

# » Management

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The comprehensive school counseling program must be effectively and efficiently managed to deliver the school counseling curriculum and address the developmental needs of every student. The management component of Oregon’s Framework provides organizational assessments and tools designed to manage a school counseling program. These assessments and tools help school counselors develop, implement and evaluate their school counseling program based on clearly defined priorities reflecting student needs.



## School Counselor Competencies Assessment

The school counselor competencies assessment supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career, social/emotional development and community involvement so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. The assessment helps school counselors self-assess their knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to perform the range of school counselor responsibilities in all four components of a comprehensive school counseling program.

The competencies are applicable in a variety of areas, including those listed.

<b>School counselors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-assess their own competencies</li> <li>Formulate an appropriate professional development plan</li> </ul>
<b>School administrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide the recruitment and selection of competent school counselors</li> <li>Develop or inform meaningful school counselor performance evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>School counselor education programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish benchmarks for ensuring school counseling students graduate with the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for developing comprehensive school counseling programs</li> </ul>

## School Counseling Program Assessment

The school counseling program assessment is used to self-evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the school counseling program in comparison with Oregon's Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. The assessment findings help school counselors and other counseling staff identify strengths and weaknesses of the school counseling program and provide direction for continued program improvement.

The assessment is first completed when a comprehensive school counseling program is being designed and then reviewed and updated at least annually to appraise the progress of program development and implementation.

After completing the assessment, see [Analysis of School Counseling Program Assessment, page 58](#), for more information about analyzing the data.

Major strengths of the assessment are helpful to determine the following:

- Program areas in need of strengthening
- Short-range goals for improvement
- Long-range goals for improvement
- Areas to consider for professional development

Results of the assessment can be shared in several ways to support the development of a comprehensive program. The results can be shared with administrators to inform the administrator of the direction of program implementation. The results may also be shared with the advisory council and other stakeholders to inform the development of program priorities and goals, training and areas of focus. See [School Counseling Program Assessment, page 83](#).



## Use-of-Time Assessment

The use-of-time assessment helps the school counselor determine how much time is spent in each of the components of the Oregon framework. School counselors with comprehensive school counseling programs spend the majority of their time providing direct and indirect services to students. It is recommended that school counselors complete the use-of-time assessment twice a year.

- **Direct student services** are in-person interactions between school counselors and students. Through the direct services components of school counseling core curriculum, individual student planning and responsive services, school counselors help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills identified from the school counseling core curriculum.
- **Indirect student services** are services provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselor's interactions with others. Through indirect services, school counselors provide leadership, advocacy and collaboration, which enhance student achievement and promote systemic change related to equity and access.

For more information about direct and indirect services see [Delivery System, page 48](#).

It is recommended that school counselors spend 80 percent or more of their time in direct student services and indirect student services. The remaining 20 percent of time is set aside for program management and school support services, such as school counseling program foundation, management and accountability tasks. In addition, a small portion of the 20 percent of the school

counselor's time is spent in fair-share responsibilities – the “routine ‘running of the school’ responsibilities that all members of the school staff take equal turns doing to ensure the school's smooth operation” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012, p. 83).

Although spending 80 percent of time in direct and indirect student services is the general recommendation for a comprehensive school counseling program, use of time within the 80 percent may be allocated differently from school to school based on needs identified in school data. Although all components of direct and indirect student services are necessary for a program to be considered a comprehensive school counseling program, decisions about time allocation are based on student needs as demonstrated in the school data profile (see [page 80](#)) and alignment with school and school counseling program goals.

School counselors may find it necessary to adjust the percentage of time in each of the delivery categories from year to year to meet students' needs. In addition, school counselors are able to justify their modification to the suggested use of time by providing a rationale for an increase or decrease to any category based on research and best practice. In programs with more than one school counselor per site, there is often flexibility between and among school counselors in determining how much time individual school counselors spend in the delivery components.



## Use of Time: Effective and Ineffective School Counseling Activities

School counselors' responsibilities are focused on the overall delivery of the comprehensive school counseling program – direct and indirect student services and program management and school support. Administrators are encouraged to eliminate or reassign ineffective tasks, allowing school counselors to focus on the prevention and intervention needs of their program. The chart below represents a comparison between the two similar types of activities and serves as a helpful teaching tool when explaining school counseling program activities.

Effective Use of Time	Ineffective Use of Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ individual student academic program planning</li><li>▪ interpretive cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests</li><li>▪ providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent</li><li>▪ providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems</li><li>▪ providing counseling to students as to appropriate school dress</li><li>▪ collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum lessons</li><li>▪ analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement</li><li>▪ interpreting student records</li><li>▪ providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management</li><li>▪ ensuring student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations</li><li>▪ helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems</li><li>▪ providing individual and small-group counseling services to students</li><li>▪ advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards</li><li>▪ analyzing disaggregated data</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students</li><li>▪ coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs</li><li>▪ signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent</li><li>▪ performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences</li><li>▪ sending students home who are not appropriately dressed</li><li>▪ teaching classes when teachers are absent</li><li>▪ computing grade-point averages</li><li>▪ maintaining student records</li><li>▪ supervising classrooms or common areas</li><li>▪ keeping clerical records</li><li>▪ assisting with duties in the principal's office</li><li>▪ providing therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders (See <a href="#">Responsive Services, page 50</a> for more detailed information on therapy)</li><li>▪ coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards</li><li>▪ serving as a data entry clerk</li></ul>

Adapted from Campbell, C.A. & Dahir, C.A. (1997) *Sharing the vision: The ASCA national standards for school counseling programs*, Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

### Non-School-Counseling Duties

Non-school-counseling duties take away valuable time from implementing a school counseling program that meets the needs of all students. Consider these steps for the reassignment of non-school-counseling duties.

1. Identify tasks school counselors are currently responsible for that do not align with the appropriate duties of a school counselor (see Effective and Ineffective activities for school counselors in the Use of Time section, p. 40).
2. Use data from the use-of-time assessment or estimate the amount of time in hours these duties take away from implementation of the school counseling program.
3. Consider if the tasks really need to be completed and how else the tasks might be completed, including through use of technology for increased efficiency.
4. Determine what school counseling activities would replace these tasks if they were removed, and estimate the impact on students.
5. Express willingness to be a part of a plan for successful transfer of the tasks to staff who have skills to complete the task, keeping in mind that other staff members may already have a large list of responsibilities as well.
6. Recognize that reassigning tasks may take time.

Adapted from Gysbers, N.C. & Henderson, P. (2012) *Developing and managing your school counseling program* (5th ed.), Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

## Annual Agreement

Annual agreements outline the organization and focus of the school counseling program and are made between each school counselor and the administrator in charge of the school counseling program each school year. These agreements ensure formal discussion between the school counselor and administrator about the alignment of school counseling program goals with the goals of the school and can increase an administrator's understanding of a comprehensive school counseling program. Each school counselor develops an annual agreement with the administrator.

When developing the agreement, it is recommended that the agreement:

- Is created and signed by the school counselor and supervising administrator within the first two months of school
- Provides rationale for the school counselor's use of time based on the school's data
- Reflects the school counseling program's mission and program goals, which align with the school's mission
- Lists the school counselor's specific responsibilities within the school counseling program, such as student caseload and program components or activities
- Identifies areas for professional development for the school counselor

When school counselors and administrators meet and agree on program priorities, implementation strategies and the organization of the school counseling program, the program runs more smoothly and is more likely to produce the desired results for students.

### Suggested Steps for Developing an Effective Annual Agreement

1. Assess the guidance and counseling needs of the community and school.
2. Assist in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.
3. Investigate best practices in other communities.
4. Help develop and maintain program elements.
5. Review and recommend program materials.
6. Annually evaluate progress made toward stated objectives.
7. Assist in the revision of the goals and objectives of the program.
8. Offer specific recommendations for improvement.
9. Serve as an avenue of communication between the program and community.
10. Assist the program in obtaining community support.
11. Collaborate with community organizations in providing services to students and their families.
12. Work with employers to create learning opportunities for students.

## Advisory Council

An Advisory Council, or collaborative structure, is a representative group of stakeholders selected to review and advise on the implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program. The council meets at least twice a year and maintains an agenda and minutes for each meeting.

Advisory Councils assist school counselors by:

- Advising on program goals
- Reviewing program results
- Making recommendations about the school counseling program
- Advocating and engaging in public relations for the school counseling program
- Advocating for funding and resources

(Johnson & Johnson, 2001)

### Examples of Activities for Advisory Councils

- Assess the guidance and counseling needs of the community and school.
- Assist in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.
- Investigate best practices in other communities.
- Help develop and maintain program elements.
- Review and recommend program materials.
- Annually evaluate progress made toward stated objectives.
- Assist in the revision of the goals and objectives of the program.
- Offer specific recommendations for improvement.
- Serve as an avenue of communication between the program and community.
- Assist the program in obtaining community support.
- Collaborate with community organizations in providing services to students and their families.
- Work with employers to create learning opportunities for students.

## Creating an Advisory Council

When creating an Advisory Council, school counselors consider items such as:

- **Goals and objectives** – The Advisory Council’s goals and objectives are set prior to selecting Advisory Council members. School counselors are responsible for helping the members understand the council’s purpose and focus. Council members can provide feedback on the goals and objectives, which can be revised as needed.
- **Representation** – The broader the representation on the Advisory Council, the more the group’s work will accurately reflect the community’s values, concerns and interests. Ideally, members of the Advisory Council reflect the diversity of the community and include students, parents, teachers, school counselors, administrators, school board members, Oregon Tribal Governments, and business and community members.
- **Size** – Although broad representation is crucial, the council’s size is an important issue. It is important to create an environment that encourages informed, constructive discussion. A council with too many members may be ineffective. Generally, a good rule of thumb is to establish a council with a minimum of eight members and a maximum of 20 members
- **Appropriate candidates** – Advisory Councils function as a communications link between the school counseling program and the various groups in the school and community: students, parents or guardians, educators, businesses and the community organizations. Appointing members with sincere interest in the school counseling program is recommended. Officially invite potential members by letter to serve on the Advisory Council and provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the council as well as an estimate of time commitment required. Also give potential members an opportunity to decline.
- **Chairperson** – An effective Advisory Council chairperson has skills in planning and conducting meetings. Additionally, the chairperson should possess group facilitation skills and consistently demonstrate an effective working relationships with others.
- **Terms of membership** – Terms of membership include appointments to definite terms of office serving from one to three years. If terms are staggered, there will always be experienced members serving. When a member’s term has expired, appoint a new council member for a new term.
- **Agenda and minutes** – To ensure effectiveness, it is important that each Advisory Council meeting have a specific agenda and goals to be accomplished. Send minutes of previous meetings and an agenda of the

upcoming meeting to each member several days in advance.

- **First meeting** – The chairperson calls the first meeting of the council. Detailed information is provided to council members to inform members of the council’s purpose and goals. In addition, reports, school data and other information previously collected are included in an information packet to each member. Setting meeting dates and times and other organizational activities should take place at the first meeting. Although the number of meetings may vary, the school counseling advisory council should meet at least twice a year to collaborate and provide input.
- **Additional meetings** – As the group forms and develops an identity, agenda topics may naturally arise. However, part of the focus for the first meeting of the school year may be presenting the school counseling program calendar, goals and objectives. At the end of the year, the results gained in the program during the year can be shared along with recommendations for program improvement.

## Advisory Council Indicators

- The school district has developed or designated one or more collaborative structures to advise the comprehensive counseling program’s design, content, structure, delivery, and continuous improvement.
- The roles and responsibilities of the collaborative structure(s) are clearly assigned.
- The assigned structure(s) has appropriate representation from school counseling staff, students, teachers, school administrators, parents or guardians, and the community (both service providers and employers).
- The assigned structure(s) represents the diversity of the school and community.

## Use of Data

The focus and direction of the comprehensive school counseling program is driven by student needs as determined through a review of the school's data. Understanding and using data are essential to ensuring equitable services, and that every student receives the benefits and has access to the school counseling program.

The use of data in data-driven decision-making enables school counselors to show how activities are implemented as part of the school counseling program after a careful analysis of achievement, attendance and behavioral data.

The use of data helps school counselors:

- Monitor student progress
- Identify students who are having difficulties or behavior problems
- Identify barriers to learning
- Understand factors affecting student behavior
- Identify access and equity issues
- Close achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps
- Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of activities within the school counseling program
- Improve, modify or change services provided to students
- Educate stakeholders about the power of a comprehensive school counseling program
- Advocate for additional resources to increase program effectiveness

A comprehensive school counseling program requires school counselors to be proficient in the collection, analysis and interpretation of student achievement, attendance and behavioral data. While the management component of the ASCA National Model aids school counselors by providing tools for planning and data collection, the accountability component helps with data analysis and program results.

## Disaggregating Data

To ensure every student achieves high academic standards, it is important to understand aggregate, global data from the entire student body, but it is even more important to understand the disaggregated data. When disaggregating data, school counselors separate data by variables to determine if there are any groups of students who are not performing as well as others.

For example, a school counselor may be pleased with data revealing that 85 percent of all seniors attend post-secondary education but not be as pleased if disaggregated data reveal that 93 percent of white students attend post-secondary education compared with only 42 percent of underserved students. Disaggregated data often brings to light issues of equity and access and helps focus the discussion upon the needs of specific groups of students.

Although there are many ways to disaggregate data, frequently used categories include:

- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Socio-economic status\* (free or reduced lunch)
- Course enrollment
- Language spoken at home
- Special education
- Grade level
- Teacher assignment

\*Although the socio-economic status of individual students may be helpful in understanding student backgrounds, these data are protected by federal and state laws and may not be readily available to school counselors. Making decisions about prevention or intervention activities based on academic, attendance and behavioral data will help school counselors meet the needs of any student, regardless of background, who is not achieving success.



## School Data Profile

School counselors and other counseling staff use student and school site data to monitor student progress and to determine the needs of students to achieve success. If not otherwise available, the school data profile template can be used to help school counselors organize and disaggregate data. Disaggregated data are needed for the school counselor to gain an understanding of whether or not achievement gaps or issues of equity exist at the school. The following types of data can help school counselors better understand the needs of all students.



### Achievement Data

Achievement data measure students' academic progress. Achievement data fields include but are not limited to:

- Promotion and retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Drop-out rates
- Standardized test data (e.g., state exams, SAT/ACT scores)
- Grade-point averages
- At or above grade/achievement level in reading, math, etc.
- Passing all classes
- Completion of specific academic programs (e.g., honors, AP or IB, college prep, etc.)

### Behavioral Data

Behavioral data measure elements having a strong correlation to academic achievement. These data fields include:

- Discipline referrals
- Suspension rates
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug violations
- Attendance rates
- Course enrollment patterns
- Post-secondary education attendance rates
- Parent or guardian involvement

- Participation in extracurricular activities
- Homework completion rates

The school data profile is provided as a template framework for documenting current school data as well as data over time. Collecting data over time can help provide a better understanding of the impact of the school counseling program. Data are collected in short-term and long-term formats. See [page 80](#).

**Short term:** Data that measure the short-term impact of changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills as a result of school counseling activities or interventions such as:

- Pre-post tests on student standards and competencies addressed in a classroom unit
- Four-year/graduation plans
- Six-year education plan and profile
- Improved test scores after delivering test-taking lessons
- Improved classroom behavior after small-group counseling
- Improved grades from one term to another after delivering homework or study skill lessons.

**Long term:** School-wide year-to-year, longitudinal student impact data collected for areas such as:

- Promotion and graduation rates
- Attendance rates
- Suspension rates
- College acceptance and persistence rates





## Program Results Data

School counselors use data not only to identify areas of concern but also to show the school counseling program has attained goals and made a difference for students (Dimmitt, Carey & Hatch, 2007). In order to demonstrate student outcomes as a result of the school counseling program, school counselors collect and analyze process, perception and outcome data and include them in program activity results reports.

**Process data:** Process data answers the question and shows evidence of what was done for whom. Process data describes how the activities are conducted and how many students were affected by the activity.

**Perception data:** Perception data answer the question, “What do people think they know, believe or can do?” These data can be collected through surveys such as pre-post tests, needs assessments, program evaluation surveys or feedback surveys measuring self-reports of:

- Attainment of competencies
- Changes in attitudes and beliefs
- Perceived gains in knowledge

**Outcome data:** Although it is important to keep track of process and perception data so interventions can be replicated or improved, these data alone are not sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Outcome data show the impact of an activity or program and answer the question, “So what?”

Outcome data provides school counselors with the opportunity to discuss the extent to which the program has had a positive impact on students’ ability to utilize their

knowledge, attitudes and skills to effect improvement in achievement and behavior. These data are collected from multiple sources and include fields such as promotion rates, attendance rates, number of discipline referrals, grade-point averages, student graduation rates, etc.

The data fields mentioned above are typically available in the school’s student information system. These systems or databases greatly enhance the school counselor’s ability to monitor every student’s progress and help to make these tasks a manageable and valuable strategy.

Although data collection and analysis are important, school counselors have limited time and/or resources available to monitor every activity within the school counseling program. Therefore choices are made based on school priorities and data available at the local site. School and district goals, school improvement plans and other documents will help the school counselor determine what activities may be the highest priority. Each school district should provide direction on what is most important to be monitored.

Although collecting and analyzing data are important, these activities do not imply that school counselors are data analysts or attendance clerks. Schools may ask administrators or data managers to assist in the collection and management of this information, or they may hire paraprofessionals to assist with these tasks. Although data collection and analyses take time, the benefits for students and the school counseling program greatly outweigh these costs.

Types of Surveys	
<b>Pre-Post</b>	Given before and after an intervention to determine knowledge gained or to measure a change in perspective
<b>Needs Assessment</b>	Given to students or stakeholders to gather their perception of student or program needs
<b>Program/Activity Evaluation</b>	Given after an intervention or activity to gather participants' opinions about the value of the intervention or activity
<b>Opinion Survey</b>	Given to students or stakeholders to understand their perceptions of the school counseling program or activities
Examples of Perception Data	
<b>Competencies Attainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 percent of ninth-graders understand graduation requirements and have completed a graduation plan</li> <li>100 percent of sixth-graders can identify three career interests</li> </ul>
<b>Changes in Attitudes or Beliefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>93 percent of fourth-graders believe fighting is not an appropriate method of solving problems</li> <li>69 percent of all students report feeling safe at school</li> <li>90 percent of the parents report benefiting from a presentation on college entrance requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Gains in Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>89 percent of ninth-graders demonstrate knowledge of diploma requirements</li> <li>92 percent of all students can identify the early warning signs of violence</li> </ul>
Examples of Outcome Data	
<b>Achievement Outcome Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduation rate improved from 79 percent to 86 percent.</li> <li>Identified ninth-graders increased GPA from 2.0 to 3.4 between first and final marking period.</li> <li>Fourth-graders improved math assessment score from 69 to 73.</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance Outcome Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average attendance increased from 88 percent to 91 percent.</li> <li>Identified students decreased average number of days absent from 15 to 8 during final marking period.</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral Outcome Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discipline referrals decreased by 30 percent for students with four or more referrals.</li> <li>Number of students referred for discipline decreased by 15 percent by the end of the school year.</li> </ul>



## Action Plans

To efficiently and effectively deliver the comprehensive school counseling program, there must be a plan detailing how the school counselor and other counseling staff intends to achieve the desired results (Johnson & Johnson, 2001). Action plans are utilized within three areas: school counseling curriculum, small groups and closing-the-gap activities.

The templates of all three types of action plans are similar and contain the following information:

- Goals to be addressed

- Domain(s), standard(s) and competencies, which are consistent with school and program goals
- Description of school counseling activities to be delivered
- Title of any packaged or created curriculum that will be used
- Timeline for completion of activities
- Name of person(s) responsible for each activity
- Methods of evaluating school success using process, perception and outcome data
- Expected results for students stated in terms of what will be demonstrated by the student

## Curriculum Action Plan

Delivering school counseling curriculum activities can be an effective way to increase student achievement and improve student behaviors and attitudes (Whiston & Quinby, 2009). The curriculum action plan template assists school counselors and other counseling staff in creating effective plans to help students develop the knowledge,

attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level within the domains of academic, career, social/emotional development and community involvement.

School counseling curriculum activities are presented systematically in the school (preK-12) through classroom and group activities. The template (see [School Counseling Core Curriculum Action Plan, page 92](#)) assists school counselors in the design, documentation and implementation of the school counseling curriculum.

- **Design** – Design the curriculum by selecting specific standards and competencies that address student needs as demonstrated through school data. The competencies are selected from, or align with, the ASCA/Oregon Mindsets & Behaviors. Lessons are selected or created to help students gain the appropriate knowledge, attitudes or skills specified in the plan.
- **Documentation** – The curriculum is documented through the school counseling core curriculum action plan. The plan includes the lessons taught, standards and competencies addressed, curriculum used, timelines, projected student outcomes, evaluation methods and persons responsible.
- **Implementation** – The curriculum is implemented through direct instruction, team teaching or coordination with other educators. The standards and competencies are taught using a variety of curriculum materials or activities. Student attainment of the competencies is assessed using formative and interim assessments such as pre-post tests, product creation or activity completion. ([www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment/Pages/Formative-Assessment-Resources.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment/Pages/Formative-Assessment-Resources.aspx))



## Small Group Action Plan

Small group activities have also been shown to have a positive effect on student achievement and behavior (Whiston & Quinby, 2009). The small group action plan template (see [page 93](#)) is used to provide focus and organization to the academic, attendance or behavioral goals of small group counseling activities.

Like individual counseling, small group counseling is provided as a short-term intervention and typically involves four to eight sessions organized to meet specific prevention or intervention goals. The template assists school counselors and counseling staff in the design, documentation and implementation of small groups.

- **Design** – Select students for small groups based on academic, behavior or attendance needs as reflected in school data. Specific standards and competencies addressing student needs are selected from, or align with, the ASCA/Oregon Mindsets & Behaviors. Lessons or activities are selected or created to help students gain the appropriate knowledge, attitudes or skills specified in the plan.
- **Documentation** – The small group is documented through the small-group action plan. The plan includes the lessons and activities, standards and competencies addressed, curriculum used, timelines, projected students, evaluation methods and persons responsible.
- **Implementation** – The small group is implemented using counseling skills and techniques appropriate for the group and a variety of curriculum materials or activities. Student attainment of the competencies is assessed using pre-post tests and success toward reaching the established goals of the group.

## Closing-the-Gap Action Plan

The closing-the-gap action plan template serves as a guide to address academic or behavioral discrepancies that exist between student groups. These discrepancies, often referred to as gaps, are identified through the review of disaggregated data, and school counselors develop detailed action plans indicating activities and resources leveraged to close the gaps.

Closing-the-gap activities often change from year to year based on student needs as demonstrated in the school's data. The template (see [Closing the Gap Action Plan, page 93](#)) assists school counselors in the design, implementation and documentation of closing-the-gap action plans.

- **Design** – Identify students for closing-the-gap activities based on academic, attendance and behavior needs as reflected in school data. Specific standards and competencies addressing student needs are selected from, or align with, the ASCA/Oregon Mindsets & Behaviors. Activities and interventions are selected or created to help students meet the goals specified in the plan.
- **Documentation** – The activities and interventions are documented through the closing-the-gap action plan. The plan includes the activities and interventions, standards and competencies addressed, curriculum used, timelines, projected student outcomes, evaluation methods and persons responsible.
- **Implementation** – The activities and interventions are implemented using counseling, collaboration, advocacy and referral skills appropriate for the identified students. Student attainment of the competencies is assessed using pre/post tests and improvement in achievement, attendance or behavior as specified in the plan.



## Lesson Plans

To successfully deliver classroom lessons related to the school counseling core curriculum, the importance of lesson planning cannot be overstated. School counselors and counseling staff have limited time to spend in classrooms, and it is imperative to give enough time and thought about what will be delivered, to whom it will be delivered, how it will be delivered and how student attainment of the competencies will be evaluated.

The lesson plan template (see [Lesson Plan Template, page 95](#)) can help school counselors and counseling staff plan an effective classroom or large-group lesson. Lesson plan topics include:

- **ASCA/Oregon Mindsets & Behaviors** – Identify the appropriate domain and standard from the ASCA/Oregon Mindsets & Behaviors. The selected standard guide the lesson content.
- **Learning objectives** – State a clear, measurable learning objective related to the selected competency. Verb lists from the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) may be helpful in writing measurable learning objectives; search online to find the list.
- **Materials** – List any materials needed to deliver the lesson.
- **Procedure** – Include steps to:
  - Introduce the lesson
  - Present the content
  - Check for understanding during the lesson by using simple assessments such as think-

pair-share (Jones, Jones & Vermette, 2011)

- **Plan for evaluation** – Determine how process, perception and outcomes data will be collected.
- *Process data* – Identify the number of students who will participate.
- *Perception data* – Allowing students time to create a tangible product that matches the learning objective during class is an active and visible assessment of whether or not the students attained the competency and learning objective (Jones, et al., 2011). In addition, pre- and post-tests will provide perception data.
- *Outcome data* – Identify what academic, attendance or behavioral data the lesson is designed to affect. Although it is unlikely one lesson will have a strong impact on outcome data, a full curriculum or series of lessons on a topic may have a more significant impact.

Although it is impractical to collect outcome data on every lesson presented, collect all three types of data on several lessons each year to measure the extent to which the lesson has had a positive impact on student outcomes.

- **Follow up** – If the lesson is important enough to teach, it is important that all students master the standard, competency and learning objective. Plan for how students will be followed up with who do not master the competencies of the lesson (DuFour, Eaker, Karhanek, and DuFour, 2004).

## Calendars

School counselors develop and publish calendars of school counseling events to inform students, parents, school staff and administrators of what, when and where school counseling activities will be held. Creating calendars also assists school counselors with the development of a comprehensive school counseling program that provides activities and services for all students in the school.

Publicizing the school counseling program calendar encourages staff, parent, student and community involvement as partners in student education. As the program grows and multiple activities are developed, a calendar validates the important support the school counselor program provides students, parents or guardians, staff and administrators.

A well-developed calendar that is complete, timely and visually appealing can be a powerful public relations booster. Time and thought in the following areas can help to produce a useful tool:

- Format for ease of understanding,
- Consistency in timing and distribution methods (weekly, monthly, annually)
- Attractiveness of the design, color and detail
- Identification of grade levels, dates and activities
- Distribution to appropriate persons: students, staff, parents or guardians and community
- Comparison with established goals for time spent in the elements and strategies of the delivery

(Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Myrick, 2003).

## Annual calendar

School counselors use the annual calendar to identify and communicate school counseling program priorities. The school counseling program has one annual calendar that includes all major school counseling activities delivered or coordinated by the school counselor(s). The annual calendar can increase visibility of the school counseling program and provide focus on events or activities of value for the students, parents and staff.

The annual calendar includes activities such as:

- school counseling classroom lessons
- back-to-school night
- open house
- student/parent/teacher meeting days
- standardized tests dates
- career or college nights
- evening activities provided through the school and the community

Organizing the annual calendar in a monthly format can be useful in reminding students, teachers, parents and administrators about upcoming events. The current or upcoming month's events can be posted in prominent places such as the school's website, department and classroom bulletin boards, administrative offices, career center and other sites used to communicate school events. It may also be submitted to the student newspaper or the local newspaper to increase the program's visibility.

## Weekly calendars

Each school counselor creates a weekly calendar that provides a detailed plan of the school counselor's activities for the week. Although the weekly calendar is somewhat flexible due to crisis or immediate student needs that may occur unexpectedly, this calendar serves as a plan for program implementation on a daily basis. The weekly calendar includes activities such as:

- classroom lessons
- group and individual counseling
- meetings with students
- collaboration and advocacy
- data analysis
- committee and fair-share responsibilities



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