

Orchard Park Central School District School Counseling Plan

2026

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Community

Orchard Park, a community of 25,000 people, lies less than ten miles southeast of the city of Buffalo, New York. Orchard Park is proud of its cultural and educational offerings, such as the Orchard Park Symphony, SUNY Erie, and Highmark Stadium, which houses the Buffalo Bills of the National Football League. Orchard Park's location, coupled with the appealing character of the community, make it an ideal place for business and industry.

The Orchard Park School District comprises a cross-section of managerial, professional, industrial, and service occupation groups. Residents encourage and participate in the numerous community and academic activities within the schools as well as throughout the Niagara Frontier region. Numerous annual events reflect Orchard Park's tremendous sense of community spirit and pride.

District Vision Statement

We will give our students the vision to reach for the stars, the skills and fortitude to climb the ladder, and the wisdom to appreciate the beauty of the journey.

District Mission Statement

The Orchard Park Central School District, in partnership with families and the community, will prepare our students to:

- Achieve their fullest potential
- Develop critical thinking, creativity, and character
- Become healthy, lifelong learners
- Be responsible and contributing members of an ever-changing and global society

District Strategy for Success

Organizational Coherence for Equity and Excellence

Strong systems require coherence across schools, departments, and roles. We are committed to aligning curriculum, instruction, and support so that every student, regardless of school or teacher, receives a high-quality educational experience. This coherence is essential for ensuring equity, reducing variability, and maintaining high expectations across the district.

Aligned Structures for Collaboration and Student Voice

We are committed to building and sustaining districtwide structures that promote meaningful collaboration among teams, elevate student voice, and ensure that all work is driven by a shared purpose. Aligned structures such as common planning time, shared protocols, and consistent instructional expectations support coherence and allow us to act collectively in service of student success, make sure our schools are safe, are inclusive, and supportive environments where every student feels welcome and proud to be an Orchard Park Quaker.

Responsive and Aligned Policies and Practices

To remain responsive to evolving student needs, we will continuously evaluate and refine our policies and practices. This ensures alignment with district priorities and allows for the effective implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies.

Data-Informed Decision-Making Through MTSS

We use a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) along with multiple sources of data to guide decisions. This framework allows us to match supports to student needs across academic, behavioral, and social areas and ensures that every decision is grounded in evidence. Through data-informed practices, we can deliver targeted support that improves outcomes for all learners.

Stakeholder Feedback to Inform and Strengthen Our Work

We believe continuous improvement depends on listening to those we serve. We are committed to gathering meaningful feedback from students, families, staff, and community members to help align our priorities and guide decision-making. This input helps us identify what is working, where adjustments are needed, and how to better align our work with the values and needs of our school community. We encourage all stakeholders to share their perspectives.

Our belief in fostering partnerships with parents, students, and the community to provide an education of distinction and excellence has led to the formulation of these Guiding Principles.

Core Commitments of Orchard Park Central School District

1. Learning and achievement for all
2. Family and community engagement
3. Positive climate and culture



Orchard Park Central School Counseling Department Advisory Board

Our district-wide advisory council's membership is reflective of our Orchard Park community. This council should meet twice annually. This group reviews district-wide goal progress, counseling objectives, and provides feedback from a global level on our counseling program. The Orchard Park advisory board should review program goals and competencies while responding to data findings and recommendations. School counselors will use this input to evaluate the effectiveness of the current program and make adjustments to its content and delivery as needed. Ongoing monitoring of student progress is essential to ensure the program is effective and maximizes its impact. The members of the Advisory Board will represent a range of school, community, and agency stakeholders (as defined in the [Commissioner's Regulation Part 100.2](#)). Our Advisory Board shall be: a School Counselor from each building level, a Community Member, a School Board Member, a District Administrator, and a teacher representative from each building level.

The Orchard Park School Counseling Program will:

- Focus on students and be guided by clearly defined goals and developmental competencies.
- Provide learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom, helping students build lifelong skills that support the achievement of their personal and career goals.
- Take into account the diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, and individual needs of all students when designing and delivering counseling services.
- Use data to guide decision-making, evaluate program effectiveness, assess student needs, and inform ongoing program development and improvement.

Introduction

School counselors design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that promote and focus on the whole school, community, and child. This promotes and fosters a healthy school climate and student success. These programs are comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, and developmental in nature. The [ASCA National Model. A Framework for School Counseling Programs](#) (ASCA, 2025), outlines the components of a comprehensive school counseling program. The ASCA National Model brings professional school counselors together with one vision and one voice, which creates unity and focus toward improving student achievement and supporting student development.

Counselor's Vision Statement

In partnership with students, parents, home, and community, our Mission is to provide our students with an academic environment that fosters discovery and knowledge and guides them to a sense of quality and integrity that will enable them to assume a role of responsible interdependence within our global society.

Counselor's Mission Statement

The professional school counselors in the Orchard Park Central School District believe:

Student Rights

School Counselors in the Orchard Park School District are committed to supporting the rights of every student. All students are entitled to the services of the school counseling program, which prioritizes the development of the whole child. Every student will have access to a school counselor for guidance and support related to academic, career, and personal/social needs.

School Counselors

The role of School Counselors is to support students, families, faculty, and administrators. They provide guidance to students and parents/guardians in monitoring academic progress and planning for post-secondary opportunities. To ensure a high-quality counseling program, school counselors engage in ongoing professional development and adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the American School Counselor Association.

Rationale

A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the school's academic mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, driven by student data and based on standards in academic, career, and social/emotional development, promote and enhance the learning process for all students. The ASCA National Model:

- Ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students
- Identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K-12 comprehensive school counseling program
- Is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion
- Is based on data-driven decision-making
- Is provided by a state-credentialed professional school counselor

Effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the professional school counselor, families, and other educators to create an environment promoting student achievement. Education professionals, including professional school counselors, value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in our societies and communities. Comprehensive school counseling programs ensure equitable access to opportunities and rigorous curriculum for all students to participate fully in the educational process and improve life-readiness.

As education evolves and expectations tied to NYS Learning Standards continue to rise, the demands on both students and educators grow as well. In response, the role of the professional school counselor is adapting to meet these changing needs.

Role of a School Counselor

The Professional School Counselor's Role

Professional school counselors focus their skills, time, and energy on direct and indirect services to students. To achieve maximum program effectiveness, the American School Counselor Association recommends a professional school-counselor-to-student ratio no larger than 1:250 and that professional school counselors spend 80% or more of their time in direct and indirect services to students. No more than 20% of a school counselor's time should be spent on program planning and school support activities. School counselors work in concert with school principals, administrators, and instructional support teams to most effectively prioritize their support services based on the needs of our students, families, the school, and the community.

Professional school counselors participate as members of the educational team and use the skills of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration to promote systemic change as appropriate. "The ASCA National Model®: A Framework for School Counseling Programs" outlines the components of a school counseling program integral to the school's mission. School counselors design, implement, and assess a school counseling program that improves life-readiness and academic success for each and every student.

Professional school counselors prioritize the effective implementation of school programs and serve as leaders within the educational community. In this role, they advocate for systemic change, collaborate with stakeholders, and use data to promote equity and support student success. They work to help students achieve their goals while identifying and reducing barriers to learning.

School counselors build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with students, educators, families, and community members. They contribute to system-wide improvements, addressing both preventative and responsive student needs. Additionally, they assist in interpreting assessment data and partner with school staff to ensure appropriate educational placement and instructional strategies.

Committed to ethical standards and ongoing professional growth, school counselors engage in continuous learning and professional involvement. They remain adaptable and responsive to evolving educational demands, ensuring they effectively meet the needs of all students.

The Orchard Park Central School Counseling Department has examined its current counseling practices and services and has aligned them with the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), the ASCA National Model, and the expectations of the New York State Education Department.



New York State Certification Requirements for School Counselors

The Strategic goal of the Board of Regents is to provide New York State educational systems with certified, qualified, and well-trained professionals to serve all students. School counselors in New York State must meet requirements as outlined on the [New York State Education Department](#) website.

Orchard Park Central School District Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Plan

Pursuant to [Part 100 of the New York State Education Department](#) (last updated July 2025), listed in Part 100 of the Commissioner's Regulations, school counseling programs are defined as follows:

1. Public Schools: Each school district shall have a guidance program for all students
 - a. In Grades K-6, the program shall be designed in coordination with the teaching staff to prepare students to participate effectively in their current and future educational programs, to help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral, or adjustment problems, to educate students concerning the avoidance of child sexual abuse, and to encourage parental involvement.
 - b. In Grades 7-12, the guidance program shall include the following activities and services:
 - i. An annual review of each student's educational progress and career plans, with such reviews to be conducted with each student individually or with small groups by personnel certified or licensed as school counselors.
 - ii. Instruction at each grade level to help students learn about various careers and about career planning skills is conducted by personnel certified or licensed as school counselors, or by classroom teachers in cooperation with school counselors.
 - iii. Other advisory and individual or group counseling assistance to enable students to benefit from the curriculum; to help students develop and implement post-secondary educational and career plans; to help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral or adjustment problems; and to encourage parental involvement, provided that advisory assistance shall be provided by teachers or counselors or by certified teaching assistants under the supervision of counselors or teachers, and that such individual or group counseling shall be provided by certified or licensed school psychologists or certified or licensed school social workers in cooperation with school counselors; and
 - iv. The services of personnel certified or licensed as school counselors.
 - c. Each school district shall develop a district plan that sets forth the manner in which the district shall comply with the requirements of this subdivision. The City School District of the City of New York shall submit a separate plan for each community school district, for the High School Division, and for the Special Education Division. Such a plan shall be filed in the district offices and shall be available for review by any individual. The plan shall present program objectives, which describe expectations of what students will learn from the program, activities to accomplish the objectives, specifications of staff members and other resources assigned to accomplish the



objectives, and provisions for the annual assessment of program results. The plan shall be reviewed annually by the school districts, and revisions shall be made as necessary.

Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Continuing Education/Part 11/100. 2j/2010

Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Plan Program

To establish program focus, professional school counselors identify personal beliefs addressing how all students benefit from the school counseling program. Building on these beliefs, professional school counselors create a vision statement defining what the future will look like in terms of student outcomes. In addition, professional school counselors create a mission statement aligned with their school's mission and develop program goals defining the vision. In alignment with the ASCA model, this support includes addressing factors that contribute to achievement gaps, such as attendance, discipline, school climate, and systemic barriers.

In 2025, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) published the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, Fifth Edition. The model includes four components: Define, Manage, Deliver, and Assess. Information learned through the accountability process contributes to the continuous improvement of the school counseling program.

Define

A school counseling program is defined by professional and student standards, which guide school counselors through developing, implementing, and assessing a school counseling program.

Professional Standards

[The ASCA School Counselor Competencies](#) outline the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that ensure school counselors are equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the profession. [The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) specify the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the highest standard of integrity, leadership, and professionalism. They guide professional school counselors' decision-making and help to standardize professional practice to protect both students and school counselors.

Student Standards

Enhancing the "whole child" for all students, the [ASCA Student Standards](#) guide the development of effective school counseling programs around three domains: academic, career, and personal/social development. Professional school counselors also consider how other student standards important to state and district initiatives complement and inform their school counseling program.

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success

Mindset Standards: School counselors encourage the following mindsets for all students

Standard	Mindset/Behavior Description
M 1	Belief in the development of the whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional, and physical well-being
M 2	Sense of acceptance, respect, support, and inclusion for self and others in the school environment
M 3	Positive attitude toward work and learning
M 4	Self-confidence in the ability to succeed
M 5	Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
M 6	Understanding that postsecondary education and lifelong learning are necessary for long-term success

Behavior Standards: School Counselors provide culturally sustaining instruction, appraisal, and advisement, and counseling to help all students demonstrate:

Learning Strategies

B-LS 1	Critical thinking skills to make informed decisions
B-LS 2	Creative approach to learning, tasks, and problem-solving
B-LS 3	Time-management, organizational, and study skills

B-LS 4	Self-motivation and self-direction for learning
B-LS 5	Media and technology skills to enhance learning
B-LS 6	High-quality standards for tasks and activities
B-LS 7	Long- and short-term academic, career, and social/emotional goals
B-LS 8	Engagement in challenging coursework
B-LS 9	Decision-making informed by gathering evidence, getting others' perspectives, and recognizing personal bias
B-LS 10	Participation in enrichment and extracurricular activities
Self-Management Skills	
B-SMS 1	Responsibility for self and actions
B-SMS 2	Self-discipline and self-control
B-SMS 3	Independent work
B-SMS 4	Delayed gratification for long-term rewards
B-SMS 5	Perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals
B-SMS 6	Ability to identify and overcome barriers
B-SMS 7	Effective coping skills

B-SMS 8	Balance of school, home, and community activities
B-SMS 9	Personal safety skills
B-SMS 10	Ability to manage transitions and adapt to change
Social Skills	
B-SS 1	Effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
B-SS 2	Positive, respectful, and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them
B-SS 3	Positive relationships with adults to support success
B-SS 4	Empathy
B-SS 5	Ethical decision-making and social responsibility
B-SS 6	Effective collaboration and cooperation skills
B-SS 7	Leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse groups
B-SS 8	Advocacy skills for self and others, and the ability to assert self, when necessary
B-SS 9	Social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment
B-SS 10	Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness

Manage

The ASCA Student Standards can be applied to three broad domains: academic, career, and social/emotional development. These domains promote mindsets and behaviors that enhance the learning process and create a culture of college, career and life-readiness for every student. The domain definitions are as follows:

- Academic Development – Standards guiding school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn. Refer to the [district plan for Homebound Instruction](#) to meet the needs of individual students.
- Career Development – Standards guiding school counseling programs to help students 1) understand the connection between school and the world of work and 2) plan for and make a successful transition from school to postsecondary education and/ or the world of work and from job to job across the lifespan.
- Social/Emotional Development – Standards guiding school counseling programs to help students manage emotions and learn and apply interpersonal skills.

Statement of beliefs:

We believe that success begins with each child's belief in the development of their whole self. This includes maintaining a healthy balance of mental, social-emotional, and physical well-being. Students should build confidence in their ability to succeed, feel a strong sense of belonging within their school community, and understand that postsecondary education and lifelong learning are essential for long-term career success. We also believe students should strive to use their abilities to their fullest potential to achieve high-quality results and maintain a positive attitude toward their work and learning.

School counselors deliver direct and indirect student services that improve life-readiness and academic success for each and every student.

Direct Student Services

Direct student services provided by the counseling program may include, but are not limited to, responsive services, crisis intervention, group counseling, individual counseling, appraisal, assessment, and advisement. These services are designed to help students benefit from the school curriculum, support the development and implementation of postsecondary education and career plans, assist students experiencing attendance, academic, behavioral, social/emotional, or adjustment concerns, and encourage parental involvement.

Note: Certified or licensed school psychologists and certified or licensed school social workers, pursuant to Part 80 of the Commissioner's Regulations, may also provide these and other direct student services within their respective scopes of practice. *However, these services may not replace those provided by a certified school counselor.*

- **Instruction:** Enhance student access, life-readiness, and academic success through delivery of the ASCA Student Standards. The curriculum is delivered through classroom instruction, interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent workshops/instruction.

- **Appraisal & Advisement:** Appraisal: Analyze and assess students' abilities, interests, skills, and achievement from test and inventory results. Advisement: Make recommendations based on appraisal of test and inventory results to help students make decisions for their future.
- **Counseling:** Provide students with short-term assistance and support based on counseling theories and techniques during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change, or other situations impeding academic, career, and social/emotional development. Refer to the district Crisis Response Plan.

Indirect Student Services

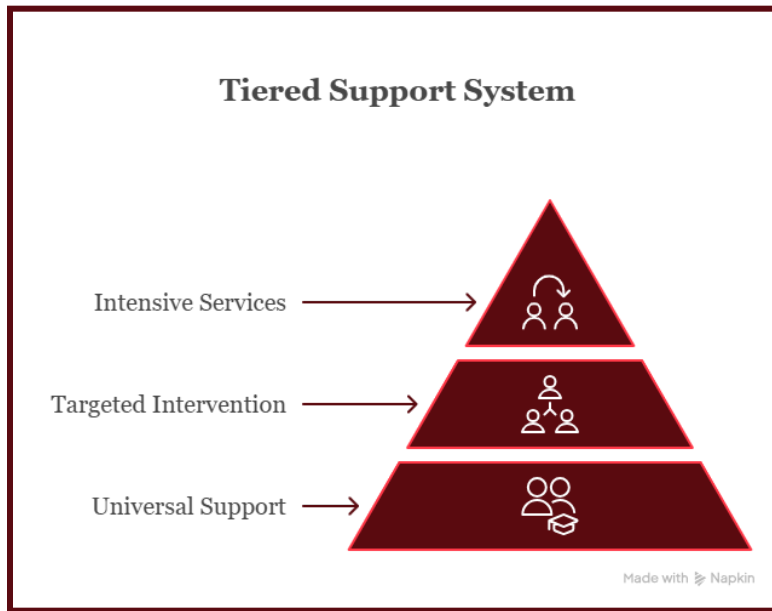
Indirect student services may include, but are not limited to, referrals to appropriately licensed or certified professionals, consultation, collaboration, leadership, advocacy, and participation in team-based support efforts. Counselors will also assist in identifying those students who may qualify for McKinney-Vento Status via district liaisons. [McKinney-Vento Act: A Quick Reference Guide for School Staff](#)

- In addition, each school counseling plan must be developed annually and include program objectives, planned activities, and strategies for program development and maintenance. The plan should also outline the school counseling curriculum, professional learning plans, evaluation methods based on data analysis of program outcomes, and "closing-the-gap" reports used to guide program improvement. Furthermore, the plan must assess the resources necessary to support positive student outcomes and include the preparation of a program outcomes report that analyzes all systemic components of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program as defined in this subdivision.
- **Referrals:** Connect students and families with more intensive resources for life-readiness and academic success.
- **Consultation:** Provide information, perspectives, strategies, and recommendations to individuals who can support a student's needs. Seek information on what students might need to address an issue and strategies to enhance life-readiness and improve academic success. Consultation includes providing assistance and planning for student transition as defined in the Orchard Park Transition Plan.
- **Collaboration:** Work with education partners (faculty/staff, parents/guardians, community services/agencies) on an identified goal for student success, sharing responsibility for identified tasks among cooperating individuals.

Tiered Delivery System

- Tier 3 - Address intensive academic, behavioral, and mental health needs through referrals, consultation, and collaboration. This level includes indirect services for a few.

- Tier 2 - Offer small-group and individual counseling for students, along with referrals, and consultation and collaboration with educational partners. This level would include some students.
- Tier 1 - Offer programming that supports students at the classroom, grade, and schoolwide levels. This level would include every student, family, and staff member.



Academic Development	Career Development	Social/Emotional Development
At-risk Interventions (T2, T3)	Career Awareness & Exploration (T1, T2, T3)	Individual Counseling (T1, T2, T3)
Credit/Graduation reviews (T1)	College Application Process (T1, T2, T3)	Group Counseling (T2)
MTSS (T2, T3)	College Awareness & Exploration (T1, T2, T3)	Family Solutions Center (T1)
Administrative/Staff Consultation (T1, T2, T3)	Parent Workshops (T1, T2, T3)	Referrals/Linkage to community resources (T1)
Team/Department Meetings (T1, T2, T3)	Military Awareness & Exploration (T1, T2, T3)	Crisis Intervention (T3)
CSE Participation (T3)	Professional Development/Organization Membership (T1, T2)	Staff Consultation/Collaboration (T3)
504 Plans (T3)	K-12 District School Counselor Meetings (T1, T2)	Character Development/Education (T1)
Course Planning/Scheduling/Classroom Placement (T1, T2, T3)		Community Outreach (T1, T2, T3)
BIP/FBA Planning or Participation (T3)		At-risk Interventions (T2, T3)
Parent/Teacher Conferences (T2, T3)		Professional Development/Organization Membership (T1, T2)
Transition Planning (T1, T2, T3)		K-12 District School Counselor Meetings (T1, T2)
Homebound Instruction Consultation (T3)		
Professional Development/Organization Membership (T1, T2)		
K-12 District School Counselor Meetings (T1, T2)		

**T1 (Tier 1 - Global Application), T2 (Tier 2 - Specialized Group), T3 (Tier 3 - Individualized)

Family Solutions Center



The Orchard Park [Family Solutions Center](#), located at 75 Bank St., supports district and community families with school-age children by providing direct counseling services to families, hosting parenting classes, and providing resources. The mental health professionals at the Family Solution Center will work with families to promote problem-solving strategies to develop healthy relationships using solution-focused communication. By recognizing the family as the most significant influence in the development of a child, mental health professionals will optimize student success by empowering families. The Family Solutions Center is not a mental health clinic but provides counseling to families to address parenting, school, social/emotional, and behavioral issues that interfere with a family's well-being.

Assess

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms, professional school counselors analyze school and school counseling program data to determine how students are different as a result of the school counseling program. Professional school counselors use data to show the impact of school counseling programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior, and analyze school counseling program assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students. The performance of the professional school counselor is evaluated on basic standards of practice expected of professional school counselors implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. (*ASCA National Model, Fifth Edition*)

Professional school counselors incorporate organizational assessments and tools that are concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school's needs. Assessments and tools include:

- School counselor competency and school counseling program assessments to self-evaluate areas of strength and improvement for individual skills and program activities
- School Counselor Collaboration Committee (advisory council), made up of teachers, counselors, administrators, and community members, to collaborate regarding the implementation of this plan.
- Use of student data to measure the results of the program, as well as to promote systemic change within the school system. Data sources may include, but are not limited to: academic performance, attendance rates, discipline rates, systemic barriers, and student and stakeholder perspectives.

- Collaborate with administration and PPS to create plans, including prevention and intervention activities and services that define the desired student competencies and measure the impact on achievement, behavior, and attendance.

Benefits of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Comprehensive developmental school counseling programs positively impact students, teachers, administrators, boards of education, and other student services personnel, school counselors, business, and industry. The benefits of each of these groups include the following:

Benefits for Students

- Prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century by acquiring knowledge and skills in academic, career, and personal/social development.
- Connects the educational program to future success.
- Facilitates career exploration and development
- Develops decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Assists in acquiring knowledge of self and others.
- Enhances personal social development.
- Assists in developing effective interpersonal relationship skills.
- Broadens knowledge of our changing world.
- Guarantees school counseling services to every student.
- Increases the opportunity for counselor/student interaction.
- Encourages facilitative, cooperative peer interactions.
- Fosters resiliency skills for students.

Benefits for Parents

- Prepares their children for the challenges of the 21st century through academic, career, and personal/social development.
- Provides support for parents in advocating for their child's academic, career, and personal/social development.
- Develops a systematic approach for their child's long-range planning and learning.
- Increases opportunities for parent/social interaction.
- Enables parents to access school and community resources.

Benefits for Teachers

- Provides an interdisciplinary team effort to address student needs and educational goals.

- Provides skill development for teachers in classroom management, teaching effectiveness, and effective education.
- Provides consultation to assist teachers in their guidance and advisement role.
- Positively impacts school climate and the learning community.
- Supports classroom instruction.
- Encourages positive, scheduled activities and supportive working relationships.
- Promotes a team effort to address developmental skills and core competencies.
- Increases teacher accessibility to the counselor as a classroom presenter and resource person.

Benefits for Administrators

- Integrates school counseling with the academic mission of the school.
- Provides a program structure with specific content.
- Assists the administration in using school counselors effectively to enhance the learning and development of all students.
- Provides a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the school counseling program.
- Demonstrates school counseling accountability.
- Enhances the community image of the school counseling program.

Benefits for Local Boards of Education

- Provides rationale for implementing a comprehensive developmental counseling program in the school system.
- Assures that a quality school counseling program is available to every student.
- Demonstrates the necessity of appropriate levels of funding for implementation.
- Supports appropriate credentialing and staffing.
- Provides a basis for determining funding allocations for school counseling programs.
- Furnishes program information to the community.
- Gives ongoing information about student acquisition of competencies and standards through school counseling program efforts.

Benefits for School Counselors

- Provides a clearly defined role and function in the educational system.
- Eliminates non-counseling functions.
- Provides direct service to every student.
- Provides a tool for program management and accountability.
- Enhances the role of the school counselor as a student advocate.
- Ensures involvement in the academic mission of the school.
- Places school counselors in a leadership role.



Benefits for Student Services Personnel

- Provides school psychologists, social workers, and other professional student services personnel with a clearly defined role of the school counselor.
- Clarifies areas of overlapping responsibilities.
- Fosters a positive team approach, which enhances cooperative working relationships.

Benefits for Post-secondary Education

- Enhances the articulation and transition of students to post-secondary institutions.
- Prepares every student for advanced educational opportunities.
- Motivates every student to seek a wide range of substantial, post-secondary options, including college.
- Encourages and supports rigorous academic preparation.
- Promotes equity and access to post-secondary education for every student.

Benefits for Business and Industry

- Increases opportunities for business and industry to participate actively in the total school program.
- Provides increased opportunity for collaboration among counselors, business, industry, and communities.
- Provides a potential workforce with decision-making skills, pre-employment skills, and increased worker maturity.

Benefits for the Community

- Provides an increased opportunity for collaboration and participation of community members with the school program.
- Creates community awareness and visibility of the school counseling program.
- Connects the community to the needs of the school and the school to the needs of the community.
- Enhances economic development through the quality preparation of students for the world of work.

Adapted from the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program, Missouri State Department of Education, 2017

Comprehensive Counseling Plan Program Summary

Pre-K–12 Attendance Program Summary

Over the past three years following COVID-19 (2022–present), the School Counseling Department has prioritized improving student attendance through a district-wide initiative. This effort has involved all school buildings and focuses on restructuring practices to ensure consistency, utilizing data-driven decision-making, and implementing a multi-tiered system of support.

While many students look forward to reconnecting with peers, engaging in new learning, and reestablishing routines, the transition back to school can also bring increased anxiety and stress. Since the pandemic, there has been a notable rise nationwide in both student mental health needs and chronic absenteeism.

According to Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization, the percentage of chronically absent students has more than doubled since the pandemic and now exceeds 20%. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 18 days in a school year. Loss of instructional time has a direct impact on academic achievement, making it essential to understand and address the barriers that prevent consistent attendance.

As we continue to navigate post-pandemic challenges, the district is committed to partnering with families and the community to build resilience, reduce barriers, and support student success. Improving attendance is not solely about increasing numbers; it is about strengthening relationships, identifying concerns early, and providing meaningful support systems.

Even a few missed days each month—beginning as early as kindergarten—can accumulate and lead to academic and social gaps. Research shows that students who are chronically absent are at greater risk of dropping out, which can limit future opportunities. Therefore, fostering consistent attendance habits early is critical.

Family Communication and Support

Effective two-way communication with families is a cornerstone of this initiative. Families now receive updates on their child's attendance to increase awareness, as absences can accumulate quickly due to illness or unforeseen circumstances.

The district emphasizes a supportive, rather than punitive, approach by working collaboratively with families. When challenges arise, families are encouraged to connect with school staff or access resources such as the Family Solutions Center. Building strong, trusting relationships is central to addressing attendance concerns.

Strategies to Support Attendance



Families are encouraged to consider the following strategies to promote consistent attendance:

- Establish consistent bedtime and morning routines, including weekends
- Prepare backpacks, clothing, and lunches the night before
- Maintain regular medical checkups
- Keep children home only when truly ill
- Seek support for mental health concerns rather than relying on absences
- Limit "screen-time"
- Model positive attendance habits
- Schedule appointments and vacations outside of school time
- Maintain open communication and listen to children's concerns
- Engage with the school community through visits and orientation opportunities

District-Wide Approach and Key Considerations

The district recognizes that attendance is a shared responsibility among students, families, and school staff. Key priorities include:

- Building a relationship-centered, team-based approach
- Establishing consistent procedures across all six buildings
- Using clear, data-informed processes ("clear is kind")
- Identifying concerns early and intervening proactively
- Providing supportive interventions rather than relying solely on consequences
- Collaborating with other districts and community resources
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability and follow-through
- Strengthening school culture and staff engagement

Chronic absenteeism thresholds are defined as:

- 18 days absent (10% of the school year)
- 36 days absent (20%, considered severe chronic absenteeism)

Multi-Tiered System of Support

The district utilizes a three-tiered framework:

- Tier 1: Universal supports focused on building relationships, promoting positive school culture, and educating families
- Tier 2: Targeted interventions for at-risk students, including monitoring and early support
- Tier 3: Intensive, individualized plans developed by school-based teams

Intervention Strategies

A variety of interventions are implemented across tiers, including:

- Peer mentoring programs (Windom Buddy, WEB)
- Enhanced learning opportunities (e.g., arts, music, STEM)
- Credit recovery options
- Parenting support groups
- Modified schedules
- Summer programs and interventions
- Building-level attendance teams (IST/MTSS)
- Direct communication efforts such as postcards and letters

Building-Level Plans

Elementary Schools

Focus on early intervention, relationship-building, and fostering strong attendance habits through consistent communication and education. Attendance teams support Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

All four elementary buildings have established consistent attendance procedures and standardized communication, including aligned attendance messaging in parent outreach. Based on individual student needs, school counselors provide a range of supports, including:

- Individual interventions with students and families
- Efforts to reduce barriers such as access to food, clothing, transportation, and housing
- Building student independence (e.g., using an alarm clock)

- Support for morning routines, including hygiene
- Referrals to the Family Solutions Center for additional services

Schools have implemented practical, real-life interventions, such as connecting students with career exploration opportunities. Additional strategies include:

- PowerSchool alerts, staff communication, letters, and regular check-ins
- Consistent use of IST, MTSS, and team conferences involving SROs, administration, nursing staff, students, parents, Pupil Support Services, and the Transition Coordinator
- A collaborative, team-based approach to attendance support
- Trial program in one of the elementary buildings of “Who is your One” in which every faculty member identifies with one student to provide additional support throughout the year.

Orientation programs emphasize the importance of daily attendance, arriving on time, and remaining in school for the full day. Schools have also embraced a philosophical shift in how students are welcomed back after absences, focusing on support and re-engagement (e.g., “It’s great to see you, let’s work together to get you caught up”).

Additional supports include McKinney-Vento interventions for students experiencing housing instability and ongoing collaboration to address barriers related to food, clothing, and transportation.

Middle School

The middle school currently employs a developing, collaborative approach that brings together administration, PPS, and community resources to support students.

The middle school counseling department utilizes a range of strategies to address chronic attendance concerns, including:

- Conferences with parents/guardians and students
- Student check-in/check-out systems
- Home visits conducted with the School Resource Officer
- Collaboration with the Behavior Specialist
- Development of modified schedules
- Connections to outside service providers
- Efforts to eliminate transportation barriers
- Daily morning phone calls to parents/guardians

- Attendance incentives
- Offering physical education time before school
- Meetings with the CPS Liaison and families
- Referrals to the Family Solutions Center

In addition, the school maintains consistent communication with families regarding attendance and tardiness, while implementing appropriate interventions. Current practices include sending notification letters after 10 and 18 days of absence, increasing counseling support, and making referrals to resources such as the Family Solutions Center and McKinney-Vento services.

High School

The school currently follows a structured, sequential process to address attendance concerns, which includes staff referrals, parent communication, conferences, and progressive interventions such as extended study sessions.

During the 2025–26 school year, the high school established an Attendance Team composed of teachers, SRPs, administrators, and PPS staff. This team meets regularly to identify barriers to attendance and develop plans for improvement. Data has been regularly reviewed to identify trends and students.

The school is also revising the Attendance Committee structure to place a stronger emphasis on data collection and improving the accuracy of student attendance records among staff. Staff will be encouraged to provide after-school support for students who have missed instructional time, allowing them to make up coursework.

Attendance data will be reviewed every five weeks to identify students with absenteeism rates exceeding 10%. These students will receive notification letters, and their cases will be discussed during House meetings, where additional communication will be distributed as needed. PowerSchool will be used to analyze the relationship between attendance rates (10% or higher absenteeism) and failing grades.

For students identified through this process, the House Office will develop individualized intervention plans. The House Principal may assign one or more of the following interventions:

- Extended learning time or detention
- Parent/guardian meetings

PPS staff will be available as needed to support students and families throughout the intervention process.

Systems and Processes



PowerSchool serves as a central tool for tracking attendance and initiating communication. Families receive notification letters at key thresholds (10 and 18 absences), with building administrators reviewing any exceptions.

Each building collaborates to determine appropriate responses, ranging from monitoring to formal intervention planning. Attendance teams, composed of administrators, nurses, PPS staff, teachers, and support personnel meet as needed to review and address concerns.

District Progress and Ongoing Work

The district has made significant progress in:

- Aligning attendance practices and language across schools
- Strengthening data collection and analysis
- Increasing communication with families
- Expanding electronic documentation systems
- Establishing regular cross-building collaboration meetings

Notably, elementary attendance has improved over the past three years, while middle and high school initiatives continue to evolve.

Key Elements for Success

The district's work is grounded in several core principles:

- Strong relationships with students and families
- Early identification and intervention
- Individualized and flexible support strategies
- Consistent communication and expectations
- Recognition that attendance is foundational to academic success

Student Engagement Factors

Recent insights indicate that students are more likely to attend school when they experience:

- Joy: Engaging, meaningful learning experiences
- Connection: Positive relationships with peers and staff
- Growth: Opportunities to build skills and confidence

- Success: Clear pathways toward future goals

Chronic Absenteeism Accountability Report

Chronic Absentism Rate					
	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Eggert	5.03%	13.58%	11.98%	7.63%	8.10%
Ellicott	1.98%	13.71%	9.33%	3.82%	5.54%
South Davis	3.64%	14.29%	11.26%	5.38%	5.54%
Windom	4.34%	20.57%	8.25%	7.28%	6.53%
OPMS	4.77%	15.76%	11.60%	10.36%	8.34%
OPHS	7.77%	16.54%	16.47%	12.55%	14.85%

Moving Forward

Attendance remains a critical focus as the district continues to refine systems, strengthen transitions (Pre-K, Kindergarten, and middle school entry), and build a cohesive, supportive framework across all grade levels.

By maintaining a consistent, relationship-driven approach and engaging families as partners, the district is committed to improving attendance outcomes and supporting the success of every student.

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ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success

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