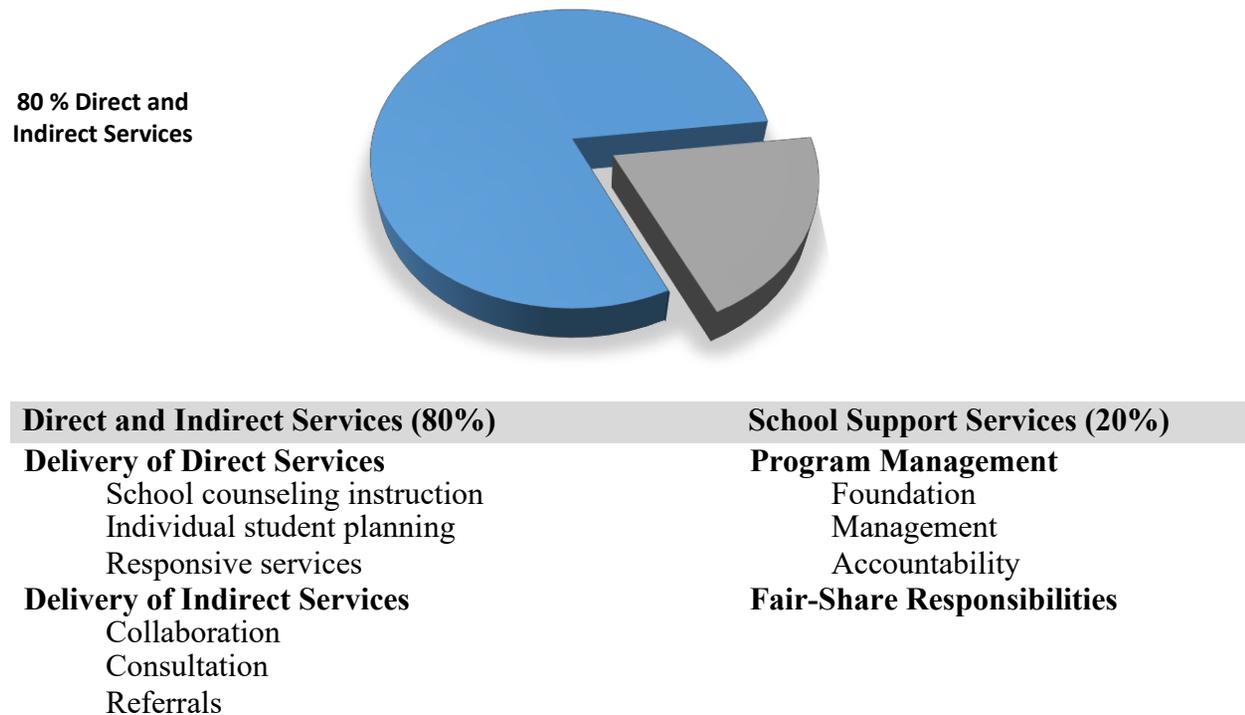
Appropriate resources are required for each aspect of the program delivery system (school counseling instruction, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect services). These resources include equipment and materials, staff expertise, community resources, and parent/guardian involvement. LEAs and schools must provide technology resources and training to enable effective virtual counseling. Approved platforms should support confidentiality, accessibility, and compliance with legal requirements. Resource materials should be relevant to the program, appropriate for the composition of the school and community, and provided in sufficient quantity. All school counselors should be provided the necessary equipment, office space, and materials to implement the comprehensive school counseling program effectively.

Use of Time

School counselors collaborate with all school personnel to promote and maintain a supportive environment for each and every student. School counselors should spend approximately 80 percent of their time on the overall delivery of the school counseling program, including both direct and indirect services. The remaining 20 percent of time should be used for program management and school support services, such as accountability tasks. Additional academic development, career development, and foundational wellness instruction based on legislative acts and requirements, such as *Erin’s Law* and the *Jamari Terrell Williams Student Bullying Prevention Act*, are considered part of direct services.

In addition to their primary school counseling responsibilities, school counselors may also participate in fair-share duties in a manner and amount consistent with the responsibilities assigned to other certified staff. These duties should be limited in scope and time, ensuring they do not exceed what is expected of other certified personnel. The school counselor should remain free from other administrative duties or responsibilities that may hinder the effective implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program as outlined in *The Alabama Model*.

Use of School Counselor’s Time



School Counseling Program Organization

The comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the educational system. The school counselor is responsible for designing, planning, delivering, and evaluating the comprehensive program, in collaboration with the district school counseling coordinator, instructional leadership, students, classroom teachers, parents/guardians and other program partners. Each school year, school counselors meet with program partners to align goals and expectations for the comprehensive school counseling program, ensuring that advocacy for children and families is an important focus. In schools with multiple school counselors, duties and student caseloads should be distributed equitably to ensure balanced support.

Contributions from a variety of collaborative partners are required to implement a multi-tiered system of support services for student success.

Roles of Personnel

Each school counseling department should include the following collaborative partners required by law or provided as a foundation unit:

School Counseling Coordinators provide the leadership and collaboration which are essential to the success of school level comprehensive school counseling programs, compliance monitoring, and the district level school counseling plan. Each LEA should have a designated school counseling coordinator to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of school counseling services across the district, acting as facilitators, leaders, advocates, and advisors to ensure that the program remains aligned with best practices and student needs. Through strategic leadership and ongoing communication with all program partners, school counseling coordinators help maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the comprehensive school counseling program in alignment with *The Alabama Model*.

School Administrators are responsible for all instructional programs, including the school counseling program. They should ensure that the program is implemented by certified school counselors at a student-counselor ratio designated by state-approved accrediting organizations. Because their support is critical, school administrators should receive adequate training regarding school counselors' specific roles and responsibilities. Administrative support includes providing appropriate facilities, materials, support staff, adequate and ongoing professional development, time for planning as well as time to provide both direct and indirect services to students. School administrators provide input into program development and encourage and support the participation of all school personnel in the implementation of the school counseling program.

School Counselors lead the implementation and management of the comprehensive school counseling program in their schools. They are responsible for the systematic delivery of program components through provision of direct services, including whole group instruction, small group counseling, individual student planning, and responsive services. School counselors also provide indirect services, such as consultation and collaboration with program partners, to support the academic, career, and foundational wellness development of students. School counselors coordinate and evaluate programs and activities within the school that are related to student success. School counselors collaborate with other school personnel to connect students and parents/guardians with resources and outside services when more intensive intervention is required. They also conduct check-ins and provide follow-up support when students return from outside services as needed. School counselors provide individual and group support and ensure

compliance with local, state, and national mandates, collaborating with program partners to ensure students develop the tools necessary for success in academic, career, and social settings as they grow toward adulthood.

Elementary School Counselors support academic development by teaching skills essential for school success (such as goal-setting, time management, and perseverance) and linking learning to potential future careers. They facilitate students' early explorations of career interests, helping students to connect their schoolwork to the career clusters, participate in classroom jobs, and learn about career choices. They promote foundational wellness by fostering the development of communication skills, empathy, friendships, decision-making abilities, and healthy coping strategies. They help students learn to self-regulate, develop a positive self-image, maintain boundaries, practice online safety, and recognize when to seek adult help.

Middle School Counselors support students' academic, career, and foundational wellness development during a pivotal stage of growth and transition. They help students develop effective study habits, set academic goals, and plan for high school and future careers by exploring interests and strengths. They promote foundational wellness by teaching coping skills, conflict resolution, and decision-making strategies. Middle school counselors address personal and peer-related challenges and collaborate with parents/guardians, classroom teachers, and school administrators to ensure each student receives the support they need as they prepare for the transition to high school.

High School Counselors focus on helping students meet graduation requirements, interpret standardized test results, and make specific plans for college, careers, the workforce, or military enlistment. The personal education plan of study, initially formulated in middle school, follows each student to high school and is reviewed and updated during each academic year. High school counselors help students set specific goals for adult life.

Classroom Teachers, the professionals who have the most direct contact with students, play a key role in identifying students' developmental and individual needs. Through collaboration and referrals, classroom teachers support interactions between students and school counselors and reinforce school counseling concepts to help students retain essential skills and knowledge. Classroom teachers' input and support help the school counselor deliver a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes success for all students.

Additional Student Support Services Personnel

While not all LEAs have the additional positions described below, these individuals provide valuable support for the school counseling program when they are present.

Career and Technical Center School Counselors support students in making informed career pathway decisions. They address career development by linking skills, interests, and work value assessment results to postsecondary goal-setting and promote academic growth by ensuring that course selections align with and support the achievement of academic and career goals.

Career Coaches support the school counseling program by focusing specifically on career exploration, workforce readiness, and postsecondary planning. Career coaches provide specialized guidance in areas such as resumé building, school-hosted career fairs, job applications, interview skills, internships, and career pathway selection. Working collaboratively with school counselors, career coaches help students make informed decisions about their future and prepare for successful transitions beyond high school.

Mental Health Services Coordinators (MHSC) coordinate student mental wellness services throughout the local school system with a systematic LEA Mental Wellness Plan. The MHSC serves as a collaborative partner with school counselors, nurses, school resource officers, and other student services personnel at the Tier II and Tier III levels to facilitate coordinated and appropriate interventions. A MHSC, in conjunction with community and state agencies, develops and sustains schoolwide supports and interventions reinforcing mental wellness. The MHSC serves a vital role in developing family, community, and other partnerships to support the needs of students.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) District Coordinators work alongside school counselors to identify student needs early and provide targeted interventions. They collaborate to identify core direct services (such as small group counseling, individual academic support, Tier II interventions and other interventions) designed to promote positive behavior, improve attendance, and foster student resilience and engagement.

School Psychologists work collaboratively with school counselors, school administrators, classroom teachers, families, and community agencies to promote the academic, career, and foundational wellness of students. They apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior, and collaborate to identify core direct services (such as small group counseling, individual support, or Tier II and Tier III interventions) to support students' success.

School Resource Officers (SRO) serve as a critical link between community resources and the school counseling program. School counselors and SROs help maintain a safe school and community by sharing concerns and issues that might impact public safety and students' well-being.

School Social Workers support students and families by addressing foundational wellness needs. This program partner plays a key role in removing barriers to learning by providing both direct and indirect services, including crisis intervention, home visits, and connecting families to appropriate community resources. School social workers serve as a vital link between home, school, and community, collaborating closely with school districts and families to promote the academic success and the well-being of each and every student.

Collaborative Contributions to Student Development

The positions listed above, as well as other school and LEA staff, collaborate to help students build knowledge and acquire skills to ensure academic development, career development, and foundational wellness. Each position serves a unique role in this collective effort to ensure actualization of the school counseling program.

The chart below illustrates the domains in which various positions within a school or LEA contribute to student developmental success:

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT	CAREER DEVELOPMENT	FOUNDATIONAL WELLNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Counselor ● Career and Technical Center School Counselor ● Classroom Teachers ● Career Coach ● Academic Advisor ● School Administrator ● MTSS Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Counselor ● Career and Technical Center School Counselor ● Classroom Teachers ● Career Coach ● Work-Based Learning Coordinator ● Job Coach ● School Administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Counselor ● Career and Technical Center School Counselor ● Classroom Teachers ● School Social Worker ● School Psychologist ● Mental Health Services Coordinator ● School-Based Mental Health Therapist ● School Resource Officer ● School Administrator

Development And Implementation of the LEA Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Each LEA in the state is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program based on the 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)*. Successful development and implementation require all program partners, including the community, local board of education, educators, parents/guardians, and students, to understand the goals, emphases, and structure of *The Alabama Model*. The LEA and local school counseling programs are reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The Alabama Model provides a research-informed framework undergirding a systematic approach to school counseling. Having a statewide structure provides assurance that academic and career plans are consistent from one Alabama school to another. This uniformity is beneficial for students, K-12 schools, and postsecondary institutions. The following outline lists steps for developing the LEA's comprehensive school counseling program. Full implementation requires all steps to be completed, although they need not be completed sequentially. Some steps may be undertaken concurrently.

1. **LEA Preparation.** Purpose: to create understanding of the foundation needed to develop and implement an effective school counseling program.
 - a. Research and review appropriate professional sources regarding the design of comprehensive school counseling programs.
 - b. Examine the current LEA school counseling program to determine changes needed for implementation of *The Alabama Model*.
 - c. Align the current LEA school counseling program to *The Alabama Model*.
 - d. Establish procedures for complying with requirements of Alabama law and administrative code, including opt-in/opt-out and *Parents' Right to Know Act* provisions.

2. **LEA Leadership Consultation.** Purpose: to secure support and essential resources to implement the new program.
 - a. Convene key instructional leaders, including the superintendent, school principals, coordinators, and school counselors, to prepare for the implementation of *The Alabama Model*.
 - b. Secure the commitment of individuals to serve on the LEA school counseling advisory council as described in *The Alabama Model*.
 - c. Select a task force composed of individuals not already serving on the LEA school counseling advisory council to create the system's plan, which may include parents/guardians and other program partners.
 - d. Develop work groups (outside of the LEA school counseling advisory council), a work plan, a timeline, and a calendar for completion and actual writing of the LEA's adaptation of *The Alabama Model*.

3. **LEA Needs Assessment.** Purpose: to identify and prioritize needs, both those outlined in *The Alabama Model* and those that are unique to the individual LEA.
 - a. Discuss with the LEA school counseling advisory council the LEA's major areas of concern, such as academic achievement, attendance, behavior, or foundational wellness.
 - b. Develop a needs assessment correlated to the school counseling program standards and other areas of concern, such as those listed in a

- school improvement plan.
- c. Distribute the needs assessment to students, educators, parents/guardians, and other program partners in the community and record responses.
 - d. Analyze data from the needs assessment to establish priorities for the LEA implementation of *The Alabama Model* and disseminate this information to program partners.
4. **LEA Program Foundation Component Alignment.** Purpose: to align resources, review other LEA plans (e.g., strategic plan, Alabama Continuous Improvement Plan), guiding principles, mission and vision, and desired student outcomes.
- a. Review the current *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)*.
 - b. Review other LEA plans.
 - c. Review the LEA’s guiding principles (based on *The Alabama Model*) in terms of the following key elements:
 - focuses on each and every student
 - is comprehensive in scope
 - is student-centered, data-informed, and outcome-based
 - is an integral part of the total educational program
 - is preventive in nature
 - provides for measurable student outcomes
 - involves collaboration with all program partners
 - includes efforts to close the achievement gap
 - d. Correlate the school counseling program’s components with the LEA’s educational mission, including how the program components accomplish the following:
 - focus primarily on students
 - advocate for access and success of each and every student
 - establish a structure for effective and innovative school counseling practices
 - create one vision
 - indicate linkages (e.g., relationship to Alabama State Department of Education, professional standards, LEA)
 - identify long-range results
 - include locally-identified needs
5. **LEA Program Management Components.** Purpose: to define the school counselor’s responsibilities and roles in the school counseling program.
- a. Share and review *The Alabama Model* with program partners and key district leaders, including the following components:
 - responsibilities
 - job description
 - role in discipline
 - role in character education instruction
 - school counselor caseload assignment

- use of time
 - role in program delivery
- b. Consult with LEA leaders and the LEA school counseling advisory council.
 - c. Incorporate, analyze, and utilize data to ensure smooth operation of the program, including the following sets of data:
 - student progress evaluation
 - program evaluation
 - longitudinal data collection/storage/access regarding the school counseling program
 - d. Utilize calendars, including the annual calendar of LEA school counseling activities (e.g., LEA advisory council meetings, school counselor professional development or workshops).
6. **LEA Program Accountability Components.** Purpose: to ensure successful implementation through data evaluation, program audits, and performance evaluations of the school counselor.
- a. Conduct program evaluations, led by the school counseling coordinator, based upon data sources including the following:
 - demographic data
 - attendance data
 - discipline data
 - behavioral referrals
 - promotion and retention data
 - graduation rates
 - standardized test results
 - b. Conduct program audits.
7. **LEA Program Implementation Process.** Purpose: to draft, review, finalize, and approve the LEA school counseling program plan.
- a. Draft initial plan.
 - b. Conduct plan review by administration, board of education, parents/guardians, and other program partners.
 - c. Make changes in the plan.
 - d. Finalize the plan.
 - e. Secure letter of approval from superintendent and/or local board of education.
 - f. Provide the finalized plan to each LEA school counselor.

Development And Implementation of the Individual School Comprehensive School Counseling Program

The school counselor should assume the primary responsibility for the development of the individual school's comprehensive school counseling program – based on the 2026 *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)* and the LEA's plan – with support from school leaders, parents/guardians, and the LEA school counseling advisory council. Successful development and implementation require all program partners, including the community, board of education, educators, parents/guardians, and students, to understand the goals, emphases, and structure of *The Alabama Model*.

The Alabama Model represents a commitment to a consistent, statewide approach to school counseling. This statewide consistency provides assurance that academic and career plans are built on the same foundation from one Alabama school to another.

The following outline lists steps for developing the individual school's comprehensive school counseling program. Full implementation requires all steps to be completed, although they need not be completed sequentially. Some steps may be accomplished simultaneously. An annual review of current local programs will occur to ensure compliance in full implementation.

1. **Individual School Preparation.** Purpose: to review the LEA plan for a comprehensive school counseling program for adherence to the LEA plan and relevant components set forth in the *The Alabama Model*.
 - a. Review the current *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model for Alabama Public Schools (The Alabama Model)*.
 - b. Review the LEA comprehensive school counseling program.
 - c. Review the guiding principles based on the LEA comprehensive school counseling program.
 - d. Correlate the school counseling program's components with the school's mission and vision.
2. **Individual School Consultation with Leadership.** Purpose: to determine, in conjunction with the school administrator, faculty, staff, and program partners, the changes that may need to take place as a result of the review and revision of the program.
 - a. Establish the individual school counseling advisory council.
 - b. Consult and plan with the school administrator regarding the timeline, calendar, and faculty in-service training for implementation of the school counseling plan.
 - c. Consult and plan with the school administrator, advisory council, and faculty for the needs assessment.
3. **Individual School Needs Assessment.** Purpose: to establish priorities for the school. Additional knowledge and skills can be identified through the individual school needs assessment.
 - a. Conduct a needs assessment that applies to the school and its grade level(s).
 - b. Prioritize standards based on data received.
 - c. Review and update regularly to respond to changing student needs, school goals, and data trends.

4. **Individual School Foundation Components.** Purpose: to review the existing school counseling plan and other pertinent school plans to determine the foundation component content, including introductory statements, student knowledge and skills, and sample activities.
 - a. Review the LEA comprehensive school counseling plan.
 - b. Review other individual school plans, such as a school strategic plan or a continuous improvement plan, as appropriate.
 - c. Incorporate applicable components of the LEA comprehensive school counseling program as the introductory material for the individual school plan, including:
 - introduction
 - mission and vision
 - program benefits
 - program goals for students
 - d. Incorporate the student standards which apply to the grade level(s) of the individual school.
 - e. Develop activities and an activity calendar to address every standard in each grade band. Multiple standards may be addressed in a single activity.

5. **Individual School Delivery Components.** Purpose: to establish the specific aspects within the four delivery components of the school counseling program (school counseling instruction, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect services).
 - a. Establish the school counseling instruction program in terms of the following:
 - classroom school counseling activities
 - group activities
 - interdisciplinary curriculum development
 - parent/guardian workshops and instruction
 - b. Analyze needs related to individual student planning, including the following:
 - individual or small-group appraisal
 - individual or small-group advisement
 - placement and follow-up activities
 - c. Establish responsive services to be utilized, including the following:
 - consultation
 - individual counseling
 - crisis counseling
 - peer support
 - d. Establish indirect services to be utilized, including the following:
 - professional development and in-service training
 - consultation, collaboration, and teaming
 - public relations
 - community outreach
 - curriculum development support

- advisory council
- program management and operations
- research and evaluation
- referrals
- fair-share responsibilities

6. **Individual School Management Components.** Purpose: to establish the school counselor’s responsibilities and roles in the school counseling program.

- a. Lead an annual school administrator conference that reflects *The Alabama Model* and any additional program requirements, including the following:
 - responsibilities
 - job description
 - role in discipline
 - role in character education instruction
 - school counselor caseload assignment
 - use of time
- b. Consult with LEA and individual school counseling advisory councils.
- c. Develop a calendar for the academic year showing the planned implementation of the three domains (academic, career, and foundational wellness development).
- d. Develop or adapt forms to gather information for documenting program implementation and program effectiveness.
- e. Incorporate use of data, including the following:
 - student progress evaluation
 - program evaluation
 - management, collection, storage, and access to longitudinal data regarding the school counseling program
 - data analysis
- f. Develop action plans, which may include the following:
 - program implementation plan
 - closing-the-gap action plan
- g. Utilize calendars, including the following:
 - annual calendar of LEA/individual school counseling activities (e.g., LEA or individual school advisory council meetings, school counselor in-service programs)
 - monthly/weekly calendar of LEA/individual school counseling activities (e.g., counseling staff team meetings, classroom counseling instruction, group counseling sessions)

7. **Individual School Accountability Components.** Purpose: to provide for data evaluation, program audits, and performance evaluations of the school counselor.
 - a. Conduct program evaluations, led by the school counselor, based upon data sources including the following:
 - demographic data
 - attendance data
 - discipline data
 - behavioral referrals
 - promotion, retention, and graduation rates
 - standardized test results
 - program evaluation and sharing of results
 - program goals for improvement
 - b. Conduct program audits led by the school counselor.
 - c. Utilize school counselor performance evaluations, including analysis of data regarding standards implementation.
8. **Individual School Program Implementation Process.** Purpose: to draft, review, finalize, and approve the school counseling program plan.
 - a. Draft initial plan.
 - b. Conduct plan review by administration and other program partners.
 - c. Make changes in the plan.
 - d. Finalize plan.
 - e. Secure letter of approval from instructional leaders (e.g., principal, superintendent, local board of education).
 - f. Provide the finalized plan to appropriate personnel.

Program Accountability

Program accountability and evaluation are integral components of high-quality school counseling programs. Both programs and school counselors must be held to high professional standards. In addition, school counselors should utilize data from student results and ongoing evaluation of program implementation to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program. Virtual school counseling activities must be included in program evaluations and audits.

Fostering Student Growth

In student-centered, data-informed school counseling programs, analyzing student outcomes creates a basis for discussion and planning and ensures that activities focus on students' needs and the school counselors' role in addressing them.

Student Data. School counselors use data to monitor academic development, career development, and foundational wellness, which provides a basis for ensuring that each and every student receives the support necessary for success. School counselors should be proficient in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement and related data used to evaluate student progress. School counselors demonstrate ethics in the collection, management, and maintenance of data as they adhere to regulations set forth by law, including the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Academic Achievement Data. Academic achievement data measure academic progress and may include the following:

- standardized test data
- grade point averages
- graduation rate
- graduation requirements
- grade-level benchmarks in reading, mathematics, and other content areas
- course completion success rate
- promotion and retention rates
- completion of specific academic programs (honors, career-readiness indicators, credentials and certifications)

Achievement-Related Data. Achievement-related data measure those areas which have been shown to correlate with academic and foundational wellness success and may include the following:

- discipline reports
- attendance reports
- family and community engagement
- participation in extracurricular activities
- alcohol, tobacco, and other drug violations

Standards-Related Data. These data measure student mastery of the standards in the comprehensive school counseling program and may include the following:

- pre- and post-assessment data from activities or interventions that address specific standards
- participation data from activities or interventions that address specific standards

Disaggregated Data. School counselors examine academic achievement data and develop outcome-based interventions designed to ensure academic success for each and every student. School counselors should disaggregate data to determine areas of growth or need among subgroups in order to provide appropriate services for under-served, under-performing, and under-represented student populations. Disaggregated data often precipitate change because they identify issues of imbalance and focus discussion upon the needs of subgroups. Disaggregated data should be analyzed to ensure equitable access for students in virtual programs. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- demographic information
- home language
- special population status
- grade level

Data Over Time. Collecting and maintaining data allows the school counselor to construct an accurate picture of the impact of the school counseling program over time. Assessing the school counseling program reveals how effectively it meets the academic, career, and foundational wellness needs of students. The process of gathering and analyzing data ensures that the implementation of the school counseling program identifies the specific needs of students, including needs that are unique to their school and community. Data analysis is the mechanism by which the school counselor is able to acquire specific information to best understand these needs.

Fostering Program Growth

Alabama school counseling programs should be data-informed and outcome-based. Thus, each school counseling program incorporates processes that promote evaluation, accountability, and revision.

Program Evaluations. Evaluation of the comprehensive school counseling program is a vital element in determining its effectiveness. Evaluation provides information for enhancing and improving the program and demonstrating accountability. An evaluation of the school counseling program uses participation data, student standards data, and achievement data. In addition, input and collaboration from parents/guardians, school personnel, and community partners is utilized to measure the degree to which students have acquired the skills and knowledge defined by the standards of *The Alabama Model*.

- **Participation Data** measure engagement through students' participation in opportunities that prepare them for school and lifelong success. Examples include how many students access the school counseling program, how often they participate, and for what length of time they participate. Participation data should capture virtual engagement metrics when applicable, including attendance in online sessions and completion of digital modules.
- **Post-Event Evaluation Data** measure engagement and satisfaction with events presented as part of the school counseling program. This data

can include feedback regarding organization and delivery. In events that include parents/guardians or other community partners, it is critical to measure their impressions of the event.

- **Student Standards Data** measure attainment of the student standards through pre- and post-assessments.
- **Achievement Data** measure performance through student achievement to identify any students or student subgroups who are not achieving at their highest potential. It includes measurement of any factors that contribute to achievement, including but not limited to attendance rates, discipline rates, systemic barriers, student perspectives, and education partner perspectives. The impact of the school counseling program on student data may be measured by traditional grades, standards-based grades, benchmark assessments, promotion rates, graduation rates, and test scores.

These data help determine success in terms of the number of graduates who master the academic, career, and foundational wellness standards essential for becoming successful adults.

Program Audits. A program audit evaluates the current status of the school counseling program and assesses its alignment with *The Alabama Model*. Its primary purpose is to guide future actions within the program and to improve future results for students. Program audits may first be performed when a school counseling program is being designed and then conducted annually to appraise the progress of program development. Annual audits of program implementation recognize strengths and weaknesses and determine the program’s needs for the following school year.

The program audit evaluates the school counseling program in the following areas, including but not limited to:

- guiding principles
- mission
- vision
- domains
- goals
- standards
- individual student planning
- responsive services
- system supports
- annual school administrator conference
- advisory council
- needs assessment
- action plans

Fostering School Counselor Growth

Effective evaluation of school counselors requires a comprehensive approach that reflects the unique nature of their role. School counselor evaluation should balance quantitative and qualitative measures and be aligned with professional standards.

Role-Based Goals and Responsibilities. Evaluation should align with the school counselor job description as well as program and outcome goals in

- academic development;
- career development; and
- foundational wellness development.

Evaluations should be based solely on tasks that fall within the school counselor’s scope of responsibility as outlined in *The Alabama Model*, not on unrelated tasks such as administrative duties.

Student Outcomes and Impact. Evaluation should utilize data to measure impact, not just quantity of activity, on

- graduation rates, attendance, behavioral referrals, and course completion;
- reduction in achievement gaps;
- college/career readiness indicators; and
- pre/post assessments from interventions.

School counselors should not be held solely accountable for student outcomes but rather for their contribution to improving these outcomes.

Program Implementation. Evaluation should assess how well the school counselor implements a comprehensive school counseling program, including

- annual calendars and use-of-time analysis (e.g., 80% of time spent on direct/indirect student services);
- delivery of classroom lessons, group counseling, and individual counseling; and
- use of needs assessments and student data to guide interventions.

Professional Practice and Skills. Evaluation should utilize observation and tools to assess

- communication and collaboration with students, staff, and parents/guardians;
- ethical decision-making;
- crisis intervention and conflict resolution; and
- advocacy for development and success of each and every student

Program Partner Feedback. Evaluation should consider feedback from persons impacted by the school counseling program by

- gathering feedback from students, school staff, and parents/guardians; and
- ensuring feedback focuses on support, accessibility, and effectiveness.

Professional Growth and Goals. Evaluation should foster reflection on how the school counselor grows professionally and contributes to the overall growth and development of the school by reviewing

- professional development completed;
- progress toward program and outcome goals set at the beginning of the year; and
- contributions to school climate and leadership.

Glossary

Advisor/advisee programs: School programs designed to develop connections between students and school staff. Advisor/advisee programs are structured to pair students (advisees) with a teacher, school counselor, or staff member (advisor) who provides guidance and support.

Alabama Career Planning System (ACPS): A platform that provides education and career planning resources for students, parents/guardians, and educators in Alabama. It helps students explore career interests, connect with local industries, plan for postsecondary education, and build skills for the workforce.

Co-curricular activities: Intentional learning experiences that complement, reinforce, and enhance a student’s formal academic curriculum.

Examples: peer helper, tutoring, field trips, job shadowing

Consultation: A collaborative process in which school counselors work with teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and community partners to plan and develop strategies that support student success and well-being.

Closing-the-gap action plan: A plan developed by schools to identify and address gaps in student achievement and behaviors. The plan outlines specific goals and interventions, and provides measurable steps to ensure positive student outcomes.

Direct services: Student services provided in person or through direct interactions between school counselors and students. Direct services may include, but are not limited to, large group or classroom instruction, small group instruction, individual counseling (brief, short-term), small group counseling (brief, short-term), workshops, schoolwide events, student advisement and appraisal, and crisis response.

Fair-share responsibilities: Duties that are assigned to all staff on occasion, such as lunch supervision, bus duty, recess supervision, or attendance at sporting events. Fair-share responsibilities refer to non-school-counseling duties that all staff members share equitably to maintain a positive and safe learning environment.

Foundational wellness: Foundational wellness supports a student’s ability to be successful in daily life activities. It can include life skills such as maintaining good physical health, having mental clarity, maintaining balanced routines, developing positive relationships, and managing stress and responsibilities.

Healthy relationships: Relationships characterized by positive connections with peers, teachers, family, or others.

Indirect services: Management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total comprehensive school counseling program. Indirect services may include, but are not limited to, participation in advisory councils, community outreach, consultation, curriculum development support, parent/guardian outreach, public relations, professional development and leadership, school counseling program management and operations, and research and evaluation.

LEA (local education agency): A board of education or other public authority that is legally constituted for administrative control or direction of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, or school district.

Mental health therapist: A licensed professional trained to provide long-term therapeutic support and treatment for individuals experiencing

emotional, psychological, or behavioral issues. These professionals may work directly for the school district as school-based therapists or be employed through external service agreements as contracted therapists.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): A comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support all students' strengths and needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based decision-making.

Needs assessment: A systematic process used to identify the strengths and gaps in the services and resources available to each and every student.

Personal education plan of study: An outline of an individual student's high school courses that incorporates career exploration and assessment results to guide decisions about advanced classes, electives, and extracurricular activities.

Responsive services: Services provided within the school counseling program that consist of activities to meet the immediate needs of students. These services may include prevention, crisis intervention, and post intervention.

School counselor: A certified professional who works in educational settings to support students' academic achievement, career planning, and foundational wellness.

Short-term counseling services: Services that provide students with support and coping strategies within a short span of time to address specific concerns or challenges.

Student support services: Resources and programs within a school or district designed to help students succeed in academics, career development, and foundational wellness.