

School Counselors Excellence Initiative (SCEI) Guidebook

2025 - 2026

2025- 2026 SCHOOL COUNSELOR EXCELLENCE INSTRUMENT (SCEI) GUIDEBOOK, Version 1.0

Dallas Independent School District's Administration, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, prioritizes academic support and student outcomes. While this work will rely heavily on the dedication and performance of the District's instructional leaders and staff, counselors play a crucial role in reaching these goals by supporting the work of our teachers and school leaders and working directly with students, families, and the community to further our mission of "Educating all students for success."

To advance student achievement in Dallas ISD, each of the District's counselors must be working toward a shared vision, focusing on the same outcomes, and striving for excellence. The School Counselor Excellence Instrument (SCEI) is designed to grow Dallas ISD counselors toward the exemplary performance that our students deserve. SCEI is the approved appraisal instrument for campus administrators to complete counselors' annual performance appraisal, as dictated per district board policy.

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

The primary intent of the SCEI appraisal process is to provide a framework for accurate and rigorous assessment of counselor performance followed by honest and open dialogue about strengths and areas for growth.

APPRAISAL PROCESS

The appraisal process contained in the SCEI Guidebook is accomplished through three conferences during the annual appraisal period:

Phase 1: Planning for Success and Goal-Setting Conference

Phase 2: Mid-year Conference – Review Status of Counselor's progress

Phase 3: Final SCEI Evaluation Conference

All counselors will have electronic access to their appraisal/evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their appraiser, and will have the opportunity to respond to the appraisal results.

The appraisal planning conference, mid-year review, and end of year review processes contained in the performance module occur during three phases, respectively, within the annual appraisal period.

PHASE 1: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS AND GOAL-SETTING CONFERENCE

In preparation for this planning/goal setting conference, the counselor is accountable for the development and accomplishment of 2-3 annual individual professional goals, entered in Cornerstone, that align with campus and district needs. During the planning/goal setting conference, the administrator ensures that the counselor understands their job roles/responsibilities, goals, expected professional standards of conduct and ensures that the counselor's goals are aligned with the goals of their campus and the counseling program.

This planning activity is critical for the success of the campus, counselors, and the district. When this activity is well executed by all appraisers and counselors, counselors can focus their time and resources in meeting the priorities of their campuses, the counseling program, and the district.

PHASE 2: MID-YEAR CONFERENCE – REVIEW STATUS OF COUNSELOR PROGRESS

During the mid-year review conference, counselors complete a self-rating task in Cornerstone prior to the conference. Appraisers will record notes regarding the conference in the notes section of the task as they review the counselor's self-rating form. Progress of calendar activities and the required documentation are reviewed according to the midyear checklist. Counselors are provided specific and general feedback to assess areas of strength and growth, including where their performance falls at the mid-year point.

Expectations for the second semester and priorities will be discussed during this conference. If necessary, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be developed to address levels of performance that need improvement are not meeting expectations. The mid-year conference includes the following activities:

1. A discussion and review of the counselor's performance,
2. Review of areas where the counselor's performance is not meeting established goals,
3. Review, revision, and realignment of the counselor's goals with the needs and goals of the district and campus, and
4. Development of a PIP whenever counselor performance requires improvement (if applicable).

For the mid-year conference, counselors should bring documentation supporting their work performance. As a best practice, appraisers should not wait until the middle of the year review conference to develop a PIP. Appraisers may conduct additional conferences between the mid-year conference and end of year conference if a counselor's work performance requires improvement.

PHASE 3: FINAL SCEI EVALUATION CONFERENCE

During the end of year review conference, the appraiser conducts a final review and discussion of progress made toward meeting the counselor's performance goals. The appraisers review and document areas of commendation/growth and provide the final annual overall rating results. The End of year review conference requires the following:

1. Appraiser will review the counselor's success in meeting goals and expected work behaviors. Appraisers will provide the counselor with final performance component ratings
2. Appraisers will review performance components for improvement and commendation.

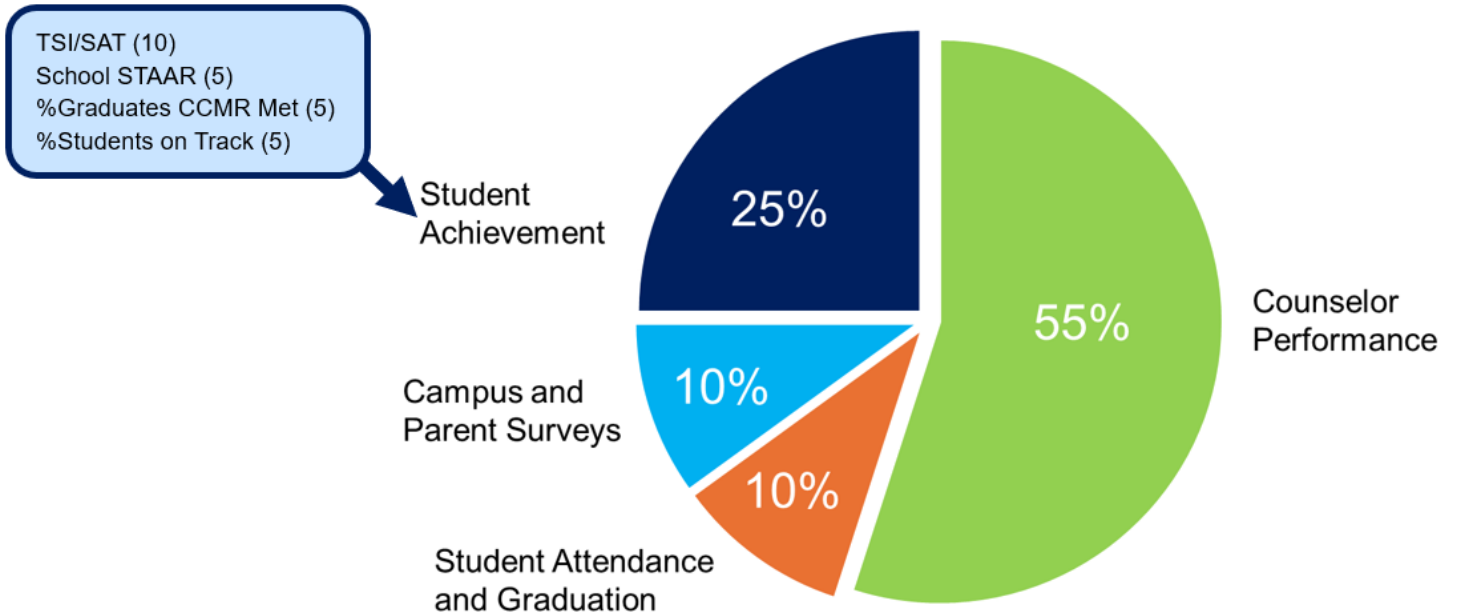
APPRAISAL TIMELINE

PHASE	APPRAISAL CYCLE COMPONENT	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION	KEY ACTIONS
Phase 1: Goal Setting	Online Goal Entry	August 25- October 17, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counselor enters 3 SMART goals online into Cornerstone. Appraiser review goal(s).
	Planning/Goal Setting Conference		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appraiser holds goal-setting conversation around job responsibilities, the SCEI rubric, and reviews counselor's goals.
Phase 2: Mid-Year Review	Online Employee Self-Review	January 20- February 27, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counselor tracks goal completion. ● Counselor self-rates performance on identified indicators and goal accomplishment.
	Mid-Year Review Conference		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counselor and appraiser discuss progress and areas of improvement. ● If needed, an appraiser redefines goals or develops a performance improvement plan if progress is below expectations. ● Appraiser completes online conference acknowledgment.
Phase 3: End of Year Review	Online Appraiser Review	May 4- June 19, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appraiser completes review of counselor's performance using SCEI rubric and goal accomplishment.
	End of Year Review Conference		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appraiser examines goals and scores of competencies. ● Appraiser holds an end of year review conference with employee. ● Employee accepts evaluation online during the end of year conference.

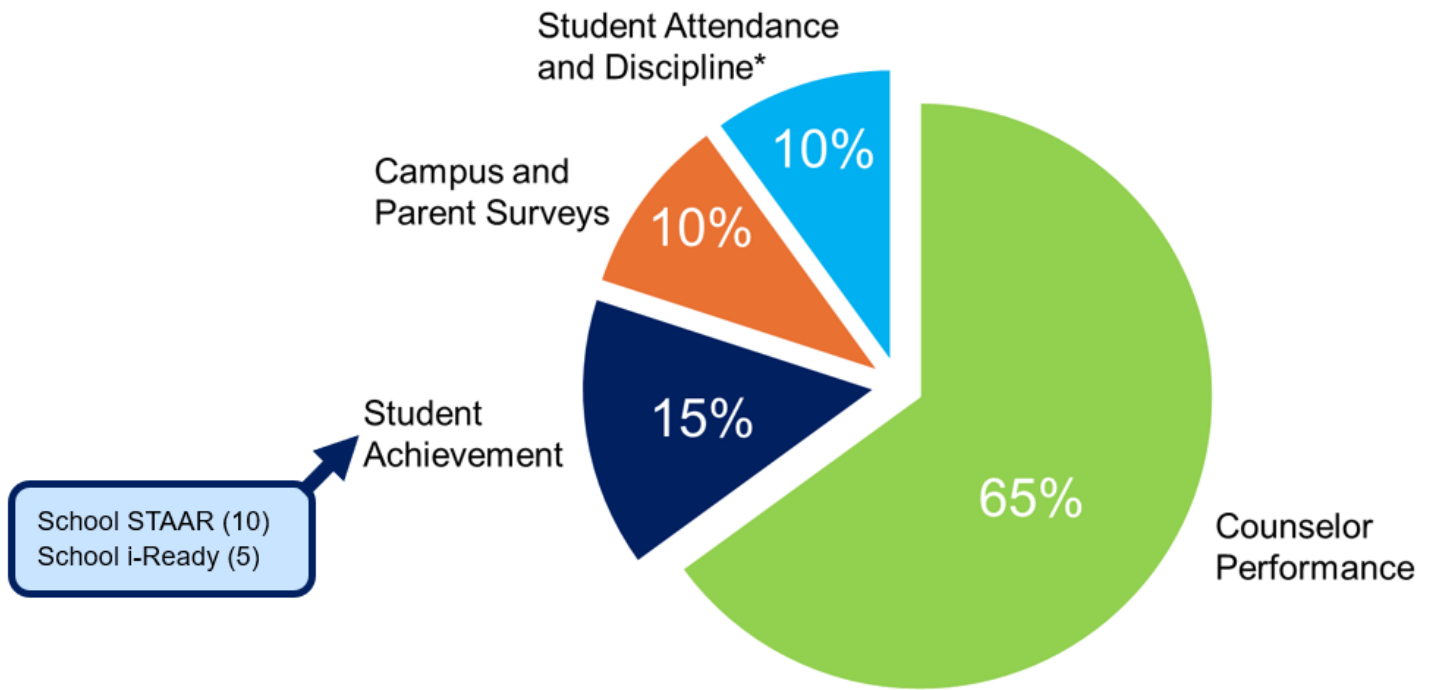
*Counselors must be hired into the position no later than the last instructional day of the fall semester to receive an Evaluation Rating

APPRAISAL TEMPLATES

CATEGORY 1: HIGH SCHOOLS



CATEGORY 2: ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL



APPRAISAL COMPONENTS

Performance measurements with measurable outcomes are used to assess the effectiveness of a school counselor. There are three types of metrics **used** in the SCEI:

Individual Performance: Measurable indicators that describe how well a school counselor does his/her job. This will be reflected in the SCEI Performance Rubric consisting of four domains: (1) Focus and Planning, (2) Program Delivery, (3) CCMR, (4) Professional responsibility. 55-65% percent of a school counselor's annual evaluation is based on performance metrics.

Experience: These measures will capture stakeholder voice via campus climate and parent/guardian survey to gauge the perception of counselor support for students at the campus.

Achievement & Outcomes: These measures will leverage school-wide measures of college/career readiness and academic progress of students via state assessments (STAAR/i-Ready).

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE RUBRIC (55-65 PTS.)

A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of a school's academic vision. An outstanding counseling program is data driven, based on academics, and enhances the learning process for all students through career and personal/social development.

The rubric includes specific performance criteria for leadership, planning and preparation, data-driven decision making and accountability, delivery of services, and professional responsibilities. The rubric also includes specific sources of evidence to be used in assessing the various areas.

Domain I: Focus and Planning	Domain II: Program Delivery	Domain III: College, Career, and Military Readiness	Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities
Standard: The school counselor oversees systems, structures, and processes for the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program.	Standard: The school counselor designs and delivers differentiated direct and indirect student services aligned to the needs of every student.	Standard: The school counselor will effectively advise individuals and groups of students to plan, monitor, and manage their educational development by including information on post-secondary planning and career readiness.	Standard: The school counselor acts professionally and ethically as an advocate for students, families, and the school community.

The full SCEI Individual Performance Rubric can be accessed here on the [SCEI Website](#)

When evaluating performance, SCEI rubric indicators will be scored using the following 1-4 scale during the end of year appraisal using the performance levels indicated in the full SCEI Performance Rubric. Points will be awarded for the individual performance component using a targeted distribution, which serves to provide differentiation of points for this component. Separate distributions will be used for elementary and secondary campuses.

ES	Points Earned	30	40	50	55	60	70
	Percent of Summatives	3%	12%	25%	40%	15%	5%
MS	Points Earned	30	40	50	55	60	70
	Percent of Summatives	3%	12%	25%	40%	15%	5%
HS	Points Earned	30	35	40	45	50	55
	Percent of Summatives	3%	12%	25%	40%	15%	5%

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

This measure currently assesses improvement in the school's student attendance rate. Its single metric is average student attendance rate. The attendance statistic is computed annually by Evaluation & Assessment for publication in the Campus Data Packet. For assigning points, elementary schools are grouped separately from secondary schools before ranking the attendance statistics. Highest attendance rates are assigned the highest point values, according to the target distribution.

GRADUATION RATE (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

The graduation rate statistic is the higher of the school's four-year or five-year graduation rate most recently reported by the Texas Education Agency. (The statistic lags one year because the TEA must collect data for its calculation.) Highest point values are assigned to the highest statistics, according to the target distribution.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

At this time, the Student Discipline measure has not been defined. Points for Student Discipline measure will be reweighted into the performance component in the 2025-2026 SCEI Evaluation Template.

CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY

The campus climate survey is administered to all campus-based professional and support staff twice per year. The survey has three purposes: to aid in organizational improvement; to obtain feedback from school-based employees; and to align systems to student outcomes, with the first being its primary purpose. Points may be earned in two ways: average of the scale-level percentages of positive response or change in the average of the scale-level percentage of positive responses on the "College-Going Culture" strand only.

- *Staff expect most students in this school to go to college.*
- *Instruction in this school is focused on helping students get ready for college.*
- *Staff in this school feel that it is a part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college.*
- *Staff at this school accept nothing less from students than their full effort.*
- *Staff at this school do not let students give up when their class work becomes challenging.*
- *Staff at this school give students feedback to help them understand how to improve.*

The metric with the higher point value determines the points for the measure. Cut points are created for the two metrics such that the percentage of schools receiving each point value for the measure follows the target distribution.

PARENT SURVEY

The measure assesses the support of parents and guardians in the school's community for the direction of the school and its engagement with parents. The district contracts with a vendor to conduct an annual survey that captures their opinions about the direction of the school and quality of education provided to students. Similar to the campus climate survey, points may be earned in two ways: average of the percentage of positive responses or change in the average of the scale-level percentage of positive responses for the two items below:

- *My child's school stresses the importance of preparing for/attending college after high school.*
- *My child's school provides to me information about career and college options provided by the District*

SCHOOL STAAR

The School STAAR measure is determined by statistics generated for all STAAR assessments at the campus. The principal's score is based on the best of three STAAR metrics:

1. Percentage of all tests with scores at Met standard ("status metric")
2. Relative growth measurement (SEI)
3. Percentage of students exceeding the District average score within their "academic peer groups"

Points are received for the greatest of the three metrics, and separate distributions will be developed for elementary and secondary campuses.

TSIA/SAT MET

The points for this measure are equivalent to the highest points earned from one of three metrics based on student scores on The College Board's SAT® and TSIA. Cut points for individual metrics are set such that the percentage of schools receiving each point value for the measure follows the target distribution.

SCHOOL I-READY or ACP

Similar to School STAAR, the School ACP/i-Ready measure is determined by statistics generated for all ACP or i-Ready assessments at the campus. The points awarded are based on the best of three metrics: Percentage of all tests with scores at Met standard ("status metric")

1. Relative growth measurement (SEI)
2. Percentage of students exceeding the District average score within their "academic peer groups"
3. Points are received for the greatest of the three measures, and separate distributions will be developed for elementary and secondary campuses.

CCMR Measure 1: Percent of Graduates "CCMR-Met" (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has defined a set of indicators that students can earn to be considered college, career or military ready. Students who meet one of these CCMR indicators are considered "CCMR-met." CCMR readiness indicators include:

- Meet Criteria on Advanced Placement (AP) Examination.
- Meet Criteria of 4 or higher on International Baccalaureate (IB) exam.
- Meet TSI Criteria via SAT, ACT, TSI-A, or College Prep Course in English and Math
- Earn Dual Course Credits
- Complete an OnRamps Dual Enrollment Course
- Earn an Industry-Based Certification
- Graduate with Completed Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Workforce Readiness.
- Enlist in the Armed Forces. A graduate enlisting in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Marines.
- Graduate Under an Advanced Diploma Plan and be Identified as a Current Special Education Student.
- Earn a Level I or Level II Certificate in any workforce education area.

This high school-specific measure is the percent of graduates at the campus with "CCMR Met" status as estimated by the District using the TEA's definition. In year one, this measure will include only one metric, the percent of graduates with "CCMR Met" status. In future years, additional metrics may be defined to gauge change over time.

Point assignment for this measure will not follow a targeted distribution. Points will be assigned using the distribution below:

<60	60-69	70-78	79-87	88-100
1	2	3	4	5

CCMR Measure 2: Percent of Grade 9-11 Students *on Track for Grade Level Advancement* OR IS THIS "Percent of Grade 9-11 Students *Achieved Grade Level Advancement*"

Board policy EIE-Local outlines requirements student grade-level advancement based on credits earned. This counselor-specific measure examines the percent of Grade 9-11 students rostered to the counselor meeting minimum requirements above for grade level advancement at the conclusion of the academic school year.

Sophomore (grade 10)	6 or more credits and two full semesters in grades 9-15
Junior (grade 11)	12 or more credits and four full semesters in grades 9-12
Senior (grade 12)	18 or more credits and five full semesters in grades 9-12

For inclusion in the counselor's statistics, the students must be linked to the counselor in the SIS on the first instructional days of October and April annually. Points will be assigned via the target distribution.

Priority Campus Points – District Support Initiative

Counselors at the District's Priority Campuses may receive additional points for service at a District Support Initiative campus. Counselors must earn a minimum of 65 for the individual performance rubric appraisal to be eligible. Eligible counselors will earn 5 points in the first year and one additional point thereafter up to 10 if criteria is met.

How are cut points set for each measure and metric?

Each measure has a defined metric to assign points. The Individual Performance and CCMR Met measures each use defined distributions and cut points to award points. The remaining metrics utilize the District's standard distribution for Excellence Initiatives:

Percentage of Statistics	3%	12%	25%	40%	12%	8%
Points Awarded (5 Point Measure)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Points Awarded (10 Point Measure)	0	2	4	6	8	10
Points Awarded (15 Point Measure)	0	3	6	9	12	15

By setting cut points in this way, we ensure equity across campus levels and types. That is, by using a target distribution, we ensure it is not easier to get more points in the Elementary School STAAR component than it is in the survey or TSI-Met components. The use of a target distribution allows equitable levels of rigor across grades and content areas.

EVALUATION SCORE AND EVALUATION RATING

The SCEI process outlined above results in an overall evaluation score that informs an Evaluation Rating annually. There are three major steps in developing an overall SCEI evaluation rating:

Step 1: Calculate each component score

As described in earlier sections, each component of the counselor's evaluation template – performance, experience and achievement/outcomes – is calculated according to the percentages outlined in the previous pages.

Step 2: Add component scores to total an overall evaluation score

Each component score is then added for an overall score (out of 105 possible points).

Step 3: Determine evaluation rating using the target distribution

The Evaluation Rating is determined from this average evaluation score using the SCEI target distribution as a guide:

School Level*	Unsatisfactory	Progressing	Proficient	Exceeds Expectations	Exemplary
ES	System Rules cap Counselor with a summative score below 25 at Unsatisfactory.	<20%	40%	15%	5%
MS		<20%	40%	15%	5%
HS		<20%	40%	15%	5%

The target distribution will be run twice to account for assignment at a comprehensive or choice campus. Cut points for the Evaluation Ratings will be available at the time of SCEI Scorecard Release in September 2026.

PERFORMANCE RESOURCES

Counselors may prepare and present documentation supporting their performance. This supporting documentation may include information such as the required documentation binder, counseling program calendar, action plans, and completed products and documentation of services (reports/data, report numbers/metrics, memos, meeting agendas and/or minutes, teacher/student satisfaction survey results, or records of services).

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

An appraiser must develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for a counselor whose performance has been determined to require improvement. The PIP template is available from Counseling Services and appropriate documentation and evidence for need should be included.

As best practice, a PIP should be developed in collaboration with the counselor. In all cases, the appraiser and the counselor must meet and review the PIP. The PIP must be implemented and completed during the scheduled workdays and within the annual appraisal year.

The PIP consists of the following:

- Performance component(s) in which the counselor needs assistance or improvement,
- Specific professional development activities and dates for completion,
- Evidence to determine that professional development activities have been completed,
- Directives for needed changes in counselor behavior and timelines for accomplishing change, and
- Evidence to determine if counselor performance or behavior has changed.

If necessary, the appraiser may develop a PIP at any time during the annual appraisal cycle to call attention to performance components requiring improvement.

Note: Appraisers will provide counselors with corrective feedback on existing intervention plans and discuss intervention plans for the subsequent appraisal period if necessary.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Counselors are encouraged to discuss their concerns and grievances with their appraiser, principal, or other appropriate administrator. When informal discussions fail to resolve the concern or dispute, the counselor may file a grievance with the Employee Relations Department. See DGBA at <http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/361?filter=DGBAA> grievance form must be filed no later than fifteen (15) business days from the date the counselor first knew or, with reasonable diligence, should have known of the decision or action giving rise to the grievance or complaint. Please contact Employee Relations for additional information or clarification.

CONTACT



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APPENDIX

Version	Date	Location	Description
1.0	07/16/2025		2025-2026 SCEI Guidebook
2.0			
3.0			
4.0			