



# Comprehensive K-12 School Guidance Plan



The 2026-2029 K-12 Guidance Plan is actively in development for eventual approval by the Board of Directors. This comprehensive K-12 Counseling Plan is a collaborative effort involving all district counselors and College and Career Readiness staff, who are contributing to sections such as the Guidance Plan Services, Educational Career Plan, and Career Placement and Transition Services.

### **Allentown School District's Mission Statement**

The mission of the Allentown School District is to serve the diverse educational needs of each student by igniting their passion for learning and creating an academic culture.

### **K-12 Guidance Mission Statement**

The K-12 School Counseling Mission is to advocate for and educate students, in collaboration with administrators, educators, staff, families, and the wider community, to serve the diverse educational needs of each student by delivering comprehensive guidance services spanning grades K-12 through various modalities, utilizing a tiered system of supports. We strive to ignite their passion for learning and foster an academic culture by supporting students in achieving academic success while addressing their unique needs. Furthermore, students will cultivate essential social and emotional competencies and investigate avenues for post-secondary pursuits, encompassing higher education, technical training programs, military service, and apprenticeships, enabling them to transition into contributing members of society.

### **Alignment with the Whole Child Framework**

The 2026-2029 K-12 Guidance Plan is strategically aligned with Priority Two: Safety and Whole Child Development of the "Lighting the Way: A Blueprint for Innovation and Excellence 2030" Strategic Plan. This alignment ensures a comprehensive approach to student well-being through several high-leverage actions:

- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):** The plan utilizes a tiered system of supports to deliver guidance services across various modalities, ensuring that every student's diverse educational and mental health needs are met.
- **Mental Health Task Force and Steering Committee:** Student Services leverages the Mental Health Task Force to guide the Whole Child Framework. This includes facilitating monthly meetings with the Mental Health Steering Committee to consult on district-level data—such as attendance and behavioral trends—and connect resources to identified problems of practice.
- **Clear Referral Pathways:** To improve outcomes, the district is establishing standardized, universal referral pathways and communication protocols. These systems are designed to support timely access to services and measurably increase referral-to-service completion rates for students and families.

### **Pennsylvania Department of Education(PDE)-Approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) & Centers (CTC)**

In collaboration with the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute (LCTI), the Allentown School District facilitates enrollment for approximately 580 students in grades 9-12. These students engage in 45 specialized, skills-based programs of study. The curriculum at LCTI is organized into five primary disciplinary areas: Arts & Humanities, Business & Communication Technology, Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Human Services, and Industrial Technology.

**Does your school provide career guidance services and curriculum to assist all students with unbiased occupational and educational information necessary for realistic career planning?**

Through this comprehensive, standards-aligned [K-12 Career Curriculum Action Plan](#), the district ensures that all students receive the necessary guidance to make informed decisions about their futures. Our K-12 Career Curriculum Action Plan is designed to provide comprehensive, unbiased occupational and educational information to help all students engage in realistic career planning. The curriculum is structured to support students as they progress through successive levels of career awareness, exploration, and preparation.

**Elementary Grades (K-5):** The foundation is built through activities that introduce essential work habits and the range of jobs in the community. Students identify personal interests, explore community helpers, and learn about the "Tools of the Trade" used in various professions. Students in 4th and 5th grade begin exploring entrepreneurship and participate in College Campus Exploration & Awareness Visits to identify the preparation needed for various career pathways. Fifth-grade students participate in hands-on simulations, such as JA BizTown, and visit the LCTI site to learn about the full range of career-training programs available.

**Middle Grades (6-8):** Focus shifts to self-assessment and work-readiness skills. Students use Smart Futures activities to identify career clusters, complete the My Interest and My Work Values surveys, and develop essential workplace skills such as cooperation and time management. Students are exposed to trade careers through a Trade & Skills Expo and learn about technical education via LCTI Tours and Presentations. By 8th grade, students practice Interview Skills and learn about financial planning through JA Finance Park.

**High School Grades (9-12):** The focus is on implementing realistic post-secondary plans. Students are provided with unbiased information about various pathways through activities such as:

**Networking and Career Awareness:** The District Career Symposium offers opportunities to network with industry leaders and apply the regional, state, and national scope of career information.<sup>1</sup>

**Educational Opportunities:** Students can participate in Dual Enrollment, Early College programs, and pre-manufacturing programs, as well as in college-preparatory initiatives such as Upward Bound and AVID. They also receive financial literacy support through Financial Aid Night and FAFSA Completion Workshops.

**Career Readiness and Exploration:** The program offers career and technical exposure through LCTI, Diversified Career Occupations Program, and the ASD Internship Program. Students are also exposed to military careers through the ASVAB and ROTC.

**Does your school maintain a monthly calendar or monthly listing of K-12 career guidance services offered, organized by domain (academic, career, social/emotional) and grade level? Should the calendar include ongoing activities to assist all students (and their parents) with career planning to meet student needs and interests?**

The District maintains a comprehensive [Monthly Calendar of K-12 Career Guidance Services](#), organized to meet student needs and interests across all levels. The calendar is organized by Domain and Grade Level, then by level (Elementary, Middle School, and High School), and finally by month and specific grade or grade span (e.g., K, 3, 9-12). Each activity is categorized by its domain: Academic (A), Career (C), or Social-Emotional (SE).

The calendar features an "Ongoing Services for ALL LEVELS (August through June)" section, and includes activities to assist all students and their parents with career planning throughout the year, such as consultation and collaboration with families, parents, and guardians, career-specific instruction and events, assisting in planning and participating in monthly assemblies and student recognition, and referrals to community supports for basic needs and housing insecurity.

Examples of Monthly Career-Specific Services:

Elementary (Pre-K to 5th Grade): Includes specific Career Lessons in kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grades, Career Event and Artifact, "Tools of the Trade" speakers, and career field trips like "Big Wheels on Campus" and LCTI field trip.

Middle School (6th, 7th, and 8th Grade): Involves ongoing "Career Clusters and Pathways Portfolio Management," "Update Career Information System/ Profiles," "LCTI Preparation," tours, and application preparation.

High School (9th to 12th Grade): Features "Digital Career Portfolios," College/Career Fairs, SAT and ASVAB testing, "Career Interest Inventories (Smart Futures)," Scholarship postings, Financial Aid Nights and Workshops, and CTE/LCTI tours and applications.

**Does your school provide career guidance services and curriculum to assist all students with unbiased occupational and educational information necessary for realistic career planning?**

The Allentown School District's [Student Success Portfolio](#) is a longitudinal document designed to guide students through their educational journey, emphasizing ownership and reflective learning across academic, social-emotional, and career focuses. The following strategies comprise the education and career planning components of the portfolio:

- Interest and Goal Evaluation: Students evaluate career options based on their personal interests, aptitudes, achievements, and goals.
- Career Plan Evolution: Career plans are intended to evolve through action steps that include elective choices, extracurricular activities, specific coursework, and the identification of strengths and abilities.
- Assessment Tools: The plan incorporates specific assessments, including interest surveys and the evaluation of interview skills, to help students strategically market themselves as job candidates.
- Goal Alignment: Students must incorporate feedback and personal reflection to evaluate their progress toward goals and determine their next steps.
- Academic Monitoring: The portfolio includes dedicated sections for tracking current courses, grades, and missing work to ensure students stay on track with their academic preparation.
- Career Awareness and Preparation: Students are encouraged to take advantage of both school- and community-based opportunities for career awareness and preparation.
- Path Selection: The strategy involves analyzing the relationship between career choices and necessary

career preparation opportunities to choose an appropriate path.

- **Training and Credentials:** The plan emphasizes tracking educational and training opportunities, work-based learning, and industry-recognized credentials.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Students identify sources to strengthen existing skills and maximize career growth.
- **Support Staff Collaboration:** The portfolio is regularly updated in collaboration with support staff, who use it as a guide for reflective learning.
- **Holistic Support System:** The plan identifies "trusted adults" at home, at school, and in the community to support students' needs and challenges.
- **Specialized Counseling:** The strategy includes assessing needs for mental health supports, conflict resolution, restorative conversations, and support for abstaining from nicotine, drugs, or alcohol.

**Does your school maintain a listing of diverse and inclusive external resources, organized by the Career Clusters, that includes links to businesses, organizations, postsecondary education, service learning, training, and work-based learning?**

The District maintains a listing of [Diverse and Inclusive External Resources](#) organized by Career Clusters within this spreadsheet, with dedicated sections for all educational levels: Elementary Schools (PK - 5), Middle Schools (6-8), and High Schools (9-12).

Currently, the Elementary Schools (PK - 5) sheet is well-populated with a wide range of contacts for businesses, organizations, and diverse professional roles—including fields such as Healthcare, Construction, and Public Safety. While the Middle Schools (6-8) and High School (9-12) sheets are structured with the same organizational framework to include resources across the various Career Clusters, they are currently awaiting further data entries to match the robust listing available at the elementary level.

**Do the school and the CTC work together to apply engagement strategies to promote career and technical education opportunities among all K-12 students, parents/guardians, educators, postsecondary institutions, businesses, and community agencies?**

- Ninth Grade Visits
- Middle School Orientation Sessions
- Elementary School visits
- High School Open House, Enrollment Night, College Fairs

**Does the school counsel all students regarding their transition from school to life after graduation (work, postsecondary education, military, or other)?**

The District provides comprehensive career guidance services and curriculum to assist all students with personalized support for post-secondary pathways. Our services are designed to facilitate seamless transitions from school to post-secondary life, including the workforce, higher education, or military service, empowering graduates to attain their long-term professional and personal goals. [Career Placement and Transition Services](#)

ensures that there is a system to support post-secondary readiness, opportunities, and successful pathways upon graduation. This collaborative effort is spearheaded by the Gear Up team, The Century Promise, and College and Career Counselors to ensure that every student is equipped for their chosen path. Support includes assistance with college-preparatory initiatives such as Upward Bound and AVID, as well as career-technical exposure through the Diversified Career Occupations Program and the ASD Internship Program.

**Does your school provide formal and informal career consultation with school staff, as well as access to school counseling services for all students by grade level?**

The district provides a structured continuum of services across all grade levels:

- Elementary Level: Focuses on "Career Awareness ." Students begin exploring interests through classroom guidance and informal consultation with staff.
- Middle School: Expands to "Career Preparation." Staff provide formal consultations to help students align their interests with high school pathways and elective choices.
- High School: Shifts to "Career Acquisition and Immersion, Advancement, and Entrepreneurship." Counselors provide formal one-on-one sessions for postsecondary planning, including college applications, trade school entry, and military recruitment.

**Does your school maintain a school counseling document that shows how each partner group (students, parents, educators, postsecondary, businesses, community agencies) benefits from and/or assists with the delivery of guidance services? (500 each)**

The Allentown School District maintains documentation (the Chapter 339 Plan) that outlines how various stakeholders interact with the counseling program:

- Educators: Benefit from professional development on the school counselor's role and how to help students access services. They assist by collaborating with counselors to identify students needing academic, attendance, or behavioral support and by implementing classroom-based interventions.
- Students: Benefit by developing a personalized "Career Portfolio" and gaining self-awareness. They assist by actively engaging in goal-setting and peer-to-peer support initiatives.
- Parents: Benefit from consultative services regarding their child's progress and postsecondary options. They assist by reinforcing career exploration at home and participating in school-based interventions.
- Postsecondary: Institutions (colleges, trade schools) benefit from a pipeline of prepared applicants. They assist by hosting campus visits and participating in "College and Career Nights" to provide students with direct information.
- Businesses: Benefit from a future workforce tailored to local labor market needs. They assist by providing job shadowing, internships, and serving as guest speakers to bridge the gap between the classroom and industry.
- Community Agencies: Benefit from a collaborative referral system (like the CARE Team) to support student wellness. They assist by providing specialized services (mental health, housing, etc.) that the school cannot provide in-house.

**Does your school conduct at least one school counseling advisory council meeting per year and maintain minutes that show discussion of career and postsecondary planning, career curriculum and assessment, as well as initiatives and supports related to academic development and social/emotional development, along with details on how the discussion leads to action steps and solutions that enhance student outcomes? Explain how your school will meet this mandate (500)**

The Allentown School District will conduct School Counseling Advisory Council meetings twice per year to ensure comprehensive oversight and continuous improvement of guidance services. These meetings will involve a diverse group of stakeholders, including district administrators, school counselors, school social workers, students, and representatives from community partners such as LCTI, CareerLink, and post-secondary institutions. The council will review and discuss career and postsecondary planning, career curriculum and assessment, and key initiatives supporting academic and social-emotional development. Each meeting results in documented minutes that detail how discussions lead to specific action steps and solutions designed to enhance student outcomes across the district.

**Does your school conduct follow-up studies to determine the effectiveness of your school counseling curriculum/program outcomes, including study results and how the collected information is used to improve service delivery? Explain how your school will meet this mandate (500)**

The district's Office of Data and Performance Management conducts follow-up studies to determine program effectiveness.

- Data Collection: ASD tracks post-graduation placement (college vs. workforce), student attendance, and results from "Career Education and Work" (CEW) standards.
- Program Improvement: This data is used to adjust the counseling curriculum. For example, if data shows a gap in Spanish-speaking student engagement, the district responds by hiring multilingual counselors or partnering with services like Hazel Health to remove language barriers.