

District Implementation »

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The following guidelines have been provided to help Oregon school administrators implement Oregon’s Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.

Comprehensive school counseling programs facilitate student growth, self-awareness and addresses barriers that interfere with a student’s ability to participate in the learning process, to learn and achieve. Although the content of the program focuses on student development results such as social adjustment, educational planning, career development, personal growth, and good citizenship, it is how these results enhance student learning and success that justifies the existence of the comprehensive school counseling program.



Developmental Domains and Student Standards

Oregon’s Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs is comprised of four developmental domains (Academic, Career, Social/Emotional, and Community Involvement), which include broad categories of the mindsets and behaviors necessary for all students to be career, college and life ready. The four student development domains prepare students for:

- **Learning to Learn (Academic)** - Students participate in a well-rounded and personalized learning education, achieve high academic standards, acquire relevant technical skills, demonstrate proficiency in essential skills, and continue as lifelong learners.
- **Learning to Work (Career)** - Students plan their education and career paths, successfully manage their careers, and work-life through personal transitions and economic change.
- **Learning to Live (Social/Emotional)** - Students build, maintain, and nurture relationships with others and learn to adjust and grow in a rapidly changing world.
- **Learning to Contribute (Community Involvement)** - Students prepare to be involved as contributing members of their local and global community.

District Policy

School district policy is essential for the long-term success of the school counseling program. Policies that support the comprehensive school counseling program must reflect pertinent laws and school district goals. This policy institutionalizes the program in the district and provides sustainable support to the students it serves.

The following Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) reflect the school district level requirements for comprehensive school counseling programs and related activities, and these rules can be mirrored and expanded upon in local board policy statements:

- **OAR 581-022-2060** directs districts to provide a developmental, coordinated, and comprehensive counseling program and to adopt specific counseling goals.
- **OAR 581-022-2000** establishes the requirements for the high school diploma, which include district support to students with the development of education plans and profiles as well as demonstrating proficiency in essential and career-related skills, knowledge, and activities.
- **OAR 581-022-2055** requires schools to provide career education curriculum written to address essential skills, education plan and profile, and the four student development domains: as part of their comprehensive school counseling program.

(For the full text of these OARs see [Oregon Administrative Rules \(OARs\) related to school counseling, page 67.](#))

In conjunction with OARs, school board policies should reflect the official district goals for student learning and the comprehensive education program delivered in a school district. A district policy represents a statement of commitment and describes the essential elements of a course of action that has governing board support. A policy influences critical decisions concerning the planning, implementation, and continuous improvement of a comprehensive counseling program. Clear policy directives are essential for the successful operation of any program in a school district over time.

Sample District Policy Statement

It is the policy of XYZ School District Board that the Comprehensive Counseling Program assists each and every student in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to become effective students, responsible citizens, productive workers, and lifelong learners.

To do this, as an integral and central part of its educational program, each school building will deliver core counseling curriculum, individual planning, and services responsive to individual needs that are developmentally appropriate. Staff assignments will be made to ensure these program elements are carried out. Through a district level program team, the district will coordinate and articulate these services between buildings and with other community resources.

Sample District Mission Statement

School counselors in the Beaverton School District promote student growth and development by being:

- Advocates for ALL students
- Equitable: Ensuring ALL students have access and opportunity to a quality, high level education
- Data Driven: Using data to enhance our comprehensive counseling programs
- Innovative/Engaging : On the forefront of professional practice
- Collaborative: Partnering with parents, school staff, and the community, to provide a safe, supportive environment for students to be successful lifelong learners and problem solvers.

As a district's comprehensive school counseling program progresses, periodic presentations to the board help keep its members apprised of development status, curriculum activities, and program accomplishments. Trust develops as a result of shared information and active feedback opportunities. Trust between the program team and school district leadership will generate an enduring support for the program.

School district boards also provide a key link between schools and policy makers at the state level. As elected spokespeople for their communities, school board members are in a position to articulate the impact of school counseling on student success. Reporting regularly about the program ensures that they understand that the program content is integral to the district's mission.

Professional Staff

The delivery of a counseling program requires the participation of all school staff to provide comprehensive, integrated services, developmentally appropriate core curriculum, and individual student planning. A team of stakeholders guide the program goals and oversee implementation, documentation and evaluation of the program. The program team is typically facilitated by a licensed school counselor trained in a counselor education program rooted in the ASCA National Model/Oregon's Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. The core program team may be comprised of licensed counselors as well as school psychologists, school social workers, specialized counseling and career development personnel, and clerical support staff in a large school district. Small, rural district needs might

be met with a single individual, a team approach, or contracted services.

A professional licensed school counselor provides student advocacy, responsive services, and system support in order to increase the opportunities for students to meet school and district standards and successfully transition to the student's chosen post-secondary option. The involvement of a licensed counseling professional is crucial to delivering a comprehensive counseling program where leadership, curriculum development, staff development, student counseling, consultation, and advocacy are integral components of programming. School counselors contribute unique skills and knowledge and all districts, regardless of size, should develop a strategy for securing those skills and knowledge within the staff resources of the district.

Counselor-Student Ratio

OAR 581-022-2060(3), Counseling Staff Assignments, requires that "Each school district shall maintain a licensed staff and promote effective counseling and advising practices consistent with the district's expected comprehensive school counseling program outcomes." While staffing is a local decision, the OAR directs school districts to consider: (a) Alignment with the American School Counselor Association and School Social Work Association of America recommended ratio of 1:250 students and the number of aides or clerical staff assigned to support the implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program.

Districts determine reasonable student to counselor ratios for their elementary, middle, and high schools, based upon assigned tasks and national and state standards. Districts may develop a standard for the number of student contact hours per full-time equivalency to ensure that non-counseling and quasi-administrative activities do not replace the time allocated to direct student services. Such determinations might be reflected in district policies for the comprehensive counseling program.

Examples of School Counseling Staff Responsibilities

- Advocate for each student's success in school and life.
- Develop, implement, and continuously improve the school's comprehensive counseling program.
- Design and implement developmentally appropriate core counseling curricula with the support of classroom teachers.
- Oversee the initiation of student education plans in seventh grade and the annual review of the education plans and profiles; counsel students through planning and decision-making issues.
- Oversee the selection and administration of career assessment tools and the interpretation of results with students.
- Train classroom teachers in the delivery of the core counseling curriculum and educational planning activities and strategies.
- Assess and intervene with students who are experiencing emotional, social, academic, and personal issues that interfere with their success in school.
- Counsel small groups and individual students to help them with self-identity, academic issues, behavior problems, peer relations, family issues, abuse, substance abuse prevention, or other academic or social needs.
- Consult with teachers, staff, and parents regarding meeting the developmental needs of students.
- Refer students with critical needs, in consultation with their parents when appropriate, to appropriate community resources.
- Participate in systemic processes that contribute to the effective operation and continuous improvement of the school.
- Provide leadership and advocacy to impact systemic change and improve student outcomes.

Staff Development

Licensed school counselors are evaluated on their performance as school counselors using standards specific to the profession. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has defined professional competencies, and these provide an excellent resource for informing the development of individual performance standards specific to a district's program design and staffing.

The ASCA School Counselor Competencies (www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/SCCompetencies.pdf) outline the knowledge, attitudes and skills that ensure school counselors are equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the profession.

The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Ethics/EthicalStandards2016.pdf) specify the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the highest standard of integrity, leadership and professionalism.

OAR 581-022-1720 indicates that school districts shall adopt and implement personnel policies which address:

- a. Affirmative action;
 - b. Staff development;
 - c. Equal employment opportunity;
 - d. Evaluation procedures; and
 - e. Employee communication system.
- f. The requirement for releasing to Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, another district or any person upon request the disciplinary records of an employee or former school employee if the employee was convicted of one or more of the list of crimes addressed in ORS 342.143.

Roles and responsibilities related to comprehensive counseling programs are clearly delineated in the position descriptions of all staff assigned to the program. Position performance standards consider the unique requirements of these assignments. Staff development plans include activities to develop or update knowledge and skills related to the program goals and individual needs.

Performance standards for counseling program staff reflect professional standards and ethics. All licensed educators (teachers, counselors, administrators, and supervisors) in Oregon are bound by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission "Standards for Competent and Ethical Performance of Oregon Educators" (OAR 584, Division 20). Additionally, licensed school counselors should be evaluated on their performance as school counselors using standards specific to the profession. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has defined the standards of practice, and these provide an excellent resource for informing the development of individual performance standards specific to a district's program design and staffing (see the ASCA Standards of Practice, www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/SCCompetencies.pdf).



Instructional Materials and Facilities

A robust comprehensive counseling program requires a job description reflective of the education and expertise of licensed staff, curriculum materials, counseling tools, and access to facilities and equipment to implement with complete fidelity of district policy. In some schools, this may include a career resource room or counseling center to serve as the focal point of all program services and activities.

Curriculum Materials

Curriculum should be research based and aligned to student standards. These materials include books, assessment instruments, web-based subscriptions, or other instructional and planning tools defined as part of the program content. Access to technology is essential to delivering a comprehensive counseling program that is engaging and student-centered.

Instructional Materials

Students learn a range of academic, social/emotional, career development, and community involvement skills within the content of a comprehensive counseling program. Some examples of this content may include:

- Study skills
- Test-taking skills
- Organization, note-taking, academic strategies
- Positive self-concept and awareness
- Building positive relationships
- Decision-making
- Drug and alcohol abuse prevention
- Depression awareness and suicide prevention
- School violence prevention
- Cybersafety
- Educational planning, postsecondary school selection, test preparation, and securing financial aid
- Career exploration and planning: Connection of work and learning, understanding of life and occupational roles
- Employability and job acquisition
- Civic engagement in organizations, community, and society

In providing program materials, school districts should establish review guidelines to ensure that materials to be used meet standards of high quality, just as they would establish review guidelines for textbooks for other curriculum areas. OAR 581-022-1640, Instructional Materials, requires that:

- Districts provide opportunity for community and parent involvement in the selection of materials.
- Selected materials support program goals and reflect current knowledge and technologies in the field.

Counseling Center Essentials

- Computers, printers, photocopier, fax, telephone
- Internet access
- AV equipment
- Filing cabinets and shelves for confidential storage of student and resource materials
- Confidential, sound-proof counseling space

Facilities

The comprehensive counseling program is an integral part of the school community. Creating a centralized space for resources and activities allows for better visibility and accessibility by students, teachers, and community members. A center may be used for individual student meetings as well as small and large group sessions. For secondary students, a center provides a one-stop location for career planning, career-related learning, job placement, postsecondary school exploration, and financial aid and scholarships. For younger students, a center serves as a place for information and services on personal growth and development. It also provides the focal point for working with community partners in coordinating employment opportunities, career-related learning experiences, and other school-to-career activities for students.

Management and Finances

A successful comprehensive counseling program requires a commitment of resources to implement, maintain, evaluate, and improve the program. A budget detailing the financial support required for the effective operation of the program establishes the program as a district priority. The program team, in concert with an advisory group, works with school administration to determine how to adequately fund the program and develop strategies that are consistent with the overall building and district budget requirements, resources, and plans. The budget is reviewed annually in light of program evaluation and improvement plans.

Evaluation and Improvement

Program evaluation and improvement has four components:

1. Self-analysis of the school counseling program's strengths and areas of improvement using the school counseling program assessment. (See [School Counseling Program Assessment, page 83.](#))
2. Review of program goals created at the beginning of the school year.
3. Self-analysis of the school counselors' strengths, areas of improvement related to knowledge, abilities and skills and mindsets necessary to meet the demands of the profession using the school counselor competencies assessment.
4. Evaluation of the school counselor's performance by an administrator using the school counselor performance appraisal.

See [Accountability, page 52](#), for more information.



District Implementation Checklist

The following checklist has been provided to help Oregon school districts design, implement, assess, and improve comprehensive school counseling programs.

District Policy Indicators

- The school district's board has recognized the comprehensive counseling program and the student standards as an essential and integral part of the entire educational program as reflected in appropriate policy documents and directives.
- The school district's board has adopted comprehensive counseling program goals, specified activities for achievement of these goals, ensured school-level goals and activities, and assigned counseling responsibilities to staff in accordance with OAR 581-022-2060.
- The school district's board is updated at least annually on program status and continuous improvement efforts.

Professional Staff Indicators

- Licensed school counselors are part of the team that plans and coordinates the district and building comprehensive school counseling program, based upon student outcome data utilizing continuous improvement processes.
- Job descriptions for all staff members involved in the delivery of the comprehensive counseling program include clear statements about these responsibilities and list the related duties.
- Licensed school counselors are available for the counseling functions in the program delivery to students.
- Student to counselor ratios are reasonable and reflect state and national professional standards.
- Non-counseling and quasi-administrative duties are kept to the minimum in order to maximize direct services to students.

Staff Development Indicators

- The school district's position descriptions reflect comprehensive counseling program duties for all staff members, particularly those who have specific, assigned program roles and responsibilities.

- Performance standards for each position reflect relevant professional standards.
- Professional development plans for the individual educators and the district include activities related to the comprehensive counseling program.

Instructional Materials Indicators

- All curriculum materials and tools used in the comprehensive counseling program meet district and state standards for quality.
- The core counseling curriculum has been reviewed and adopted in the same way other curricular areas are reviewed and adopted in the school district.
- The core counseling curriculum is articulated between grade levels and between school buildings.

Facilities Indicators

- Confidential space for individual and group counseling activities is available in each building when needed.
- Classrooms and computer labs are available for delivery of curriculum components of the program.
- Adequate and protected storage space is provided for program materials and student work, such as career portfolios.
- Educational planning and career information is available to high school students during school hours for student and parent use.

Management Systems Indicators

- The school district has developed a counseling program budget that covers the cost of delivering the content described in its comprehensive program plan.
- The school district collects and uses data about student achievement to inform program decisions.
- The school district regularly updates the school and local community about aspects of the comprehensive counseling program.