



School Counseling and Career Guidance Model

A Comprehensive Guide for School Counseling and Career
Guidance Personnel in South Carolina

June 2026

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SECTION ONE: Introduction

The South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model is grounded in three foundational beliefs:

Every student can achieve success and reach their full potential.

Teachers and educators make a lasting difference in the lives of students.

Parents and communities are essential partners in student success.

The South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model provides a cohesive, data-driven framework for delivering high-quality K-12 programming that comprehensively supports every student. Guided by a belief in student capability, educator professionalism, and parental partnership, this model serves as the only school counseling and career guidance framework fully aligned with South Carolina law. The South Carolina Department of Education recognizes this model as the authoritative framework for school counseling and career guidance in South Carolina public schools.

Rooted in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA), and the SC Character Education Act, the model affirms the specialized expertise of school counselors and career specialists. To maximize their programmatic impact, the model mandates that these professionals dedicate a minimum of 80% of their time to direct and indirect student services, thereby appropriately restricting their involvement in non-counseling administrative tasks.

A significant opportunity presented by this updated model is the potential to intentionally crosswalk school counseling services with state academic standards. Through this alignment, school counselors can systematically cultivate essential durable skills across three foundational domains: Learning to Learn (World-Class Knowledge), Learning to Work (World-Class Skills), and Learning to Live (Life and Career Characteristics). Utilizing the South Carolina Student Skill Benchmarks, school counseling personnel deliver developmentally appropriate instruction that advances in complexity—from fostering foundational communication and teamwork in elementary school to cultivating advanced problem-solving, self-management, and resilience in high school.

To effectively address the needs of all learners, the model integrates school counseling services into the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, establishing a comprehensive continuum of care. This alignment facilitates the delivery of Universal Tier 1 supports, such as classroom instruction on character education and career awareness; Targeted Tier 2 supports, including small group counseling and personalized advisement for Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs); and Intensive Tier 3 supports, which encompass crisis response counseling and coordination with community referrals.

The model prioritizes lifelong career development. Career guidance personnel collaborate with school counselors to facilitate dynamic career awareness and exploration opportunities. These professionals assist students in bridging academic instruction with real-world applications by administering career interest inventories, guiding the development of IGPs, and coordinating work-based learning opportunities, thereby ensuring students are well-prepared for post-secondary transitions.

Furthermore, the model emphasizes rigorous program management and continuous improvement. School counselors utilize school data profiles to establish targeted SMART goals aimed at addressing specific achievement gaps in attendance, behavior, and course performance. Professional effectiveness is continually evaluated through instruments such as the ADEPT Performance Appraisal rubric. By presenting these outcomes during annual administrator conferences and advisory council meetings, school counselors effectively advocate for their programs and cultivate collaborative partnerships with families, educators, and community stakeholders.

Ultimately, school counselors and career guidance personnel are pivotal in transforming school climates and enhancing individual student trajectories. By integrating academic development, career readiness, and character and life skills, this comprehensive model ensures that each South Carolina student receives the consistent, developmentally appropriate support required for their advancement. As students acquire the requisite skills to navigate an evolving global landscape, this model prepares them not merely for graduation, but for engaged citizenship, workforce proficiency, and lifelong success.

SECTION TWO: Profile of the South Carolina Graduate and Legislative Mandates

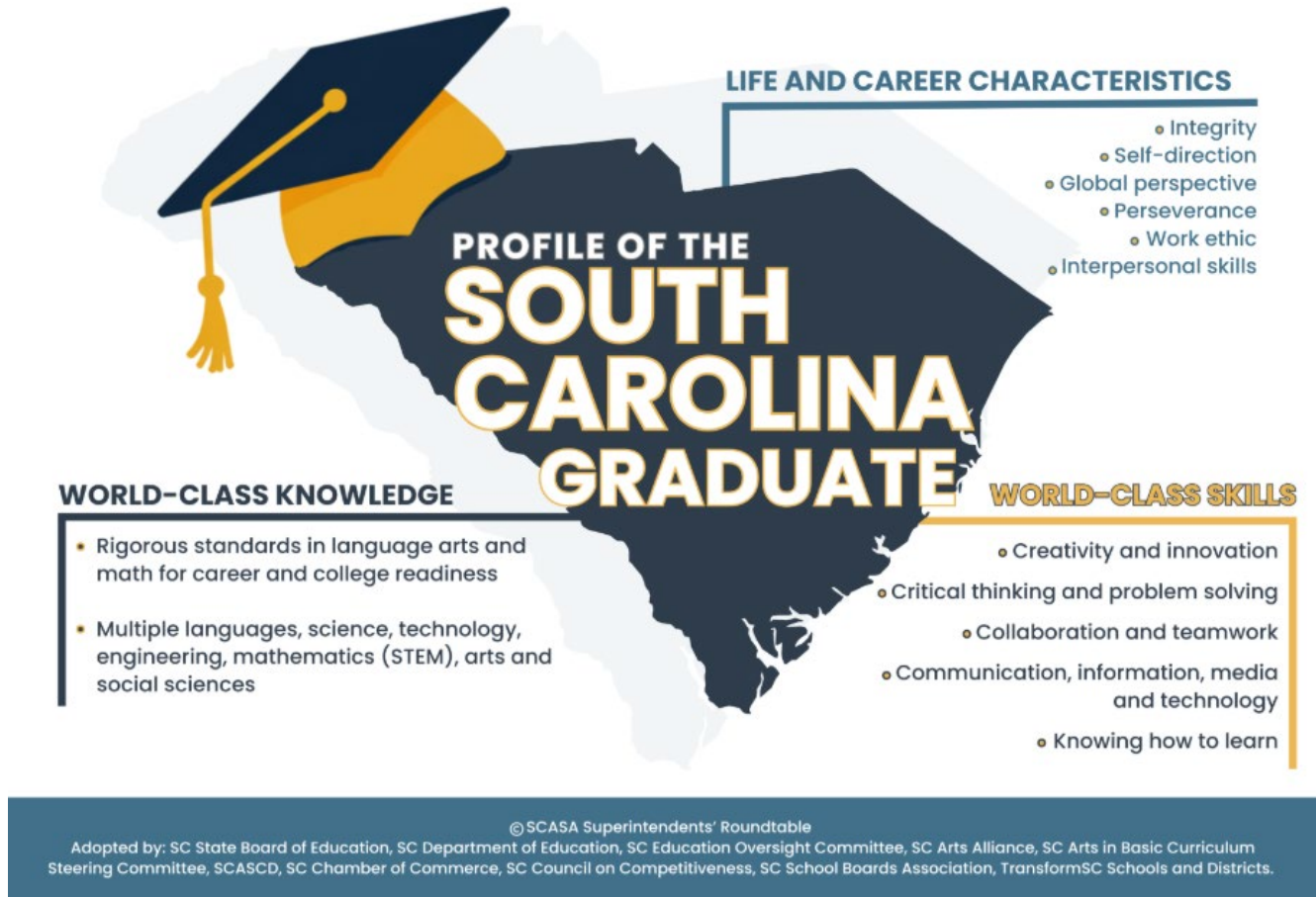
2.1 Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

In South Carolina (SC), the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, the SC Character Education Act (SC Code 59-17-135), the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA - SC Code Chapter 59, Title 59), Limitation of Activities of Guidance Counselors and Career Specialists (SC Code § 59-59-120), Administrative and Professional Personnel Qualifications, Duties and Workloads (State Board of Education Regulation § 43-205) and Act 213 which serves as the foundational legislative framework aimed at supporting students through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to assist school counselors and career development facilitators in implementing effective programs.

Every student in South Carolina deserves the opportunity to graduate prepared for success in college, career, and citizenship. South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will work to accomplish this vision through state-level leadership and collaboration, as well as school and district support to implement best practice

strategies and to help make the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate a reality for every student.

Figure 1: Profile of the South Carolina Graduate



2.2 SC Character Education Act SC Code 59-17-135

This law mandates that South Carolina public schools implement character education programs, involving students, parents, and the broader community to promote positive character traits.

Overview of the Law

SC Code § 59-17-135 requires South Carolina schools to provide a safe learning environment. To that end, South Carolina schools must actively teach positive character traits to improve student achievement, reduce disciplinary issues, and foster civic mindedness. The law emphasizes collaboration between schools, parents, and community members, including elected officials, business leaders, religious institutions, youth organizations, media, and citizens-at-large, to create a supportive atmosphere for character development.

Purpose and Goals

This law establishes a systematic framework for character education in public schools to promote academic growth, foster positive values, and ensure students learn respectful behavior. By codifying these requirements, we aim to encourage community participation and provide a structured method for evaluating program effectiveness.

2.3 Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA) Chapter 59, Title 59

The Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), "Personal Pathways to Success," is a program designed to better prepare South Carolina students for the workforce and post-high-school education through early career planning and an individualized curriculum.

Overview of the Law

EEDA was enacted to:

- Prepare students for college, career, or direct entry into the workforce.
- Address gaps in academic skills and workforce readiness.
- Create a coordinated system linking early career awareness to high school graduation planning and post-secondary pathways.

Key Components

- **Career Cluster System:** The curriculum is organized around nationally recognized Career Clusters.
- **Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs):** Students in grades 8–12 must annually develop and update an IGP that outlines course requirements, career aspirations, and academic focus.
- **School-Level Career Specialists:** Provide career awareness, exploration, and guidance for grades 6–12, working with students, parents, teachers, and school counselors.
- **School Counseling and Career Guidance Model:** Requires each middle and high school to have a student-to-guidance personnel ratio of three hundred to one.
- **Early Career Awareness:** Career exploration begins in elementary school with broader exposure based on grade-level appropriateness. Every student is required to participate in a work-based learning opportunity.
- **Regional Career Specialists:** Liaison with the South Carolina Department of Education in partnership with public school districts building partnerships with business/industry delivering career development and work-based learning opportunities to students in assigned service region.

- **Articulation Agreements:** Streamline transitions from high school to college or vocational training by aligning curricula and course credits.

2.4 Limitation of Activities of Guidance Counselors and Career Specialists SC Code 59-59-120

School counselors and career specialists should limit their activities to guidance and counseling and may not perform administrative tasks.

Overview of the Law

This statute sets a professional boundary for school counselors and career specialists, ensuring their primary role remains focused on providing academic, career, and student support services.

2.5 Administrative and Professional Personnel Qualifications, Duties and Workloads State Board of Education Regulation § 43-205

This law addresses the necessity of adequate school counselor staffing by establishing or recommending specific student-to-counselor ratios.

Overview of the Regulation

This regulation requires South Carolina secondary schools to maintain a student-to-school counselor and career guidance personnel ratio of 300-1. School counseling and career guidance personnel include certified school counselors and career specialists.

2.6 Act 213

Act 213 positions school counselors as essential members of the MTSS process. Counselors help identify students who need support, participate in data-based problem solving, coordinate and deliver social-emotional and behavioral interventions, collaborate with families, and ensure students receive appropriate supports across all tiers. Through MTSS, school counselors contribute to a proactive, equitable, and student-centered system designed to improve academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for every student.

Overview of the Law

This law requires schools to use an MTSS framework to identify students who may be at risk of academic difficulties, including reading difficulties such as dyslexia, as well as social-emotional challenges. The law promotes early

identification, timely intervention, and data-driven decision making to improve student outcomes.

SECTION THREE: School Counseling & Career Guidance in South Carolina

3.1 Introduction

School counselors are certified educators with a minimum of a master’s degree in counselor education and/or school counseling, making them uniquely qualified to address all areas of student development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating, and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes student success. School counselors are employed in elementary, middle, and high schools; in district supervisory positions; and in counselor education positions. School counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student success (Lapan, Gysbers & Kayson, 2007; Stone & Dahir, 2006).

South Carolina Career Development Facilitators are professionals who support educators and guide students in exploring career pathways and gaining workforce readiness. They are responsible for preparing individuals for the global workforce and may hold the Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) certification recognized in the career development field.

Through leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, school counselors and career guidance personnel encourage appropriate access to rigorous educational experiences for every student, support a safe learning environment, and work to safeguard all members of the school community (Sandhu, 2000), addressing the needs of every student through state and district-aligned programs as part of a comprehensive school counseling program.

3.2 Definitions: Program Stakeholders

In South Carolina, the work of school counselors is grounded in the South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model, which guides how programs are organized and implemented. The Model also identifies stakeholder roles and appropriate responsibilities. (See Table 1)

Table 1: School Counseling Program Stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Primary Purpose	Key Focus / Responsibilities
School Counselors	Program leadership and implementation	Establish, implement, manage, and assess a comprehensive school counseling program that benefits every student through intentional program planning, implementation, and assessment

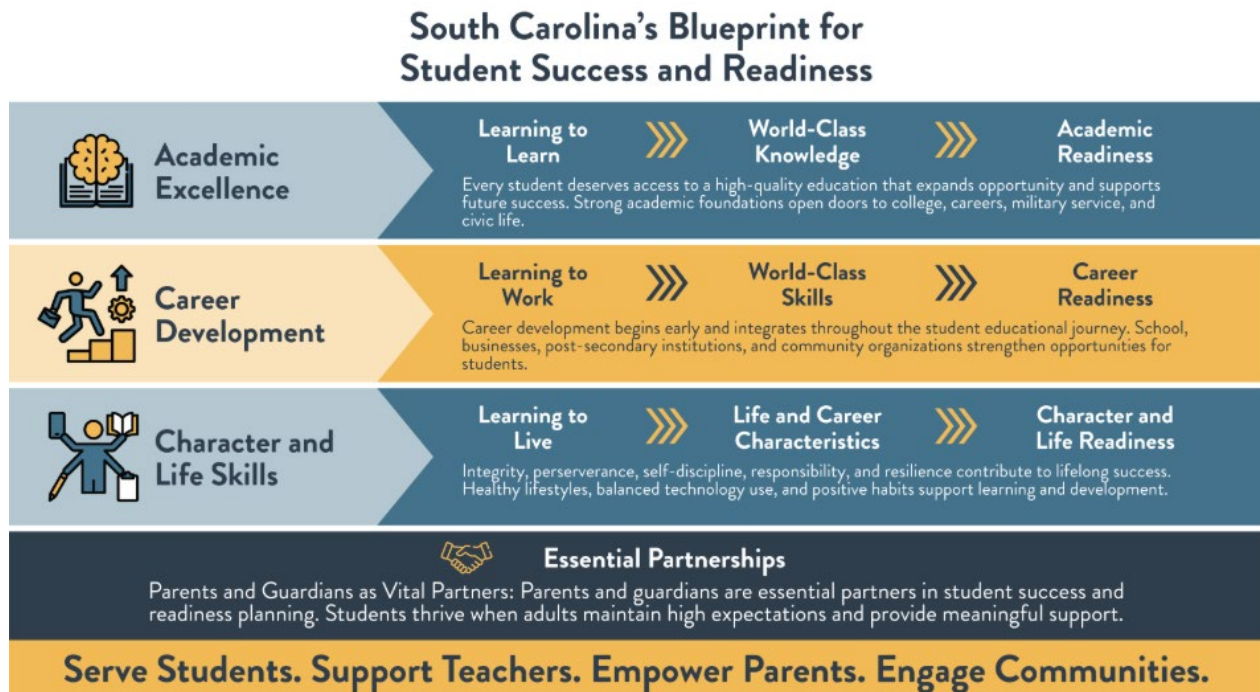
Career Guidance Personnel	Career development facilitation	Support student self-assessments, career exploration, and workforce readiness opportunities
Teachers	Program alignment and collaboration	Understand program goals and partner with school counselors to maximize student success
Principals	Program leadership and support	Collaborate with school counselors and career guidance personnel to design, deliver, and support a high-quality counseling and career guidance program
District Administrators	System-level support and oversight	Provide resources and support program development; establish procedures to improve effectiveness
Boards of Education	Policy development	Set policies that support and strengthen effective school counseling programs
School Counselor Educators	Preparation of future counselors	Train and develop future school counselors through instruction and program preparation
Students	Active engagement and growth	Participate in school counseling and career guidance activities; develop academic, career, and character and resilience competencies to support college, career, military, and life readiness
Parents/Guardians	Student support and partnership	Collaborate with school personnel to support student development; engage in educational and career planning processes and reinforce student success at home
Community Members/Community Partners	Student support and opportunity enhancement	Partner with schools to provide mentoring, career exploration, work-based learning experiences, post-secondary and workforce connections, support services, and resources that promote student academic, career, and life success.

3.3 South Carolina's Blueprint for Student Success and Readiness

The South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model aligns with South Carolina's Blueprint for Student Success and Readiness. The framework is built upon three program domains: Academic Excellence, Career Development, and Character and Life Skills—that foster the knowledge, skills, and characteristics students need to learn, work, and live successfully. The model emphasizes essential partnerships among educators, families, and community stakeholders to support student readiness and success.

Figure 2 illustrates the domains, desired student outcomes, and foundational partnerships that guide comprehensive school counseling and career guidance programs across South Carolina.

Figure 2: Blueprint for Student Success and Readiness



South Carolina's School Counseling and Career Guidance Model is grounded in the belief that every student deserves access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in school, work, and life. Consistent with the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), the Character Education Act, the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, and South Carolina's commitment to academic excellence and workforce readiness, this model is driven by South Carolina's Blueprint for Student Success and Readiness. (Figure 2)

Operating under the guiding foundational practice to "Serve Students. Support Teachers. Empower Parents. Engage Communities." school counseling and career guidance programs in South Carolina support students across three interconnected domains:

1. Academic Excellence

This domain guides students on a path from "Learning to Learn" to acquiring "World-Class Knowledge," ultimately resulting in "Academic Readiness". The core belief is that every student deserves access to a high-

quality education that expands opportunity and supports future success. By helping students build these strong academic foundations, the model ensures that doors remain open to college, careers, military service, and active civic life.

2. Career Development

Progressing from "Learning to Work" to developing "World-Class Skills" and achieving "Career Readiness," this domain recognizes that career development begins early and integrates throughout the student's educational journey. Students benefit from opportunities to explore interests, connect learning to future goals, and develop meaningful plans. Because learning is a collaborative endeavor, schools, businesses, post-secondary institutions, and community organizations must work together to strengthen career opportunities for every student.

3. Character and Life Skills

Focusing on the transition from "Learning to Live" to the development of "Life and Career Characteristics," this area culminates in "Character and Life Readiness". Lifelong success is built upon fundamental traits such as integrity, perseverance, self-discipline, responsibility, and resilience. To support ongoing student growth, academic achievement, and effective decision-making, the model also champions healthy lifestyles, balanced technology use, physical activity, and positive habits.

Essential Partnerships

Families, educators, employers, community organizations, and post-secondary partners each play an important role in helping students develop the skills necessary to navigate school, relationships, and citizenship successfully. Specifically, Parents and Guardians are recognized as vital, essential partners in student success and readiness planning. Students thrive when high expectations are paired with high support; meaning they succeed when the adults in their lives maintain high expectations while simultaneously providing the meaningful support needed to overcome barriers.

3.4 Student Skill Benchmarks

To put these foundations into daily practice, the model advances Student Skill Benchmarks organized within three domains. The embedded domains align with the identified goals of College, Career, and Life Readiness.

Learning to Learn (World-Class Knowledge), Learning to Work (World-Class Skills), and Learning to Live (Life and Career Characteristics)—define what students should know and be able to do. These benchmarks are organized within these domains and articulate clear, developmentally appropriate expectations for learners at each stage. (See Tables 2A-2C)

Table 2A: South Carolina Student Skill Benchmarks (World-Class Knowledge)

Learning to Learn: World-Class Knowledge (WCK)

Code	Indicator	I Can Statement
WCK-1	Use analytical thinking to make well-reasoned, informed choices	I can think critically about information to make smart, informed decisions.
WCK-2	Apply creativity to learning tasks and problem-solving	I can use creativity to solve problems and complete learning tasks.
WCK-3	Manage time, stay organized, and study effectively	I can manage my time, stay organized, and use effective study strategies.
WCK-4	Show initiative and ownership of one's learning	I can take responsibility for my learning and show initiative.
WCK-5	Leverage technical proficiency to deepen learning	I can use technology effectively to enhance my learning.
WCK-6	Hold high expectations for the quality of work	I can produce high-quality work and strive for excellence.
WCK-7	Set and monitor short- and long-term goals	I can set goals and track my progress over time.
WCK-8	Engage in rigorous coursework and challenges	I can challenge myself with difficult work and persist.
WCK-9	Make evidence-based decisions considering multiple viewpoints	I can evaluate different perspectives and use evidence to make decisions.
WCK-10	Participate in enrichment and extracurricular opportunities	I can get involved in activities that extend my learning.

Table 2B: South Carolina Student Skill Benchmarks (World-Class Skills)

Learning to Work: World-Class Skills (WCS)

Code	Indicator	I Can Statement
WCS-1	Communicate clearly through speaking, writing, and listening	I can express my ideas clearly and listen to others effectively.
WCS-2	Build respectful, supportive relationships	I can build positive relationships with people who are different from me.
WCS-3	Foster positive connections with supportive adults and peers	I can connect with people who help me succeed.

WCS-4	Demonstrate compassion for others	I can show kindness and empathy toward others.
WCS-5	Choose actions reflecting integrity and respect	I can act honestly and treat others with respect.
WCS-6	Collaborate and cooperate effectively	I can work well with others to achieve a goal.
WCS-7	Exhibit leadership and teamwork	I can lead when needed and contribute as a team member.
WCS-8	Communicates needs, goals, and concerns appropriately	I can clearly share what I need, want, or am concerned about.
WCS-9	Demonstrate maturity and responsibility	I can act responsibly and appropriately for my age and situation.
WCS-10	Work effectively and respectfully with individuals from different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.	I can respect and collaborate with people from different backgrounds.

Table 2C: South Carolina Student Skill Benchmarks (Life and Career Characteristics)

Learning to Live: Life and Career Characteristics (LCC)

Code	Indicator	I Can Statement
LCC-1	Accept responsibility for choices and behavior	I can take responsibility for my actions and decisions.
LCC-2	Demonstrate self-discipline and impulse control	I can control my behavior and make thoughtful choices.
LCC-3	Work independently when needed	I can work on my own and stay focused.
LCC-4	Delay immediate rewards for long-term outcomes	I can be patient and work toward long-term goals.
LCC-5	Persist through challenges	I can keep going even when things are difficult.
LCC-6	Identify obstacles and overcome them	I can recognize challenges and find ways to solve them.
LCC-7	Use healthy coping strategies	I can manage stress and emotions in healthy ways.
LCC-8	Maintain balance across life commitments	I can balance responsibilities at school, home, and community.
LCC-9	Practice personal safety and boundaries	I can keep myself safe and set appropriate boundaries.
LCC-10	Navigate transitions and adapt to change	I can adjust to changes and handle new situations.

3.5 Learning to Learn: World-Class Knowledge

The development of academic and educational standards is integral to a student's pursuit of lifelong learning. These content standards guide each student in acquiring world-class knowledge while promoting opportunities to reach their highest academic potential. (See Table 3)

Table 3: Learning to Learn (World-Class Knowledge)

Domain	Description	Student Skills Developed
Learning to Learn	The development of academic and educational standards is integral to a student's pursuit of lifelong learning.	• Achieve educational success • Identify and work toward goals • Manage information • Organize time • Locate resources

3.6 Learning to Work: World-Class Skills

A comprehensive career development program is designed to help students make informed decisions. The development of career standards is integral to a student's pursuit of success in the workforce. The content standards for career development provide an essential foundation for skill development that helps students make a successful transition from school to the world of work, from job to job, and across the life and career span, in line with the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. (See Table 4)

Table 4: Learning to Work (World-Class Skills)

Domain	Description	Student Skills Developed
Learning to Work	A comprehensive career development program is designed to help students make informed decisions about their education and career pathways.	• Make informed education and career choices • Access and apply self-assessment data for career exploration • Understand and use labor market trends • Develop competencies in self-knowledge • Engage in career and education planning • Participate in work-based learning opportunities

3.7 Learning to Live: Life and Career Characteristics

This domain provides a foundation for students' personal growth and supports their academic and career development. Students acquire skills to foster understanding of self and relationships with others. (See Table 5)

Table 5: Learning to Live (Life and Career Characteristics)

Domain	Description	Student Skills Developed
Learning to Live	The development of life and career characteristics is essential for student success and overall well-being.	• Understand and respect self • Maintain positive relationships with others • Make informed decisions • Adapt effectively to change • Demonstrate responsibility as engaged citizens

3.8 Grade-Band Progression and Descriptions

Elementary School Counselors

Elementary school years are foundational to the development of the knowledge, skills, and habits students need to become successful learners and responsible citizens. Through a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors collaborate with educators, families, and community partners to create a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment. Elementary school counselors help students develop strong academic foundations, build essential life skills such as self-awareness, self-management, communication, and decision-making, and foster positive relationships with others. At this level, school counselors introduce career awareness by helping students explore their interests, strengths, and connections between learning and future opportunities. Through prevention, early intervention, and student support, elementary school counselors promote student growth and lay the groundwork for lifelong learning, personal success, and college, career, and life readiness. (See Table 6)

Middle School Counselors

Middle school students experience significant developmental changes as they begin to shape their future aspirations. Through a comprehensive school counseling program, middle school counselors partner with educators, families, and community stakeholders to support students during this critical transition period. Middle school counselors help students strengthen academic skills, develop greater independence and responsibility, and refine essential life skills such as goal setting, problem

solving, self-advocacy, and relationship building. At this level, school counselors facilitate career exploration by helping students identify interests, abilities, values, and potential career pathways while connecting their educational choices to future opportunities. By providing developmentally appropriate support and guidance, middle school counselors help students to make informed decisions, navigate challenges, and prepare for success in high school, post-secondary education, and the workforce. (See Table 6)

High School Counselors

High school years are full of advanced growth, promise, excitement, frustration, disappointment, and hope. It is the time when students begin to discover what the future holds. Secondary school counselors enhance the learning process and promote academic achievement. School counseling programs are essential for students to achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set appropriate career goals, and realize their full academic potential, becoming productive, contributing to members of the world community. (See Table 6)

Table 6: South Carolina Student Skill Benchmarks – Grade-Band Progression Framework (Elementary → Middle → High) Key: **WCK** = World-Class Knowledge; **WCS**= World-Class Skills; **LCC**= Life and Career Characteristics

Domain	Indicator	Elementary Foundational	Middle Developing	High Advanced
WCK	Critical Thinking (WCK-1, 9)	Identify simple problems and make basic choices	Analyze problems and consider multiple viewpoints	Evaluate complex issues and defend evidence-based decisions
WCK	Learning & Creativity (WCK-2, 8)	Explore ideas through guided activities	Apply creativity to solve challenges	Innovate and apply creative solutions independently
WCK	Organization & Goal Setting (WCK-3, 7)	Follow routines and set short-term goals	Manage time with support and track progress	Independently manage time and long-term goals
WCK	Ownership of Learning (WCK-4, 6)	Complete tasks with guidance	Take responsibility for work quality	Self-direct learning and pursue excellence

WCK	Technology Use (WCK-5)	Use basic digital tools	Use technology for research and assignments	Leverage technology strategically for deeper learning
WCK	Engagement (WCK-10)	Participate in classroom activities	Engage in extracurricular opportunities	Seek advanced and enrichment experiences
WCS	Communication (WCS-1, 8)	Express ideas clearly with support	Communicate effectively in groups	Adapt communication for audience and purpose
WCS	Relationships (WCS-2, 3, 10)	Build positive peer relationships	Work with student groups respectfully	Collaborate across differences in complex settings
WCS	Collaboration (WCS-6, 7)	Work in teams with guidance	Contribute and take roles in teams	Lead teams and collaborate strategically
WCS	Integrity & Responsibility (WCS-5, 9)	Follow rules and demonstrate fairness	Show responsibility in group settings	Demonstrate professionalism and ethical behavior
WCS	Compassion (WCS-4)	Recognize others' needs	Show empathy in interactions	Advocate for and support others
LCC	Self-Management (LCC-2, 3)	Follow directions and stay on task with support	Work independently and demonstrate self-control	Consistently manage behavior and responsibilities
LCC	Responsibility (LCC-1)	Understand consequences of actions	Take responsibility for behavior	Demonstrate accountability across settings
LCC	Persistence (LCC-4, 5)	Keep trying with encouragement	Persist through moderate challenges	Demonstrate resilience in long-term goals
LCC	Problem-Solving (LCC-6)	Identify simple problems	Use strategies to overcome barriers	Navigate complex challenges independently

LCC	Wellness (LCC-7, 8)	Practice basic coping skills	Manage stress and balance activities	Maintain overall wellness and life balance
LCC	Safety & Adaptability (LCC-9, 10)	Learn basic personal safety	Apply safety skills and adapt to change	Navigate transitions and new environments independently

3.9 Career Guidance Personnel Roles and Responsibilities

Career development is a crucial component of a comprehensive school counseling model. Table 7 outlines the personnel and activities required to establish and maintain excellent practice in this area.

Table 7: Career Guidance Personnel Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Primary Responsibilities
School Districts	• Deliver a comprehensive school counseling and career guidance program aligned with the state model • Determine qualified personnel to deliver the career development plan when a career specialist is not employed or when a counselor serves a dual role • Develop a sequential curriculum addressing career awareness, exploration, preparation, and work-based learning • Provide developmentally appropriate, standards-based curriculum activities and resources that support lifelong career development and informed decision-making • Engage school personnel, families, community members, and business/industry partners in students' career development • Ensure equal access to career development activities for every student
School Counselors	• Plan, implement, and assess the school counseling program in alignment with SC Code Ann. § 59-59-70 • Promote career awareness and lead individual academic and career planning meetings • Interpret cognitive, aptitude, and achievement data to guide interventions and student goal setting • Provide individual and small group counseling services • Collaborate with teachers to deliver the school counseling core curriculum • Analyze disaggregated data and interpret student records • Counsel students in defining career goals and ensuring declaration of a major by the end of 10th grade • Provide career awareness programs and work-based learning guidance to support IGP completion • Encourage parent/guardian involvement in career planning and IGP development • Coordinate career services with career specialists, WBL coordinators, and other personnel

School-Level Career Specialists	• Meet certification requirements under SC Code Ann. § 59-59-100 • Coordinate and deliver professional development in career development and guidance • Promote quality career development for students in grades K–12 • Assist counselors and students in accessing career information and resources • Provide information on district CTE programs to educators, parents, and students • Support students in exploring career clusters and selecting an academic focus • Promote and improve district career development opportunities • Participating in continuing education related to the GCDF curriculum • Assist with career interest inventories and the IGP process • Support parent information efforts related to career development • Coordinate with regional specialists, administrators, and educators on career events, lessons, and WBL opportunities • Engage community resources and diverse occupational representatives in career activities • Support the use of computer assisted career guidance systems
Regional Career Specialists	• Partner with business and industry to provide career guidance resources and work-based learning activities across the service region • Facilitate regional and districtwide professional development for administrators, educators, WBL coordinators, and career guidance personnel • Provide student programming and workshop resources to support IGP development • Offer opportunities to recognize student achievement through CTE programs, CTSO competitions, and statewide awards processes • Provide GCDF training, maintain instructor certification, and uphold the GCDF Code of Ethics • Deliver CTE services supporting Perkins V and the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 • Ensure state level compliance by serving as an SCDE liaison for career readiness and WBL accountability measures • Provide technical assistance, professional learning, and continuous monitoring of WBL data quality and reporting in PowerSchool

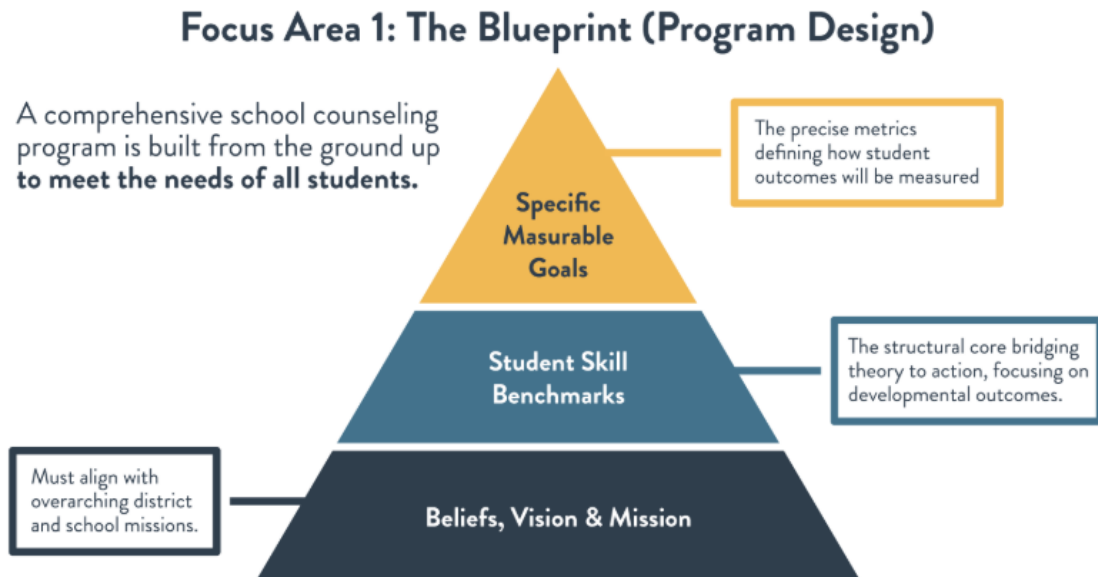
SECTION FOUR: Proficiencies & Services Delivery

4.1 School Counselor Proficiencies

Both the South Carolina School Counselor Comprehensive Proficiencies and the Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Training (ADEPT) Evaluation System target the expected knowledge of school counselors in five key areas: Program Design & Implementation, Program Management & Tools, Direct and Indirect Services, Program Evaluation & Improvement, and Professionalism. These resources outline the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that equip school counselors to meet the profession's rigorous demands and performance expectations.

Focus Area 1: Program Design & Implementation

Proficiency (CP) 1: School counselors should create and implement a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes student achievement.



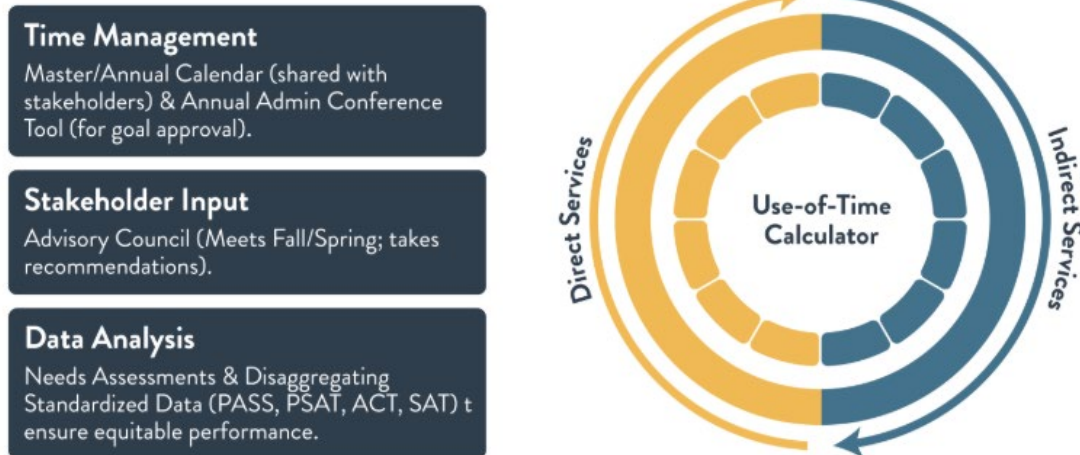
- CP 1.1 The program should be designed to meet the needs of every student.
- CP 1.2 The program should teach student skill benchmarks and focus on student outcomes.
- CP 1.3 The program should consist of school counselors' beliefs that align with the district and school mission statements.
- CP 1.4 The program should consist of specific goals defining how student outcomes, the vision, and the mission will be measured.

Focus Area 2: Program Management & Tools

Proficiency (CP) 2: School counselors should utilize tools and assessments to manage their comprehensive school counseling program.

Focus Area 2: The Infrastructure (Management & Tools)

Takeaway: Utilizing data, calendars, and council feedback to strategically allocate the most critical resource — the counselor's time.



- CP 2.1 The school counselor should use a master/annual calendar to plan the program's school year activities.
- CP 2.2 The school counselor should share this master/annual calendar with the administration, teachers, parents, and students.
- CP 2.3 The school counselor should utilize a use-of-time tracker to ensure an appropriate balance of direct and indirect services to students.
- CP 2.4 The school counselor should develop utilization of the annual administrator conference tool at the beginning of the year. This document highlights how the school counseling program will be organized for the school year and the goals to be accomplished and should be shared with and approved by the administration.
- CP 2.5 The school counselor should establish a school counseling advisory council consisting of all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, community members, higher education representatives, businesses, board members, etc.).
 - CP 2.5.1 The school counselor should share program activities and results with the advisory council.
 - CP 2.5.2 The school counselor should consider the recommendations of the advisory council regarding the program activities and results.

- CP 2.5.3 The school counselor should schedule advisory council meetings.
 - CP 2.5.4 The school counselor should record the meeting's information.
- CP 2.6 The school counselor should collect and analyze data to develop appropriate delivery services to ensure that every student is college, career, and/or military-ready upon graduation.
 - CP 2.6.1 The school counselor should review documents such as the school's profile data and assessment data.
 - CP 2.6.2 The school counselor should disaggregate the data to determine if certain groups are not performing as well as others and create programs in alignment with school goals and support identified students.
- CP 2.7 The school counselor should analyze all available data to identify student needs and inform program decisions.
- CP 2.8 The school counselor should design lesson plans for the delivery of school counseling curriculum activities and small groups.

Focus Area 3: Direct & Indirect Student Services

Proficiency (CP) 3: School counselors should provide direct services to students and indirect services on behalf of the students to parents, school staff, and the community. These services must prepare students for academic, career, and life readiness.

Focus Area 3: Delivering Value (Student Services)

Takeaway: Comprehensive support requires both immediate student intervention and systemic background architecture

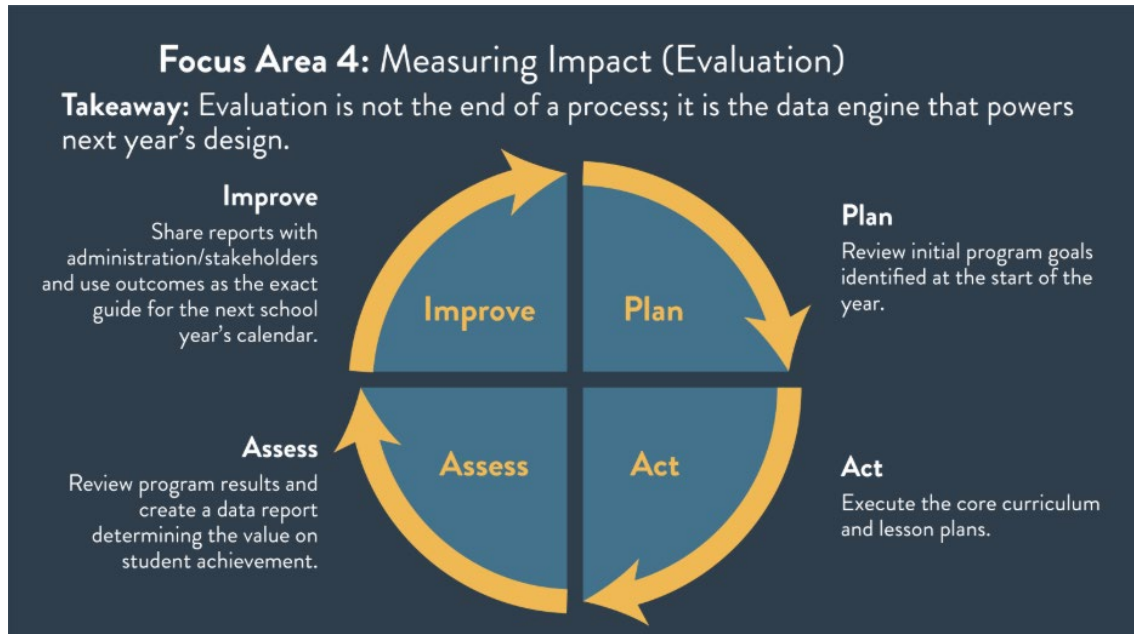
Direct Services	Indirect Services
Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Core curriculum activities aligned with state standards Small group facilitation Responsive crisis counseling	Interpreting assessment data Collaborating with school intervention teams (MTSS) Building an extensive resource directory for external referrals (e.g., Department of Mental Health, Department of Social Services)

- CP 3.1 In providing the school counseling core curriculum activities, the school counselor should collaborate with classroom teachers to align with student skill benchmarks and with state academic standards.
- CP 3.2 The school counselor should ensure that the direct services provide every student with knowledge and life skills appropriate for their developmental level.

- CP 3.3 The school counselor should allocate a minimum of 80% of their time to delivering direct and indirect services that support students' academic development, career readiness, and life skills development.
- CP 3.4 The school counselor should teach the school counseling core curriculum activities and facilitate small groups effectively.
- CP 3.5 The school counselor should encourage school staff involvement to ensure effective implementation of the school counseling curriculum.
- CP 3.6 The school counselor should have in place ongoing activities designed to assist students with their personal and post-secondary goals (i.e., Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) conferences).
- CP 3.7 The school counselor should be able to provide an accurate interpretation of assessment data.
- CP 3.8 The school counselor, in collaboration with school intervention teams (ex. MTSS teams), should monitor student progress and develop appropriate interventions as needed.
- CP 3.9 The school counselor should provide appropriate responsive services, such as individual/brief counseling, small-group counseling, or crisis counseling, based on the immediate needs and concerns of students.
- CP 3.10 The school counselor should develop an extensive resource directory to make appropriate referrals as needed (i.e., Department of Mental Health, Department of Social Services, etc.).
- CP 3.11 The school counselor should consult and collaborate as needed with parents, teachers, administrators, and other individuals and teams to ensure effective and quality programming.
- CP 3.12 The school counselor should work in conjunction with the school system to provide support and assistance to other school programs in compliance with appropriate/effective school counselor roles and activities.

Focus Area 4: Program Evaluation & Improvement

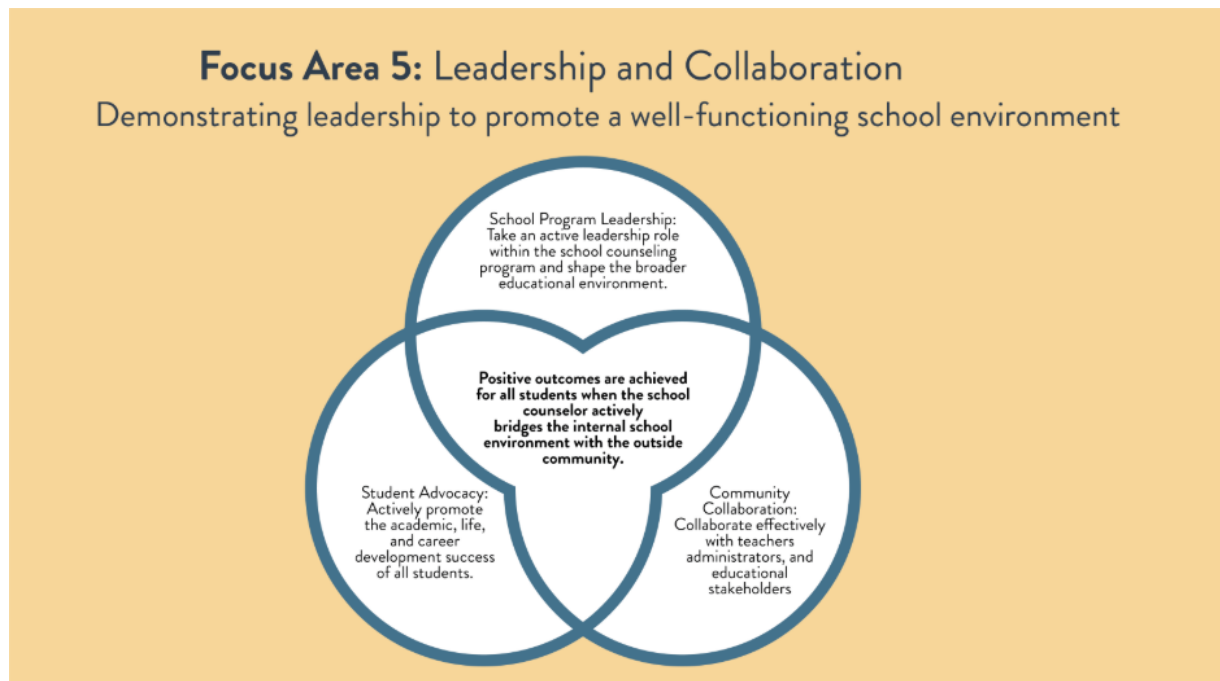
Proficiency (CP) 4: School counselors should determine the effectiveness and impact of the comprehensive school counseling program.



- CP 4.1 The school counselor should review the program goals identified at the beginning of the year to ensure alignment with district and school-level goals and focus.
- CP 4.2 The school counselor should review the program results from data from the various activities implemented throughout the year.
- CP 4.3 The school counselor should create a program lesson plan and data report to determine the value of the current year's activities on student achievement.
- CP 4.4 The school counselor should share the program results report with administration and stakeholders.
- CP 4.5 Based on the outcome, the school counselor should use the results as a guide for planning the comprehensive school counseling program and calendar for the following school year.

Focus Area 5: Leadership & Collaboration

Proficiency (CP) 5: School counselors demonstrate leadership and collaboration skills to promote a well-functioning school.



- CP 5.1 The school counselor should take a leadership role within the school counseling program as well as in the school environment and the outside community.
- CP 5.2 The school counselor should promote academic development, career development, and character and life skill development for every student.
- CP 5.3 The school counselor should collaborate effectively with teachers, administrators, and all other educational stakeholders to ensure positive outcomes for every student.

4.2 Career Guidance Personnel Proficiencies

A comprehensive career guidance program relies on a collaborative team of district leaders, school counselors, school-level career specialists, and regional career specialists. While the responsibilities of each role are distinct, effective implementation requires a shared foundation of knowledge and skills. Just as school counselors use assessment and advising competencies to support students' academic, career, and personal/social development, career specialists

must possess specialized expertise in career development theory, planning, and workforce readiness to effectively support students.

In accordance with the South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), Section 59-59-100, each middle and high school must provide students with access to a career specialist who holds at least a bachelor's degree and has successfully completed Career Development Facilitator (CDF) certification training. South Carolina recognizes this requirement through completion of a 120-hour Career Development Facilitator training program offered by a credential provider registered with the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), the credentialing body affiliated with the National Board for Certified Counselors. Certified school counselors who complete the same training pathway may also fulfill this requirement. Career specialists work under the supervision of a certified school counselor and are included within the statutory student-to-guidance personnel ratio of 300:1.

The purpose of this statutory requirement is to ensure that students receive high-quality, evidence-based career development services that support career awareness, career exploration, career planning, and informed post-secondary decision-making. By requiring specialized training, EEDA establishes a consistent foundation of practice that equips career specialists to guide students in understanding their interests, aptitudes, educational opportunities, and career pathways. These competencies align with the National Career Development Association (NCDA) Career Development Facilitator curriculum and support the delivery of career development services that prepare every student for success in post-secondary education, military service, and the workforce.

This training framework helps ensure that career guidance personnel can effectively coordinate career development activities, support Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs), connect classroom learning to career opportunities, and advance South Carolina's goal of preparing every student to be college, career, and military ready.

Figure 5 outlines the 12 core competencies for global career development facilitators (career specialists).



GCDF credential applicants are required to complete a minimum of 120 hours of training from one of CCE's Registered Credential Training Providers (RCTP).

4.3 Service Delivery

School counselors deliver direct and indirect student services that improve academic success, career preparedness, and life readiness. School counselors provide services to students, parents, school staff, and the community in accordance with South Carolina's laws and regulations and the state's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model.

4.4 Direct Services with Students

Direct services in school counseling span classroom instruction, college and career development and advising, academic appraisal and advisement, and short-term individual and group counseling services; all delivered face-to-face to meet student needs.

4.4a Instruction

School Counselor instruction consists of structured classroom, small-group, and individual lessons designed to help students attain the desired competencies and to provide every student with the knowledge and skills appropriate to their developmental level. School counseling instruction is delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and is systematically presented by school counselors in collaboration with other professional educators in K–12 classrooms and aligns with MTSS tiers 1 and 2 strategies. The curriculum emphasizes academic development (World-Class Knowledge), career development (World-Class Skills), and life skill development (Life and Career Characteristics).

4.4b Career Development Process

In addition, South Carolina's EEDA identifies the school-level career specialist as an individual who implements career development within a school as a member of the school counseling and career guidance personnel team. Other members of the school counseling and career guidance personnel team may include the work-based learning coordinator, job coach, transition specialist, and career counselor. (See Table 9)

Table 9: Career Development Process (Pre-K-12)

Career Development Process (Pre-K-12)		
Grade Level	Focus Area	Key Actions / Expectations
Elementary School PreK–Grade 5	Career Awareness & Foundation Building	• Integrate school counseling and career awareness activities into the curriculum • Provide early career exploration opportunities • Establish a foundation for future career planning • Support a smooth transition to middle school
Middle School Grades 6–8	Career Exploration & Planning	• Initiate career planning beginning in Grade 6 in collaboration with career specialists • Involve students and parents/guardians in the planning process • Deliver career awareness programs focused on career clusters • Support selection of a preferred cluster of study • Develop an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) by the end of Grade 8
High School Grades 9–12	Career Preparation & Implementation	• Assist students in refining career goals and updating IGPs

		• Ensure alignment between course selection, majors, and career goals by Grade 10 • Provide access to work-based learning opportunities and workforce resources • Ensure counselor review of IGPs • Prepare students for post-secondary education, employment, or military service
All Levels Grades K–12	Family Engagement & Transition Support	• Actively involves parents/guardians in career planning and decision-making • Develop strategies to support successful transitions (elementary to middle, middle to high, and beyond high school)

4.4c Appraisal and Advisement

Appraisal allows school counselors and career guidance personnel to coordinate ongoing, systemic activities designed to assist students in establishing personal academic goals and in developing plans based on local, state and national test and inventory results that inform student decisions.

Advisement offers school counselors and career specialists opportunities to work individually with each student in the three domains to make decisions: Learning to Learn (World-Class Knowledge), Learning to Work (World-Class Skills), and Learning to Live (Life and Career Characteristics).

4.4d Counseling

School Counselors meet students’ immediate needs and concerns. The scope of practice activities for school settings includes individual counseling, small-group counseling, and crisis/crisis response counseling and are planned, goal-focused, short-term, and aligned with MTSS school counseling strategies. (See Table 10, Figure 6)

Table 10: Career Development Process (Pre-K-12)

Service Type	Overview	Structure & Key Details
Individual Counseling	Focused, student-centered sessions in which the school counselor applies specialized training and professional expertise to address a student’s specific needs and goals.	• May include solution-focused or other brief counseling approaches • Short-term in nature, typically limited to 6–8 sessions

Small Group Counseling	Designed to address specific issues or skill-building needs through structured small group engagement.	- Typically involves 3–10 students meeting 4–8 times - Sessions last approximately 20–45 minutes - Requires parent/guardian permission
Crisis Response and/or Crisis Counseling	Provides immediate support and assistance to students experiencing emergencies or acute distress.	- Includes intervention, stabilization, and follow-up services - Designed to prevent situations from escalating or becoming severe - Implemented according to district-provided written crisis procedures

Learning to Learn: MTSS Examples

Tier 1 Universal Support	- School counseling classroom lessons on study skills, graduation requirements, learning styles, time management, etc. - Academic readiness skills workshops for teachers/parents - Universal screenings - Staff and parent presentations on topics like graduation requirements, pathway planning, etc.
Tier 2 Targeted Support	- Small groups for academic readiness skills - Individual academic planning - Academic readiness skills progress monitoring - Consultation with teachers/administrators on grade trends for student groups
Tier 3 Intensive Support	- Referral to special education when targeted interventions are not resulting in sufficient progress - Intensive academic interventions 504/IEP academic readiness support services - Referral to alternative learning or continuation program to better support the student's individual needs and success

Learning to Work: MTSS Examples

Tier 1 Universal Support	- Career awareness lessons - College planning workshops and career fairs - Interest inventories - Common language across staff (career clusters, pathways, credentials) - Whole-group lessons on course selection tied to interests and goals - SMART goal setting tied to future aspirations
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	• Classroom-based career research projects (aligned with content standards) • Virtual career exploration platforms (e.g., SCOIS) • Guest speakers (in-person or virtual)
Tier 2 Targeted Support	• Individual career counseling • Mentorship/job shadowing programs • Small group sessions connecting grades, attendance, and future goals • Academic recovery plans tied to career interests • Small groups focused on employability skills (organization, communication, time management) • Work readiness mini courses (soft skills, professionalism) • Practice scenarios (teamwork challenges, problem-solving tasks)
Tier 3 Intensive Support	• Referral to external career development services • Intensive post-secondary planning meetings • Work-based learning supports • Individualized graduation plans (credit recovery, alternative pathways) • Flexible scheduling, online coursework, or alternative schooling options • Alignment of recovery plan to career goals (not just graduation compliance)

Learning to Live: MTSS Examples

Tier 1 Universal Support	• School counseling classroom lessons on life skills • Character education programs • Anti-bullying initiatives • Schoolwide positive behavioral support • Staff and parent presentations on character and life skills topics
Tier 2 Targeted Support	• Small group counseling (grief, anger, social skills, etc.) • Check-in/check-out systems • Peer mediation/conflict resolution • Mentoring programs
Tier 3 Intensive Support	• Referral to community mental health services • Crisis intervention and safety planning • Intensive character and life skill building • Wraparound services coordination

Examples above are adapted from: Hatch, T. (n.d.). Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS). Hatching Results. Retrieved from: <https://www.hatchingresults.com/multi-tiered-multi-domain-system-of-supports>

4.5 Indirect Services

Indirect services, which include referrals for additional assistance, consultation, and collaboration with parents, teachers, other educators, and community organizations, are provided on behalf of students through the school counselor's interactions with others and, along with direct services, constitute the school counselor's 80% minimum time on task. (See Table 11)

Table 11: Indirect Services

Indirect Service	Purpose / Description	Alignment With MTSS
Referrals	School counselors connect students and families with intensive school-based and community resources to address identified needs.	Aligns with MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies by ensuring students receive targeted or intensive support.
Consultation	School counselors provide information, perspectives, strategies, and professional recommendations to individuals supporting students' academic, career, and life development.	Aligns with MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies through coordinated, data-informed decision-making.
Collaboration	School counselors work with educational partners—including faculty/staff, parents/guardians, and community agencies—to advance shared goals for student success.	Collaborative partners align their strategies with MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

4.6 Scope of Practice

School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term clinical counseling to diagnose, treat, or manage psychological disorders. Consistent with the South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model, their role is to recognize indicators of student mental health concerns, respond to crises, collaborate with parents/legal guardians, and address factors that impede academic development or life and career readiness.

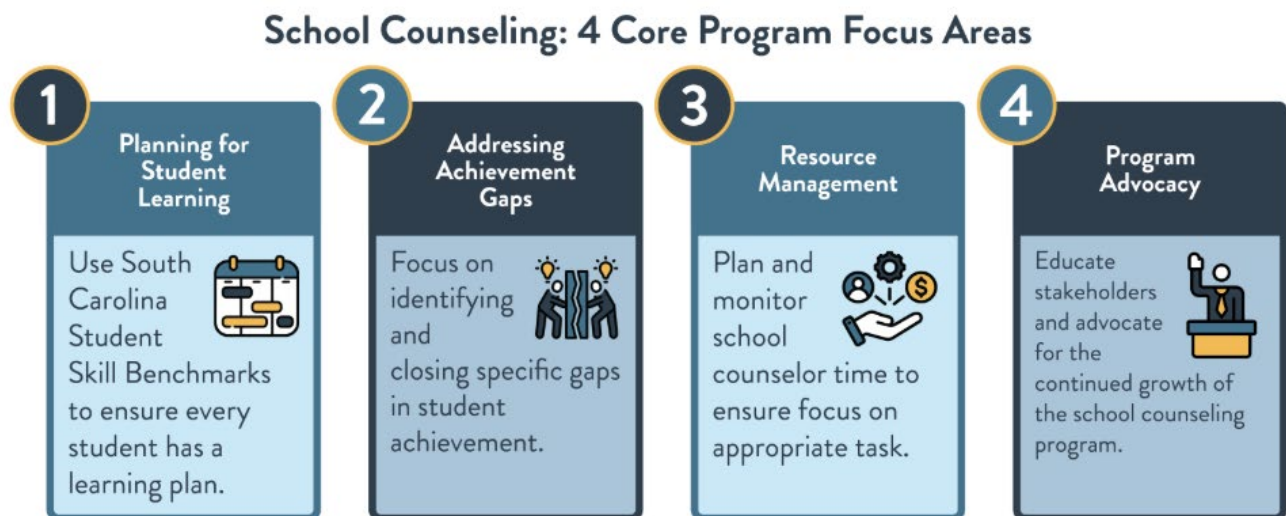
School counselors deliver developmentally appropriate instruction, prevention services, crisis response, and short-term, solution-focused support. When more intensive support beyond this scope is indicated, school counselors provide parents/legal guardians with options to facilitate referrals to licensed mental health professionals and approved community agencies.

As part of their professional practice, school counselors and career specialists may be guided by ethical standards established through local school board and district policies, which are aligned with applicable state laws and regulations.

SECTION FIVE: Program Management and Planning

The program management and planning components guide school counselors through the design, planning, and implementation of the school counseling program. School counselors manage their program by focusing on the areas outlined in Figure 7.

Figure 7: School Counseling Program Focus Areas



To manage the effectiveness of their programs, school counselors use organizational assessments and tools that are concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school's needs.

5.1 Program Focus

To establish program focus, school counselors identify and address the needs of every student in the three domains of academic success, career development, and career and life readiness.

The program's focus aligns with state and locally defined student outcomes, with goals developed to enable effective assessment and progress measurement.

5.2 Planning for Student Skill Development

South Carolina school counseling and career guidance personnel programs promote success for every student and identify state standards for school counselors to deliver in classrooms, large groups, small groups, and individually to enhance life readiness for every student.

School counselors plan for student skill development by:

- Identifying specific practices in the Blueprint for Student Success and the Student Skill Benchmarks that will be delivered in Tier 1 and 2 settings. School counselors may use the [South Carolina School Counseling Achievement Gap Plan Template/ADEPT Student Growth Goal](#) a resource to support planning and monitoring.
- Planning how the benchmarks will be taught using lesson plans. [South Carolina School Counseling & Career Guidance Lesson Plan Template](#) and the [South Carolina Small Group Sessions Plan Template](#) are provided as optional tools to support lesson development; counselors may also use other planning formats approved at the local level.
- Using student benchmarks to provide focus for individual sessions with students.

5.3 Addressing Achievement Gaps

South Carolina school counseling programs focus on achievement gaps for students' unmet achievement goals by using school-level benchmarks and connecting these gaps to contributing factors.

The Model provides a structured template to help school counselors design and implement achievement gap improvement plans. The [South Carolina School Counseling Achievement Gap/ ADEPT Student Growth Goal Plan Template](#) allows educators to identify specific student growth goals based on baseline data such as attendance, behavior, and academic performance. School counselors can formulate a SMART goal and select relevant student skill benchmarks that focus on world-class knowledge and career characteristics. Furthermore, the template prompts a comprehensive analysis of contributing factors, gathering critical input from students, families, teachers, and administrators. By identifying barriers and outlining specific school counseling interventions, the template ensures a strategic approach to closing educational disparities.

School counselors address achievement gaps by:

- Identifying school counseling data priorities,

- Using the [South Carolina School Counseling Program Data Assessment Template](#) that aligns with the state/local guidance and school improvement plans, and
- Using achievement gap plans such as the [South Carolina School Counseling Achievement Gap/ ADEPT Student Growth Goal Plan Template](#) to address the needs of students who are not reaching achievement goals or benchmarks.

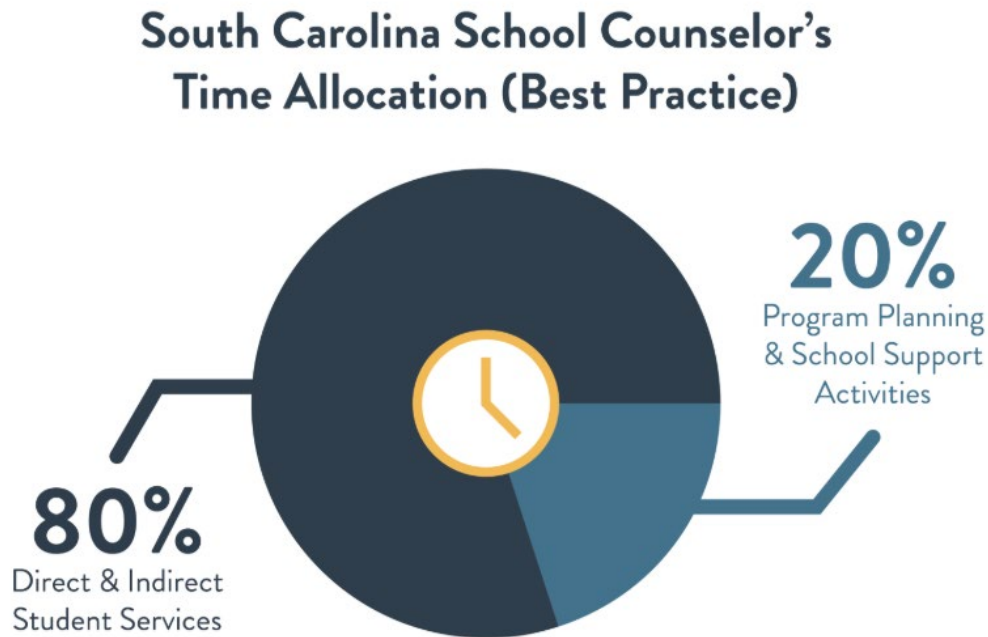
5.4 Maximizing Time to Support Student Outcomes

South Carolina school counseling programs communicate the activities delivered to every student and document the school counselor's appropriate time on tasks to ensure the ability to support the success of every student in their caseload. (See Figure 8)

School counselors maximize time to support student outcomes by:

- Using weekly calendars to prioritize, plan, and publicize day-to-day work;
- Publicizing an annual calendar, which includes all major school counseling activities, to students, families, and other education partners; and
- Spending at least 80% of the time on direct and indirect services to students and 20% or less on program planning and school support.

Figure 8: School Counselor Time on Tasks Best Practice



5.5 Program Leadership & Advocacy

South Carolina school counseling programs' priorities and plans are communicated to the administrator in charge of the school counseling program and to other education partners. Education partners are also provided input through dialogue about the school counseling program that addresses success for every student.

School counselors educate and advocate for their program by:

- Holding an annual administrator conference, [South Carolina Annual Administrative Conference & ADEPT Preliminary Approval Conference Template](#), with the administrator in charge of the school counseling program to educate about the program's impact and advocate for its organization, goals, plans, and appropriate time on task;
- Holding Advisory Council Meetings - [South Carolina School Counseling Advisory Council Meeting Template](#) to educate education partners about the impact and to advocate for the support and role of the school counselor.
- Communicating program information to students and families and sharing the program's impact with stakeholders and other partners.

5.6 Program Planning

Best practice program planning requires South Carolina school counselors to use data to inform the development, implementation, and assessment of school counseling programs.

Monitoring data may assist school counselors in:

- Determining student academic success/gaps and life-readiness skill levels;
- Identifying students who need additional readiness skills and additional wrap-around services;
- Assessing the effectiveness of school counseling program activities;
- Communicating with partners and stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school counseling program.

5.7 School Counseling Program Data

School counselors use three important categories of data to plan and report results of the school counseling program. (See Table 12)

Table 12: Program Data Types

Data Type	Definition / Description	Purpose / What It Measures
Participation Data	Tracks the number of students who access school counseling services, how often they participate, and the duration of their participation.	Measures student engagement in counseling opportunities and activities that contribute to school success and lifelong readiness.
South Carolina Student Skill Benchmark Data	Assesses student attainment of the South Carolina-specific knowledge and skills for life readiness using prescribed objectives and pre-/post-assessments.	Measures student mastery of required competencies outlined in the South Carolina Student Skill Benchmarks.
Achievement Data	Includes student performance indicators such as traditional grades, standards-based grades, benchmark assessments, promotion rates, graduation rates, and test scores.	Identifies how students or student groups are achieving their growth potential.
Additional Measures Contributing to Achievement	Supplemental data that influence or reflect student achievement, including attendance rates, behavior data, and progress toward state and local goals.	Provides a broader understanding of factors affecting student outcomes and supports data-driven decision-making.

SECTION SIX: Evaluation and Assessment

South Carolina school counselors regularly assess both their own skills and those of their program to determine effectiveness in the areas of Learning to Learn (World-Class Knowledge), Learning to Work (World-Class Skills), and Learning to Live (Life and Career Characteristics).

6.1 Program Assessment

Program assessment is designed to evaluate how well the school counseling program aligns with the South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model and with state and local guidance. The [South Carolina School Counseling Program Data Assessment Template](#) provides a structured framework that informs the design and delivery of a comprehensive program supporting students' academic achievement, career development, and character/life skill development. Additionally, the School Counseling Program Assessment helps school counselors identify and implement targeted interventions that strengthen student outcomes, including improvements in achievement, attendance, and behavior.

6.2: Using SMART Goals in School Counseling

A SMART goal framework helps school counselors design focused, measurable, and results-driven objectives that strengthen the effectiveness of their programs. By ensuring each goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time bound, counselors can more clearly define desired student outcomes, monitor progress, and evaluate the impact of their interventions. This structured approach supports data informed decision making and aligns school counseling practices with broader academic, career, and life-readiness priorities. (See Table 13)

Table 13: Program SMART Goals

Using SMART Goals in School Counseling Programs		
SMART Goal Component / Reflection Area	What It Means	What It Looks Like for School Counselors
S – Specific	The goal is clearly defined and focused	Increase 9th-grade on-track rates
M – Measurable	Progress and outcomes can be tracked with data	from 68% to 80% (using grades, attendance, or credit data)
A – Achievable	The goal is realistic given time, resources, and context	based on prior data trends and available interventions (small groups, IGPs, MTSS supports)
R – Relevant	The goal aligns with school/district priorities and student needs	targets identified gaps such as attendance, behavior, or course performance.

T – Time-Bound	The goal includes a clear timeline	by the end of the 2026–2027 school year
Sample SMART Goal: Increase 9th-grade on-track rates from 68% to 80% by the end of the 2026–2027 school year, using grades, attendance, and credit data, through targeted interventions (small groups, IGPs, MTSS) addressing attendance, behavior, and course performance gaps.		

6.3: Program Reflections and Continuous Improvement

Program assessment evaluates how well the school counseling program aligns with the South Carolina School Counseling and Career Guidance Model, as well as with state and local guidance. Through this process, the South Carolina School Counseling Assessment provides a structured framework that informs the design and delivery of a comprehensive program that supports students’ academic achievement, career development, and character and life skill growth. Additionally, the School Counseling Program Assessment helps school counselors identify and implement targeted interventions for improving student achievement, attendance, and behavior, ensuring that program decisions are data driven and responsive to student needs. (See Table 14)

Table 14: Program Reflection & Continuous Improvement

Reflection Question	Purpose	Application in School Counseling
Were SMART goals utilized?	Ensures goals were structured effectively	Review whether goals included all SMART components and were clearly defined using data
Was the goal met? If not, why?	Evaluates effectiveness of strategies	Analyze student outcome data and determine barriers (implementation, time, resources, student needs)
What are the implications for next year’s goals?	Guides to future planning and improvement	Adjust targets, refine strategies, or select new focus areas based on results
What implications do these results have for the program?	Connects outcomes to overall program effectiveness	Inform program changes, reallocate time/services, and strengthen alignment with MTSS and school goals

6.4 Guidelines for Implementing an Assessment Plan

School Counselors should use data to make programmatic decisions and to measure effectiveness. By using measurable outcomes, school counselors can demonstrate the difference that programs make for students.

In the context of a school counseling program, this may involve:

- identifying and collaborating with stakeholder groups;
- collecting data and assessing the needs of students, staff, and community;
- setting goals and establishing objectives based on data;
- implementing effective interventions;
- measuring the outcomes of interventions;
- using results for program improvement; and
- sharing results with major stakeholders.

Figure 9: Steps for Assessment Plan Implementation

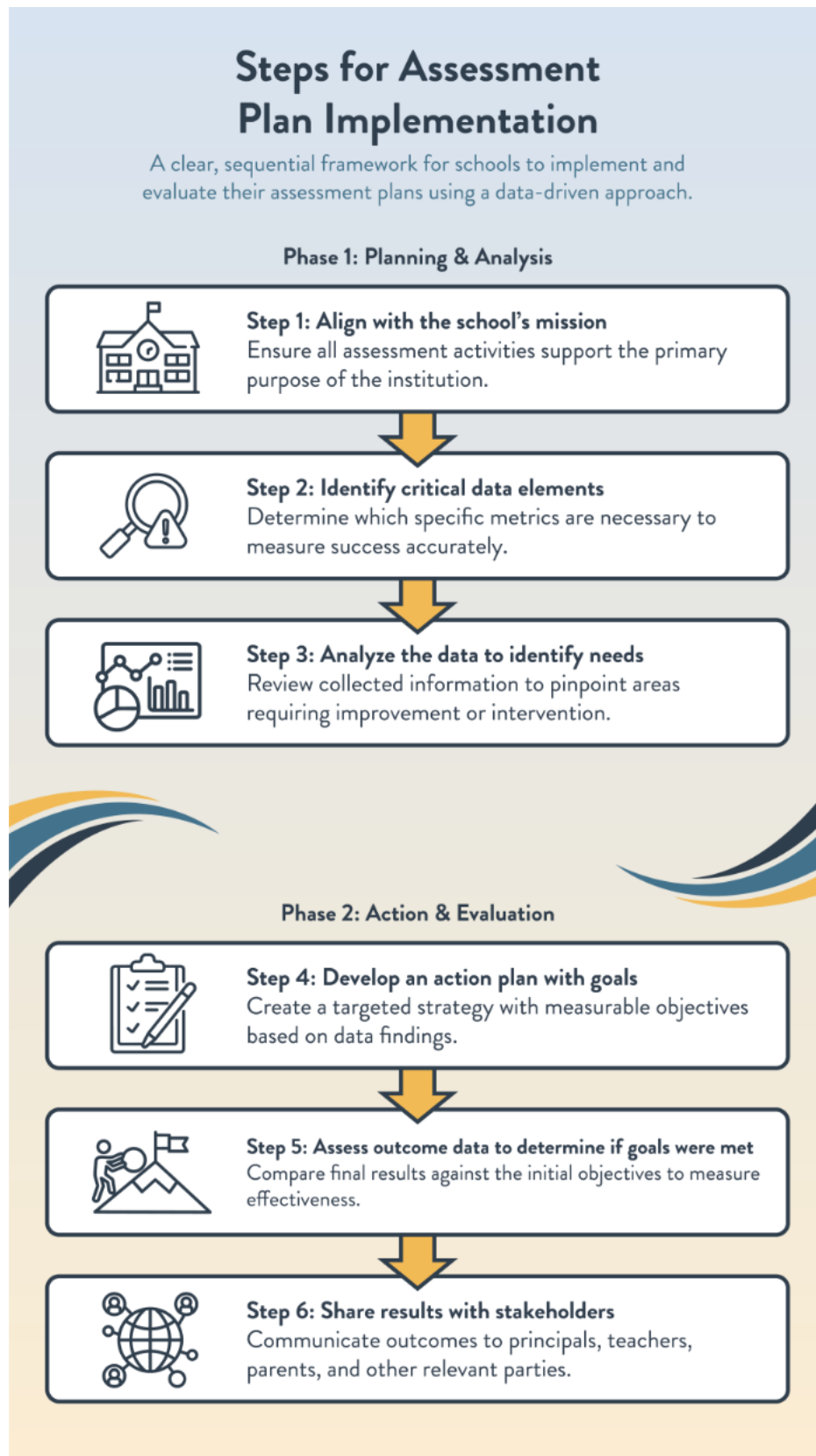


Table 15 provides examples of specific types of data and results that school counselors use to establish, improve, and enhance their school counseling programs.

Table 15: Data Sources

Data Source	Purpose / Use
School Data Profile	Provides baseline schoolwide data to identify trends and needs.
Pre- and Post-Classroom Curriculum Results	Measures the impact of classroom lessons on student learning and skill development.
Pre- and Post-Small Group Results	Assesses the effectiveness of targeted small-group interventions.
Program Assessment Analysis	Evaluates program implementation and alignment with state models and expectations.
School Counselor ADEPT Performance Appraisal	Reviews counselor performance and professional practice to guide improvement.

6.5: School Counselor Assessment and Appraisal

- The purpose of school counselor assessment and appraisal is to aid school counselors with self-reflection, assess alignment with state and local expectations, and formulate an appropriate professional development plan. Also, the purpose includes gaining feedback on personal performance as a school counselor.
- The South Carolina ADEPT School Counselor Evaluation Rubric and the South Carolina School Counselor Comprehensive Proficiencies are used to assess the school counselor's knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to implement a school counseling program in alignment with state and local parameters. The ADEPT process allows the school counselor to share artifacts of activities implemented to improve student achievement and create systematic change.
- The school counselor's assessment and appraisal process promotes continued professional development, increases school counseling expertise, and leads to improved student outcomes.
- To ensure that South Carolina school counselors uphold professional/effective practices and use their time effectively, the following chart compares two similar activities that promote best practices.

6.6 Effective and Ineffective Activities

Table 16 illustrates how school counselors can effectively allocate their time by following best practice activities.

Table 16: Effective and Ineffective Activities for School Counselors

Effective Activities for School Counselors	Ineffective Activities for School Counselors
Appraisal & advisement for academic planning	Building the master schedule
Academic advisement for new students	Coordinating and/or leading paperwork and data entry of all new students
Presenting school counseling lessons based on the SC Student Skill Benchmarks to address students' developmental needs and needs identified through data	Covering classes when teachers are absent or creating teacher planning time
Consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management, and the role of SC Student Skill Benchmarks in student success	Supervising classrooms, common areas, in-school suspension or time-out rooms
Interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests	Coordinating school/district cognitive, aptitude, and achievement testing programs
Analyzing schoolwide and school counseling program data	Serving as a data entry clerk
Analyzing GPAs in relation to achievement	Computing GPAs
Interpreting student records	Maintaining student records
Protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations	Keeping/filing clerical records
Providing individual and small group, solution-focused brief counseling services to students	Providing long-term counseling in schools
Providing counseling to students who are frequently tardy or absent	Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
Providing counseling to students who have behavioral challenges	Disciplining students or assigning behavior consequences
Consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs, and challenges	Assisting with duties in the principal's office
Advocating for students at individual education plan and 504 meetings, and MTSS meetings, as necessary	Coordinating and/or leading schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, response to intervention plans, MTSS, and school attendance review boards

CREDITS

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