Elementary

UTAH COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

College & Career Readiness
School Counseling Program
UTAH

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Utah's College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Overview

The Utah College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Model provides a comprehensive framework for school counselors to promote a whole child approach to academic/learning, life/career, multicultural/global citizenship, and social/emotional development for each student. This K-12 framework is also systemic in that it ensures student supports are deeply ingrained in the system to improve outcomes for students, not only academically but also for lifelong success. Taking a comprehensive and systemic approach offers school counselors, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and policymakers a range of strategies and practical tips to work more effectively in their schools and communities. Effective collection, analysis, and use of data ensure school counselors are accountable for personal and program implementation while meeting the individual needs of students. The data-driven process helps all stakeholders select and implement intentional supports and interventions that close equity gaps, demonstrate program effectiveness, and raise achievement levels for each student.

Elementary School Counseling Program Implementation Guide Overview

Choosing to use this guide indicates a commitment to implementing a comprehensive school counseling program based on the Program Model. Your intentional, concentrated effort to understand and implement a comprehensive program reflects your dedication to the delivery of a program that meets the needs of the whole child.

The purpose of this guide is to **supplement** the Program Model by providing additional insight and resources to help the professional elementary school counselor in developing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. It is important to have thoroughly read the Program Model first as it provides a detailed description of the program framework. Then, this supplemental guide will help you apply your knowledge of the Program Model to enhance the implementation of your elementary school counseling program.

As you work through this document, you will find links to resources and supporting documents embedded throughout the content to further supplement your work. These resources will also be available at the end of this document, under the *Implementation Guide Resources and References* section, so that you can access them from a centralized location.

The Role of the Professional Elementary School Counselor

In alignment with the Program Model, the elementary school counselor implements a program that is comprehensive in scope and preventative in design. Establishing and educating key stakeholders on the Program Model helps solidify the role and expectations of the elementary school counselor. A clear understanding of the role of the elementary school counselor helps align school counseling programs to school improvement goals to maximize the impact on improved student outcomes.

The role of the elementary school counselor is to implement a program where the main focus is prevention. Therefore, the majority of school counselor time is spent providing support at the Tier 1 level. Through a whole school, universal approach, elementary school counselors ensure they reach 100% of students.

One of the intents of this guide is to encourage conversations between the administration and the school counselor, to establish an agreed-upon role of the school counselor in alignment with the Program Model, and to establish how the school counseling program supports the overall goals of the school. It is recommended that the school counselor and building administrator complete the Elementary Principal/Counselor Annual Agreement. This process ensures that the building administrator has reviewed Board Rule R277-464: School Counselor Direct and Indirect Services, including the Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors to ensure the guidelines are followed.

Elementary School Counselor Direct and Indirect Student Services

In 2019, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) approved Board Rule R277-464: School Counselor Direct and Indirect Services. This rule applies to all school counselors, not just for schools that receive school counseling program funding. This rule defines direct and indirect student services, school counselor time allocation, and appropriate and inappropriate school counseling activities. Additionally, definitions within this rule directly align with the Program Model.

It is recommended that you review the Incorporation of School Counselor Services Document (R277-464-3) before continuing.

The Elementary School Counselor Direct and Indirect Student Services Table (see Figure 1) outlines the recommended time allotments for elementary school counselors (adapted from the Incorporation of School Counselor Services Document and Program Model). A Time/Task Analysis should be completed annually to ensure a minimum of school counselor time reflects at least 85% in direct services to students, with a maximum of 15% of school counselor time in indirect services to students. The Elementary Time/Task Analysis is a resource to help elementary counselors complete this task.

Recommended Distribution of Total Elementary School Counseling Time

Program Delivery Systems Areas	Elementary School Percent of Time	Full-time school counselor (1.0 FTE)	Half-time school counselor (0.5 FTE)
Plan for College and Career Readiness *(Direct Services)* To be college and career ready, student development in early awareness, exploration, knowledge, and skills that lay the foundation. At the elementary level, college and career readiness is embedded throughout all delivery systems through a Tier 1 approach and is most prominent in collaborative classroom instruction.	5-10%	*This time is accounted for within the other delivery systems.*	

Collaborative Classroom Instruction *(Direct Services)* Student development in the following College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies domains (**Tier 1** - for <u>ALL</u> students): ● Academic/Learning ● Life/Career ● Multicultural/Global Citizenship ● Social/Emotional	35-45%	14-20 hours per week 63-90 days per year	7-9 hours per week 31-45 days per year
Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports *(Direct Services)* Responsive Services (Tier 2 and 3) ● Group counseling (Tier 2 - 15% of students or less) ● Individual counseling (Tier 2 or Tier 3 - approx. 5% of students) ● Short-term crisis counseling ● Suicide prevention (Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention) ● Trauma-Informed/Restorative Practices (Tier 1, 2, or 3)	30-40%	12 - 16 hours per week 54 - 72 days per year	6 - 8 hours per week 27 - 36 days per year

Systemic Program Management *(Indirect Services)*
● Program management and operations
   ○ Management activities (e.g., calendar, data analysis, etc.)
   ○ Professional development
● Advocacy and outreach
   ○ Collaboration
   ○ Consultation
   ○ Referral
	10-15%	4-6 hours per week
		18-27 days per year
			2-3 hours per week
			8-13- days per year

*Percentages based on a 40-hour work week and a 180-day school calendar school year

Figure 1: Elementary School Counselor Direct and Indirect Student Services Table

Implementing a Preventative Framework through a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS)

The basis of a comprehensive elementary school counseling program is rooted in a proactive approach to prevention and intervention strategies through a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS). The MTMDSS is a program planning and decision-making framework that utilizes an evidence-based practice approach to school counseling core curriculum and instruction aligned with assessments to address the needs of ALL students in Tiers 1 - Universal, 2 - Targeted, and 3 - Intensive in the Utah College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies four domains of academic/learning, life/career, multicultural/global citizenship, and social/emotional.

Elementary school counselors serve as imperative members of the school team supporting an MTMDSS framework. Counselors are knowledgeable in prevention and intervention strategies, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, child development, college and career readiness, and community resources. An elementary school counseling program focuses the majority of its efforts on meeting the needs of all students (Tier 1). By implementing a comprehensive Tier 1 approach, 100% of students are provided with school counseling services, with the intent that 80% of students will benefit from this preventative and proactive approach. To ensure equitable access for each student, elementary school counselors evaluate their program to see if counseling supports are currently delivered to ALL students (not just "available to all" or "opt-in"). There is a plan in place on how to ensure 100% of the students have access to the Tier 1 support/services even if they are absent or working online. Always remember, implementing Tier 1 service delivery with fidelity means every student receives "because they breathe."

Through a data-informed school counseling program, elementary school counselors collaborate with administrators, faculty, and staff to identify students who may need additional academic and behavioral support(s). Through this identification process, school counselors implement targeted interventions and supports to address the needs of the identified students (Tier 2 & 3). It is important to acknowledge that students are not labeled as Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 students. The interventions and supports themselves are identified as Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 and are provided for all students who need those particular supports at any given time. By focusing on a tiered approach, elementary school counselors are able to focus prevention and interventions specific to the needs of students by providing education and skills necessary for students to succeed academically and behaviorally. Positive and healthy school cultures and school climates are the foundations of high-quality learning environments and create the conditions for effective teaching and learning to occur.
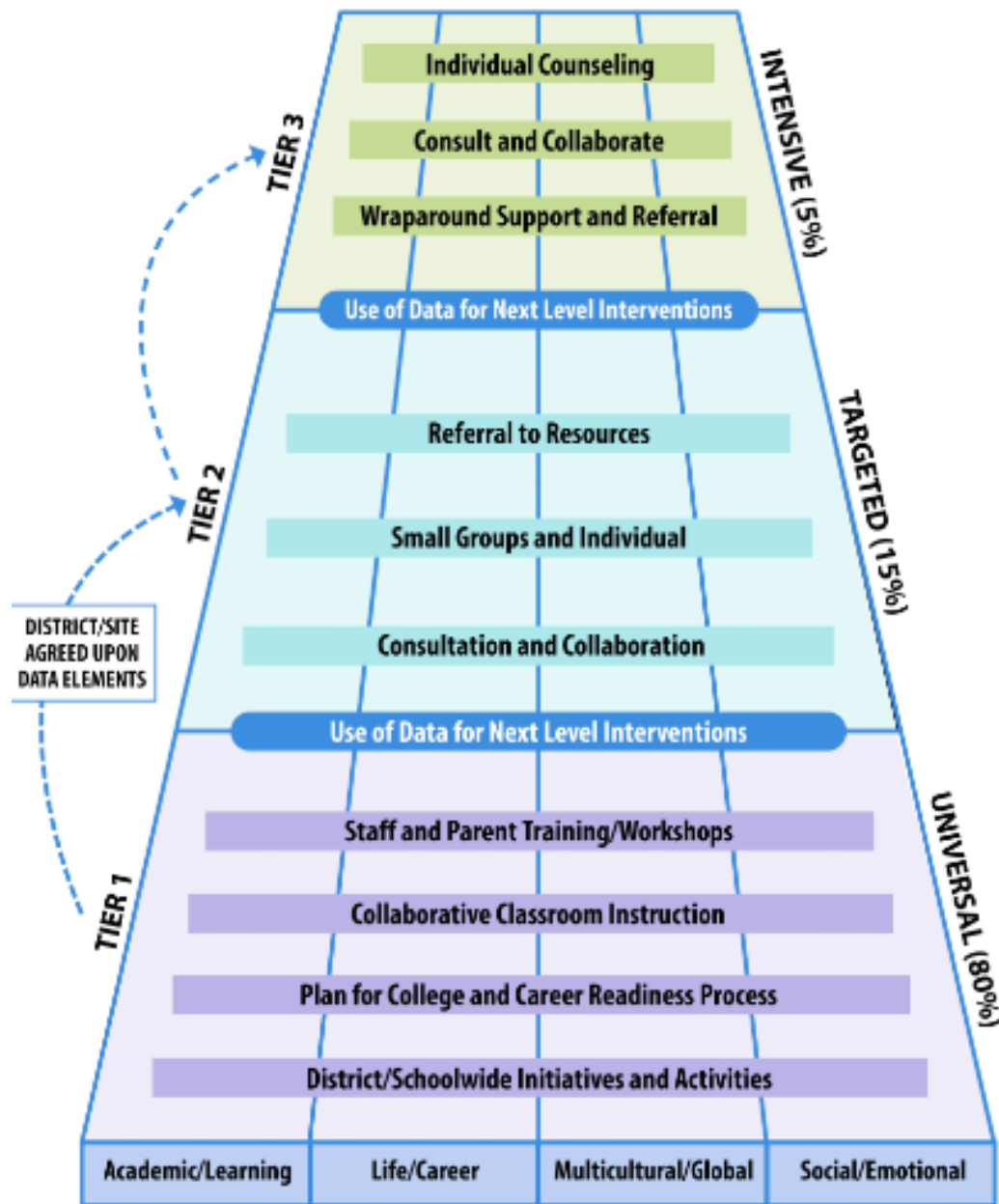
Figure 2: Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS)

Program Delivery System Areas Through an MTMDSS Approach

The Program Model outlines a framework for reaching 100% of students through the following 4 program delivery system areas:

➢ Plan for College and Career Readiness
➢ Collaborative Classroom Instruction
➢ Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports
➢ Systemic Program Management

For the purposes of this implementation guide, the following information provides elementary school counselors with information, resources, and tips to enhance the implementation of program delivery services:

➢ Plan for College and Career Readiness

At the elementary level, school counselors provide opportunities for students to establish a foundation in college and career readiness. Program elements are designed to promote college and career readiness and career literacy through a Tier 1 approach. This includes student development in early awareness, exploration, knowledge, and skills necessary to fully participate in a K-12 Plan for College and Career Readiness (CCR) process.

Schoolwide college and career readiness activities inspire school staff, parents, and the community to engage in the CCR process. This fosters a college and career readiness culture for students. Some activities are ongoing throughout the school year, others take place annually, and some may rotate through different activities depending on the year. The following are a few examples of resources and activities to build a college and career readiness culture:

● College and Career Fair
● College and Career Readiness on-line exploration platforms (e.g., Keys to Success)
● College and Career Readiness Parent Toolkit
● March Madness activities tied to college/career awareness
● Parent Awareness College/Career Night
● School activities that promote paying for college is possible (e.g., scholarships, Financial Aid, my 529 savings plan)
● School activities to support college/career awareness (e.g., Utah College Application Week [UCAW])

Refer to the College and Career Readiness Activities document for additional ideas on how to implement schoolwide CCR activities.

➤ Collaborative Classroom Instruction

Collaborative classroom instruction is how elementary school counselors spend the majority of their time (35-45%). This is an important element as it allows the elementary school counselor to develop a rapport with every student and teacher. Rapport is necessary for success in collaborating, individual and small-group counseling, making referrals, and crisis counseling. Thus, opening up Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports. Remember, elementary school counseling programming is rooted in prevention (Tier 1). It's putting a fence at the top of a populated cliff instead of an ambulance at the bottom. It creates a strong foundation for the rest of your counseling program and a strong foundation that is vital for the students you serve.

Structured Lesson Planning

Lessons consist of a written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative, proactive, and developmental in design. Aligning instruction to the content standards ensures that students acquire mindsets and competencies that are integrated and cross-curricular, meaning they are fully woven into the context of the core curriculum whenever possible, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the students. Facilitating structured lesson plans help students attain the mindsets and competencies necessary to be college, career, and life ready. Thus, guiding students in answering the questions:

WHO AM I? — SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WHERE DO I FIT? — MULTICULTURAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT

WHERE AM I GOING? — LIFE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

HOW WILL I GET THERE? — ACADEMIC AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Figure 3: Utah College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies

From a systemic approach, it is important that the student mindsets and competencies are embedded deep within the system. The term *Collaborative Classroom Instruction* represents the importance of working collaboratively with teachers to ensure that the student mindsets and competencies are embedded in instructional content and reinforced in multiple settings. Therefore, it is considered best practice for the teacher to attend the counselor's lessons with their students. This allows the teacher to use the information to reinforce, solidify, enhance, and embed the lessons learned into their curriculum.

*****Tip**: *When possible, it can be beneficial for the elementary school counselor to have their own classroom in which the students and teacher attend a weekly or biweekly lesson. This allows the counselor to develop an environment that is most conducive to high learning and development while building positive connections to students and teachers.*

*****Tip:** *If Tier 2 or Tier 3 percentages go above the suggested percentage (see Figure 1) at any given time - it may be an indicator that classroom instruction for all students needs improvement and focused refining.*

Determining What Lessons to Teach

The Curriculum Delivery Survey, through CTE Surveys (click "Counselor Login" to create account), is a tool to evaluate which student mindsets and competencies are being taught, and which ones are not. This survey is completed by teachers. It is recommended that this survey be administered every 3 years in conjunction with the Elementary Systemic Assessment. Results from this survey allow counselors to deliver intentional classroom instruction to support the development of student mindsets and competencies in the four domains of academic/learning, life/career, multicultural/global citizenship, and social/emotional.

College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies Action Plan

When determining what curriculum to teach and at which grade level, the College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies Action Plan is a helpful tool. The purpose of this action plan template is to use the data collected from the Curriculum Delivery Survey to provide an overview of the delivery of Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions to address identified gaps. This action plan provides a scope and sequence of how the student mindsets and competencies curriculum will be delivered throughout the school year. Additionally, collaborating with your cone (middle school/junior high and high school) is an important step in the K-12 scope and sequence development process to ensure mindsets and competencies are mastered by the time students graduate. This planning tool may help determine which grade level curriculum will be delivered and if it will be delivered as Collaborative Classroom Instruction, through large groups, small groups, or through College and Career Readiness (CCR) activities.

Also, the counselor and administrator should review student data to determine the needs of the school. If serving multiple schools, it is difficult to provide different lessons for each school. Arrange to meet with all of your administrators and look at the district's needs or the needs of the schools being served as a whole. Once the areas of focus are determined based on the Curriculum Delivery Survey and other data sources, plan out the lessons for the year. Lessons will look a bit different depending on each grade. The topic may be the same just adapted for the student's level. Based on data and needs, the topics may be different for different ages/grades. Doing a different topic per grade would be a heavy load, keep it simple. Remember to work smarter rather than harder.

Lesson Plan and Results Report

Once you have analyzed all data sources as well as completed the College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies Action Plan, the Lesson Plan and Results Report will help you prepare, deliver, and analyze your classroom and small/group curriculum with intention and purpose. The lesson plan may be a lesson within a unit or a single lesson for an event, activity, or classroom lesson. After the lesson has been delivered, complete the results report. Data from the results report (e.g., pre/post survey results) will help drive future curriculum planning and implementation.

Scheduling Collaborative Classroom Instruction

Lessons are taught to each class in each school(s) on a regular basis. If a counselor serves one school, they may be able to be part of the weekly schedule (e.g., *Specials*: Art, PE, Library, Music, Computers, Drama, etc.) If the counselor serves two or three schools, they may teach twice a month. If the counselor serves four or five schools, they will most likely teach a monthly lesson. This will look different in each setting depending on the size of the school(s), the distance between them, and the needs of the students. Being flexible, focusing on prevention, and remembering that

this constitutes the majority of the time will help when prioritizing the schedule at each school. Don't panic, it's doable! Collaborative Classroom Instruction constitutes approximately two to three hours each day.

When starting the school year, meet with the administrator(s) to decide the best way to schedule Collaborative Classroom Instruction, whether it be rotating with a "*Specials"* schedule or scheduling each teacher separately. Generally, grade K-2 lessons are shorter (15-20 minutes) as compared to grade 3-6 lessons (30-45 minutes). If the counselor is rotating with "*Specials,"* the lessons will likely be the same length for all grades. Schedule out the entire school year and be flexible when conflicts arise. **The organization is key**.

> *Tip: If the counselor serves multiple schools, determine which day(s) of the week they will be at each school before scheduling lessons. If the counselor is going to be sharing a space/office with another person (e.g., speech therapist, instructional coach, etc.), be sure to coordinate so they can rotate or stagger the use of the office.*

> *Tip: If serving multiple schools, schedule the same grades during the same week. For example, K-2 grades the first week of the month, 3-4 grades the second week of the month, and 5-6 grades the third week of the month.*

> *Tip: If the school uses an electronic calendar (iCal, Google Calendar), share the schedule. If not, create a document with each teacher's schedule. On the schedule, thank the teachers for allowing the counselor to come to their class and ask them to stay for the lesson. Welcome their comments and encourage them to reinforce what was taught in their classroom. It helps to leave a poster with the main point(s) of the lesson.*

Collaborate with Teachers
There may be specific needs for a particular class. Collaborate with those teachers to schedule and present some extra lessons to help the class. Maybe a class is having a problem with disrespect. Work with the teacher and even invite the principal to role-play situations that demonstrate the problem to the class. This can lead to great problem-solving discussions. During these discussions, teaching moments often arise such as an opportunity to talk about teasing vs. reporting, refusal skills, ways to show kindness and lift each other up, what harassment is, and what constitutes sexual harassment (for older grades) to name a few. The list goes on and on.

> *Tip: When planning lessons know that many counselors are willing to share. It will be extremely valuable to connect with other elementary school counselors to share lesson plans, ideas, and more. When creating lessons, books are a great place to start. Bibliotherapy is a powerful tool for teaching skills, along with object lessons. Having students share with a partner or group is a great way to process what is being taught. At the conclusion of some lessons, have the 3-6 grade students write in a journal or on a simple chart about what they've learned. There are also data proven program lessons available that can be implemented in Collaborative Classroom Instruction. Just be sure to collaborate with teachers and administrators in looking at the needs of the students and how they align with the student mindsets and competencies.*

Parent Workshops and Instruction (indirect service that supports Collaborative Classroom Instruction)

The knowledge of elementary school counselors can be shared with parents by conducting workshops and informational sessions that address the needs of the school community which supports the lessons taught in Collaborative Classroom Instruction. Listed below are some ideas for sharing:

- *Best Practices Parenting Tips* emailed, texted, or posted in the school newsletter
- *Cookies with the Counselor* monthly event
- Presentations during Parent-Teacher Conferences or Literacy Night type events
- Back to School Night Introduction
- Prepared videos
- School Website Counselor's Corner with resources
- Newsletters

Systemic Approach to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

R277-100-2: Social emotional learning means the process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitude, and skills necessary to:

> (a) understand and manage emotions;
> (b) set and achieve positive goals;
> (c) feel and show empathy for others;
> (d) establish and maintain positive relationships;
> (e) make responsible decisions; and
> (f) self-advocate.

The school counselor can be the leader in implementing a systemic Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) environment. SEL can be more than just a 30-minute lesson. A systemic approach to SEL intentionally cultivates a caring, participatory, and equitable learning environment and evidence-based practices that actively involve all students in their social, emotional, and academic growth. This approach infuses social and emotional learning into every part of students' daily lives - across all classrooms, during all times of the school day, and in their homes and communities.

The Center of Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based SEL. CASEL's integrated framework promotes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence in the identified Five Core Competencies: 1) Self-Awareness, 2) Self-Management, 3) Responsible Decision Making, 4) Social Awareness, and 5) Relationship Skills. Although lessons at the elementary level are subject-specific such as outlined in CASEL's five core competencies every lesson supports preparing students for future success by laying a solid foundation for a successful future. These lessons work collectively to develop prosocial thinking, attitudes, and behavior thus supporting dropout prevention, suicide prevention, bullying prevention, substance abuse prevention, college and career readiness, social and emotional strength, seeking help when needed, being a contributing member of society, and learning skills for a successful future.

Schoolwide Integration of SEL and Trauma-Informed and Restorative Practices
Trauma-informed and restorative practices, along with SEL, are widely used, complementary Tier 1 strategies that work well together to build a safe and supportive climate, schoolwide. Trauma-informed and restorative practices are a structure and set of skills that empower adults in a school to create a safe, supportive learning environment. SEL empowers students with the skills and strategies to be able to successfully participate in that structure. Integrating these approaches help to establish schools as a sanctuary space that is rooted in trusting relationships between students and educators, prioritize proactive behavioral supports over-reactive disciplinary consequences, anticipate and respond to challenging student behaviors with de-escalation, and compliment other schoolwide initiatives (e.g., PBIS). It is strongly recommended that elementary school counselors and all school personnel (classified and certified) take advantage of the [USBE Trauma-Sensitive School Professional Development](#) learning opportunity to support the implementation and sustainability of schoolwide integration of SEL and trauma-informed and restorative practices.

Increasing College and Career Readiness Through Collaborative Classroom Instruction
At the elementary level, the 5-10% of time dedicated to Plan for College and Career Readiness is largely integrated into the delivery area of Collaborative Classroom Instruction. The counselor's job is to help **create a college and career readiness mindset** along with developing skills needed for success as a contributing citizen in our global community.

All of the student mindsets and competencies developed through Collaborative Classroom Instruction prepares students for college and careers. Remember, teaching students' employability skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication skills, etc., all contribute to college and career readiness. Elementary school counselors can teach and integrate schoolwide activities that help inspire the development of a college and career readiness mindset.

Collaborative Classroom Instruction with college and career exploration and awareness lessons that teach "College: 1, 2, 4, or more years of training beyond high school to earn a certificate or degree for specific careers," are important. Do fun things like a "Virtual College Tour." Talk about how to pay for college, scholarships, and financial aid, the benefit of saving now, what it's like living on campus compared to home, etc. Stress the importance of attending school every day and doing their best now to prepare for success in college and a career. In presentations throughout the year, discuss how the competency being taught will help in being prepared for success in college and career.

> **Tip: Ask the local college for swag to give away to the students. See who is listening by asking questions about college, how to pay for it, how to prepare now, etc.*

➢ Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social and Emotional Supports

Responsive Services, such as group counseling, individual counseling, and crisis response, are designed to meet the immediate needs of students and provide support for students with Tier 2 & 3 needs. At the elementary level, this should account for 30-40% of the counselor's time. When providing responsive services for students, it is important to note that counselors are not therapists. Rather, responsive services are short-term and based on evidence-based practices that are effective in an educational setting to promote academic/learning, life/career, multicultural/global citizenship, and social/emotional student development. Responsive services are proactive as well as responsive and help students identify problems, causes, potential consequences and benefits, alternatives, and outcomes, so they (students) can make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

Note: School counselors must follow federal, state, and district laws, policies, and regulations when providing responsive services for students, including The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) [Title 53E-9-203: Activities prohibited without prior written consent](#). Each Local Education Agency (LEA) should provide the counselor with a Permission to Counsel Form.

Individual and Small-Group Counseling

Tier 2 & 3 interventions include individual counseling, specialized groups, and appropriate referrals for students who may need additional or targeted support. Small group counseling services may be implemented to help students having difficulty with relationships, personal concerns, or normal developmental tasks which impede student success. Individual and small group counseling helps students identify problems, causes, alternative actions, possible consequences, and appropriate responses. When necessary, referrals are made to appropriate community resources.

> **Tip: When making referrals, consider having them go through the school principal. This allows the principal to be informed of the services that are being provided and awareness of the counselor's caseload. If the counselor is serving multiple schools, remember the principal has insights into the school since they are there on a daily basis. This is another reason to have the principal at the core of the referrals. The principal can also triage referrals. For example, if the referral is related to instruction, the curriculum, or the environment, the referral may best be served by an instructional coach. If it's due to social skills or organizational skills, there may be someone holding groups where they are already addressing those topics. If the concern could benefit the entire class, the counselor may provide an additional lesson rather than individual counseling.*

Individual and small group topics may include anger management, children of divorced/ separated parents, grief, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, etc. There are benefits to individual counseling and benefits to small group counseling. Some topics are very personal and uncomfortable to share with others or parents don't want their child in a group and prefer individual one-on-one counseling for their child. Whereas a small group can provide support and help students see they're not alone or the only one with the challenge. When creating a group consider the personalities of each member and how they will interact. After forming a group, the counselor may find the students aren't cohesive, don't be afraid to split or reorganize the group if necessary.

> **Tip: When beginning a group, it is important to collectively establish rules, norms, and objectives. This elicits a sense of ownership and understanding of the group's purpose and process. Creating a strong foundation the first time they meet will help the group flourish.*

> **Tip: Work with the classroom teacher to set up a regular time to meet with the student (same day of the week, same time). Provide an appointment slip or email for the teacher. Additionally, you may want to keep a record of your individual and small-group counseling sessions. Include the date you serve the student and notes to help you keep track of what you've covered. The notes are for you but may be subpoenaed and can be used as legal evidence, so keep notes objective (not subjective).*

Crisis Counseling

Crisis counseling provides support to students and families facing emergency situations. It is short-term and temporary. There may be times when referrals to appropriate community resources are necessary. Compile a list of available resources. The local mental health agency and health department are great resources to obtain information.

Elementary school counselors are a vital resource in preventing, intervening, and responding to crisis situations. It is important that elementary school counselors are knowledgeable and stay current on the district/school's crisis response policies, protocols, and procedures.

> *Tip: The [USBE Prevention and At-Risk Programs](#) and [Safe and Healthy Schools](#) websites offers resources, supports, and professional development opportunities in the areas of absenteeism and dropout prevention, bullying prevention, child sexual abuse and human trafficking, substance abuse prevention, suicide prevention, etc. You can also download the [Elementary Response Protocol](#) "Let's Be Brave Today." It is recommended that elementary school counselors utilize these resources to further support the implementation of systemic approaches to dropout prevention with social/emotional support.*

➢ Systemic Program Management

Systemic program management activities are considered indirect student services and should not exceed 15 percent of school counselor time. Indirect student services are services provided on behalf of students as a result of effective program implementation and the elementary school counselor's interaction with others. Through indirect services of program management, advocacy and outreach, collaboration, consultation, and referral, elementary school counselors enhance student achievement and promote equity and access for all students. Indirect student services are delivered through the following strategies:

Program Management and Operations

This includes the planning and management tasks needed to support activities implemented in a school counseling program.

Management Activities

To effectively manage the elementary school counseling program, counselors oversee and maintain the following: budget, policies and procedures, annual calendaring, research and resource development, and data analysis.

Professional Development

As the school counseling profession continues to change and evolve, it is imperative that elementary school counselors keep up to date with current trends, new research for effective practice, and evidence-based strategies and techniques through professional development and professional association memberships. Elementary school counselors also provide professional development regarding the school counseling program and other areas of expertise to the school and community.

Advocacy and Outreach

The actions in which school counselors promote equity and access for all students by identifying and removing systemic barriers that impede the academic success of students. Advocacy and outreach help stakeholders understand how the school counseling program is integral to student achievement and college and career readiness through the following:

Collaboration

Collaboration is the process in which multiple individuals work toward common goals and share responsibility for the associated tasks. It occurs in a variety of situations, including faculty and leadership meetings, community partnerships, crisis response, and teaming and partnering. Teaming and partnering can take on many forms but are most often considered to be teacher collaboration, special education team collaboration, multi-disciplinary teams (e.g., Student Support Teams).

Consultation

Consultation is the process of providing and seeking information and recommendations to or from individuals who can support the student's needs. Elementary school counselors both provide and seek consultation to identify strategies to promote student success. Elementary school counselors should work closely with their administration and LEAs to develop user-friendly district-specific resource lists which may include school/district nurse, school/district social workers, school/district psychologist, school/district mental health support, school/district crisis team and other pertinent schools/district support personnel.

Referral

A referral occurs when students' needs extend beyond the training and/or responsibilities of the school counselor role. Elementary school counselors provide instructional, advisement, and counseling services through brief, targeted approaches. When a student needs support beyond short-term services or counseling, it is a school counselors' ethical duty to refer students and parents to school or community resources for additional assistance or information. Elementary school counselors should also work closely with district support personnel (e.g., social worker, school psychologist, behavior specialist, etc.), school administration, and community partners to develop applicable community referral and resource lists for students and parents.

Data-Driven Leadership

Elementary school counselors strive to ensure equity and access to a well-balanced education for every student through the use of data. Working as leaders, advocates, and collaborators, elementary school counselors promote student success by working to close existing gaps in the areas of access, attainment, and achievement. Data helps counselors answer the critical question, "Is the school counseling program making a difference for students, and how can I prove it?"

Intentional collection and analysis of process, perception, and outcome data are essential components of exemplary school counseling programs. Analysis of *disaggregated* student and program data is the heart of having a data-informed program. It ensures that each program and intervention implemented for students is assessed for effectiveness and provides the basis for informed decision-making. Ongoing analysis of data allows elementary school counselors to make modifications to the school counseling program to ensure services for students are targeted, intentional, and address identified gaps.

Elementary Systemic Assessment

The Elementary Systemic Assessment, through CTE Surveys (click "Counselor Login" to create account), is one tool to help evaluate the effectiveness of the school counseling program. This survey should include feedback from a significant representation of students, parents, and teachers that is reflective of the overall school demographics. It is recommended that this survey be administered every 3 years in alignment with the secondary school counseling program 6-year review cycle to support program alignment and data analysis across feeder schools. Results from this survey allow counselors a data-informed direction for the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Student Outcome Accountability Report (SOAR)

The SOAR provides elementary school counselors with student data to assist in the data-decision making process. Individual schools can access their SOAR through the USBE Data Gateway (you may need the assistance of your LEA Information Technology Department to obtain access). The SOAR Business Rules have been established to help school counselors analyze and interpret the data.

After the data is collected, create your school's data story by formalizing the systemic assessment results, school improvement plan, school data reports, and other data sources (e.g., office disciplinary referrals, climate surveys, SHARP survey, etc.) The School Data Summary is a great tool to help create your data story by identifying sources of data, starting conversations with your administrator and faculty, identifying gaps, and prioritizing program goals. This process allows you to assess what areas of the school counseling program that you should focus your efforts on to bring about systemic change and address program planning and implementation questions such as:

1. What steps will you take?
2. What kind of help will you need?
3. When will it be done?
4. How will you measure success?

Outcome data is an essential component of systemic practice in the areas of access, attainment, and achievement for student success. Based on the school data summary, you will identify 1-3 top areas of need, one of which will be chosen as a closing-the-gap activity through the form of a data project. If the data project shows student growth using outcome data, you may consider using the data project as a Student Learning Outcome (SLO) project.

Data Projects and SLO's

School counselors are uniquely positioned to create a program that equitably serves all students and supports the school improvement plan. As school counselors work within the system with administration and school leadership teams, they work continuously with data. A data project is a way that a counselor can connect school needs and goals for improving SLOs.

Elementary school counselors are accountable for their individual performance as well as their program's performance. It is recommended that elementary school counselors complete a data project each school year using the [Data Project Reporting Template](#). Data projects promote a systemic process of a data-driven decision-making school counseling program and answers the question, "Is the school counseling program making a difference for students, and how can I prove it?"

The Data Project Reporting Template helps counselors set a measurable goal that targets the identified top area of need. The measurable goal should be in for form of a SMART goal, which is:

➢ **S**pecific: Well defined, clear, and unambiguous.
➢ **M**easurable: With specific criteria that measure progress towards the accomplishment of the goal.
➢ **A**chievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve.
➢ **R**ealistic: Within reach, realistic, and relevant to the purpose
➢ **T**imely: With a clearly defined timeline including a starting date and a target date. The purpose is to create urgency.

How to write a measurable goal?

1. What direction will the goal move? (increase or decrease)
2. What subgroup of students will this goal involve?
3. What data elements will be used to measure success?
4. Qualify the number to increase or decrease - how much? (preferable use a percentage)
5. When will the goal be achieved? (establish a timeline)

Example: Increase attendance of 5th grade, English Learners (EL) students by 10% by the end of the year.

1. Direction	2. Group	3. Data Elements	4. Expected Outcomes	5. Date of Outcome
Increase	5th grade EL students	attendance by	10% by	the end of the school year
Direction (1)	Group (2)	Data Elements (3)	Expected Outcomes (4)	Date of Outcome (5)

Figure 4: Measurable Goal Table

Evidence of Impact: Share Your Data Story with Stakeholders
Sharing data and student outcomes with key stakeholders is instrumental in promoting and improving the work of the school counseling program. This evidence of impact links school counseling programs with improved student learning and success. This can lead to increased support for school counseling programs and may indicate a need for more school counseling services in the school, district, and state.

The following are some ways to share data and your evidence of impact:

- Faculty meetings
- Leadership meetings
- Advisory committee meetings
- School Community Council meetings
- PTA newsletters
- School counselor bulletin boards
- School Board presentations

Remember, the implementation of an effective and comprehensive school counseling program is a *process*. This requires regular data analysis, continued result-driven program planning, and collaboration with your administrator, counselors/representatives from cones and feeder schools, and other sources of teaming. The school population and climate of your school may change often, so regularly revisiting your data/needs assessments and restructuring your program is essential.

Program Evaluation and Accountability

Implementing a fully functioning comprehensive school counseling program is an ongoing process. After all the program components have been established and developed, your focus moves entirely to implementation and improvement. Your program improves and evolves as you continually make modifications to the program based on data analysis and students' changing needs.

Continued improvement requires honest reflection of the School Counseling Program and serves to:

- recognize and celebrate program strengths and accomplishments;
- identify goals and areas of improvement;
- minimize identified gaps in the areas of access, attainment, and achievement; and
- ensure program implementation promotes a whole child approach to academic/learning, life/career, multicultural/global citizenship, and social/emotional development for all students.

It is recommended that this reflective process and goal setting be completed annually. The Performance Self-Evaluation is a tool for school counselors to assess the level of implementation based on the 7 program standards and assurances outlined in the Program Model.

Tip: If you are the only school counselor at your school or district, connect with other school counselors from your district or surrounding area who are committed to implementing a comprehensive school counseling program and work together. It is helpful to share successes and challenges about program implementation.

Tip: If you oversee multiple schools, consider the same suggestions above as well as set realistic goals about how much you can accomplish in one school year. Recognize that implementation may happen at different rates at each school and continue until all parts of the Program Model have

been implemented at each school. If you truly apply a systemic approach, you will have other members of your education team and community partners to support you in your efforts.

Elementary School Counseling Program Self-Evaluation

The Elementary School Counseling Program Self-Evaluation has been adapted from the USBE On-Site Review Performance Self-Evaluation for Existing Program.

As you self-reflect on your school counseling program, mark the level of implementation for each indicator. This process will allow you to identify strengths, areas of improvement, and set goals for continued growth.

Rating Scale:

> **MEETS** Standard (**M**): Indicates a fully functional level of development and implementation.
> **APPROACHING** Standard (**AS**): Indicates a limited level of development and implementation. This helps identify areas of improvement.
> **ACTION** ITEM (**AI**): Indicates an area that has not yet been established or implemented. This helps identify and prioritize areas that still need to be implemented to ensure a comprehensive program of services are in place to address the needs of the whole child.

Standard 1: *Each Student*. Program elements are designed to recognize and address the diverse needs of each student. Access, attainment, and achievement data for academic and non-academic student needs are used to guide the school counseling program. This standard provides the framework for the school counseling program to reach each student as individuals.

M   AS   AI

> Counselors have identified and analyzed student populations according to their diversity and services.
>
> Counselors use disaggregated data to compare school demographics to student populations participating in school programs to provide equitable educational opportunities for each student.
>
> Counselors use relevant, longitudinal, closing-the gap data to analyze trends in student outcomes.

Standard 2: *Data Effectiveness and Program Improvement*. To improve outcomes for students, the school counseling program collects and analyzes data, including a formal student, parent, and teacher systemic assessment. Data projects are developed and implemented based on the data results to close access, attainment, and achievement gaps and evaluate program effectiveness.

M   AS   AI

> A systemic assessment is completed to assess program effectiveness.
> - Includes feedback from a significant representation of parents, students, and teachers and is reflective of school demographics.
> - Administration of survey is implemented at a minimum of every 3-years in alignment with the secondary school counseling program 6-year review cycle to support program alignment and data analysis across feeder schools.

M   AS   AI

Counselors identify top gaps based on data (e.g., SOAR, systemic assessment, curriculum delivery survey, academic assessments, equity of opportunity within subgroups of demographics, etc.)

Program goals and interventions are developed and prioritized for identified gaps.

Data project is completed annually.
- Designed and implemented based on data analysis and identified top needs.
- Aligned to school improvement goals.

Data projects, systemic assessment results, and other data analyses, including outcomes are shared and discussed with school faculty and other stakeholders.

Standard 3: *Plan for College and Career Ready Process* & **Standard 4:** *Career Literacy*. Program elements are designed to promote college and career readiness and career literacy through a Tier 1 approach. This includes student development in early awareness, exploration, knowledge, and skills necessary to fully participate in a K-12 Plan for College and Career Readiness process.

M   AS   AI

Ongoing college and career exploration opportunities are available for students (e.g., classroom lessons, online college and career platforms [Keys to Success], schoolwide activities [UCAW, Kids Market Place, College and Career Fair], CTE Pathways exploration, etc.)

Intentional connections are made to align SEL and essential skills development to college and career readiness and future planning.

Counselors teach and integrate CCR activities that inspire the development of a college and career readiness mindset as well as foster a schoolwide college and career readiness culture.

Standard 5: *Collaborative Classroom Instruction.* The program delivers a developmental school counseling curriculum in harmony with content standards identified in the Program Model. The curriculum is prioritized according to the results of the Curriculum Delivery Survey, Systemic Assessment, and other data analysis to improve academic and non-academic student outcomes.

M   AS   AI

Teachers have completed the Curriculum Delivery Survey to determine which of the identified student mindsets and competencies they are teaching.
- Administration of survey is implemented at a minimum of every 3-years in alignment with the secondary school counseling program 6-year review cycle to support program alignment and data analysis across feeder schools.

Counselors provide school counseling presentations/lessons that target student mindsets and competencies not being covered by classroom teachers as identified in the curriculum delivery survey and other data sources.

Tier 1 curriculum supports schoolwide goals and promotes student academic and non-academic development.

Standard 6: *Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports.* With a systemic approach to access, attainment, and achievement, school counselors collaborate and coordinate with family, school, and community resources to provide services that address the academic and non-academic needs of each student.

M   AS   AI

Counselors implement responsive services to address the immediate needs of students in a timely and proactive manner.

Counselors use a systemic tiered approach (e.g., MTMDSS) to target prevention and intervention efforts specific to the needs of students.

Counselors effectively collaborate with school, community, and family resources to ensure wraparound services are available to support students.

Academic & non-academic supports have been implemented that address issues identified from data analysis.

Counselors implement and/or collaborate with outside agencies to provide ongoing group counseling in response to school data and identified needs.

Standard 7: *Alignment.* To decrease gaps in the areas of access, attainment, and achievement, school counseling programs must systemically communicate, collaborate, and coordinate programs and goals with feeder systems, schools, and stakeholders (K-12).

M   AS   AI

Counselors have planned, formal, calendared meetings within the feeder system(s). Collaboration should include, but not limited to:
- Transition activities, including specific activities for diverse populations
- Individual student needs for dropout prevention and responsive services
- Curriculum and tiered interventions
- College and career readiness activities
- Review of student data (e.g., Systemic Assessment results)

Assurances: To implement an effective school counseling program, assurances have been established to support the role of the professional school counselor. It is important that you review assurances annually with your district and school administrators, so they know how to best support you in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

The following are key assurances that are recommended to be in place at the elementary level. For a full list of assurances, refer to the Program Model. Check the box for assurances that are in place. Leave the box unmarked for assurances not met. This will help you identify areas that you may need additional support.

Structural Components

The district/school administration supports budgetary needs (within reason) to support the implementation of the school counseling program.

The school counselor has access to facilities and resources, including adequate office space, computer, and software to meet the needs of students, families, and school personnel.

The school counselor effectively uses all available strategies, including technology, to communicate with parents/guardians and staff.

The school counseling program website is updated regularly to provide accurate and timely resources to students, parents, and stakeholders.

District and school crisis response plans are in place and updated. Training is provided so that counselors are fully aware of the execution of the crisis response plan.

Counselors are knowledgeable and up to date regarding applicable laws (e.g., FERPA, PPRA). Required forms are available and used when applicable.

Administrative Assurances

Administration support counselors in accessing individual classrooms to deliver school counseling curriculum activities.

Administration and counselors meet regularly to discuss student data and ensure the school counseling program is in alignment with school goals.

Administration has reviewed USBE Board Rule R277-464 and eliminated or reassigned tasks that are not deemed appropriate school counseling activities to allow school counselors to focus on the prevention and intervention needs of their program.

Use of Data

Counselors have access to relevant schoolwide data.

Program Leadership and Management

The school counseling program has a formalized advisory committee to support, review program results, and provide feedback for the implementation of the school counseling program.

Counselors provide training for staff related to the school counseling program, including student outcome data. They also provide training for staff related to non-academic student supports (e.g., suicide prevention, diverse populations, etc.).

Counselors are active participants in school leadership teams.

Time Allocation (per R277-464)

A minimum of 85% of aggregate counselor's time is devoted to direct services to students.

A time/task analysis is charted annually by each counselor (e.g., one day each week or one week per month - at least ten sample days).

Non-school counseling duties are eliminated from the school counselor's duties.

A full-year school counseling program calendar is completed annually.

College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Training
Counselors participate in professional development opportunities.

Electronic Evidence Box

To support the performance self-evaluation process, it is recommended that elementary school counselors save key pieces of information that support program implementation and management in the form of an electronic evidence box. Documentation of programming supports the role of the elementary school counselor and helps answer the questions, "Is the school counseling program making a difference for students, and how can I prove it?" The electronic evidence box is an ongoing resource of shared files. Use the self-evaluation standards and indicators to guide what evidence should be saved. The tools/templates outlined in this document have been developed as a resource to support elementary school counselors in this process. However, it is essential that the elementary school counselor determine what evidence best supports program management and implementation. The Electronic Evidence Box Guide is a resource to support this process.

Program at a Glance Overview
After thoroughly evaluating each standard and indicator, use the Program at a Glance to identify strengths and set goals for areas of improvement in order to strengthen program implementation and student outcomes.

Program Strengths
Use this section to identify areas of strengths for each standard based on standard and indicator ratings.

Areas of Improvement
This section is a place to *set goals to improve the quality of services provided by a comprehensive school counseling program*. Based on standard and indicator ratings and needs assessment data (e.g., perception data), set goals that will help strengthen the implementation of the school counseling program to ensure quality services are in place to best meet the needs of the students.

Measurable Goals Based on Data Analyses and Identified Top Gaps
This section is a place to *set goals to improve student outcomes*. Based on data analyses and identified top gaps (Standards 1-2), **set two to three measurable goals** (i.e. SMART Goal: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound). Remember, measurable goals should be intentional, and target specifically identified gaps to improve student outcomes in the areas of access, attainment, and/or achievement.

Alignment to School Goals
The school counseling program is most impactful when aligned to the overall goals of the school. Specify how measurable goals align with school improvement goals.

Program at a Glance

Standards	Program Strengths	Areas of Program Improvement	Measurable Student Outcome Goals	Alignment to School Goals
Standard 1: Each Student				
Standard 2: Data Effectiveness and Program Improvement				
Standards 3 & 4: Plan for College and Career Readiness Process & Career Literacy				
Standard 5: Collaborative Classroom Instruction				
Standard 6: Systemic Approach to Dropout Prevention with Social/Emotional Supports				
Standard 7: Alignment				

Implementation Guide Resources

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Career and Career Readiness Activities

College and Career Readiness Student Mindsets and Competencies Action Plan

College and Career Readiness Parent Toolkit

CTE Surveys (Curriculum Delivery Survey and Elementary Systemic Assessment – click "Counselor Login" to create an account)

Data Project Reporting Template

Elementary Evidence Box Guide

Elementary Principal/Counselor Annual Agreement

Elementary Time/Task Analysis

Incorporation of School Counselor Services Document (R277-464-3)

Lesson Plan & Results Report

School Counseling Program YouTube Channel (webinar trainings)

School Data Summary

Title 53E-9-203: Activities Prohibited Without Written Consent

Utah State Board of Education Data Gateway (SOAR) and SOAR Business Rules

Utah State Board of Education Prevention and At-Risk Programs Website

Utah State Board of Education Safe and Healthy Schools Website

Utah State Board of Education School Counseling Program Website

Utah State Board of Education Trauma-Sensitive Schools Professional Development

Additional Resources

Elementary School Counselor's Guide: NOSCA's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling

Keys to Success Elementary Resources

Monte Goes to College

Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Utah College Application Week (K-12 awareness activity ideas)

Implementation Guide References

ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (4th Edition), 2019

ASCA National Model Implementation Guide: Manage & Assess (2nd Edition), 2019

Utah College and Career Readiness School Counseling Program Model (2nd Edition), 2016

Utah State Board of Education