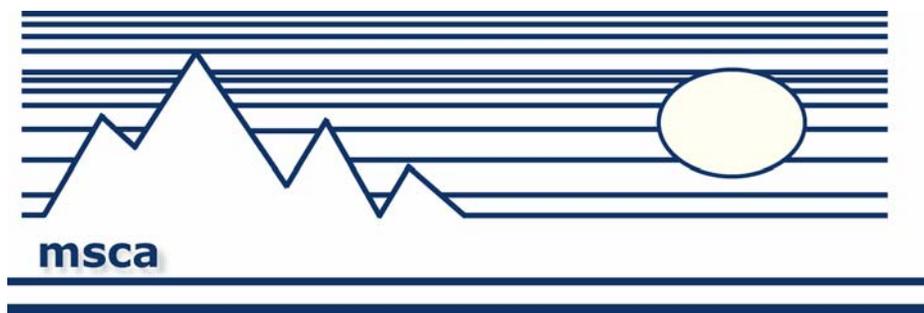# Montana School Counseling Program

Montana School Counselor Association
2004

www.mtschoolcounselor.org

Foreword

In June 2001, The Montana Board of Public Education published a revision of the Accreditation Standards for public schools in Montana. The document outlines program standards and content standards. In this revision, school counseling program standards are described, but content standards for school counseling programs were eliminated. School counseling related content standards were spread across several other program areas. Consequently, the Accreditation Standards outline delivery standards for school counseling programs under section 10.55.1901 (see appendix), but lack any specific contents standards. In an effort to create a programmatic framework for school counseling delivery standards and to develop needed content standards, the Montana School Counseling Association (MSCA) designed a program model framework for school counselors as they create school counseling programs in their own schools.

In 2004, the Montana School Counseling Association's Executive Board voted to design a school counseling program model that is founded upon the fundamentals described by American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in their publication, the *National School Counseling Programs Model*. Much of the material found in the Montana model comes from the national model. The national ASCA model for school counseling has gained the endorsements of many educational organizations including: National Association of Secondary School Principals, The College Board, National Association of Elementary School Principals, American Counseling Association, National PTA, and the National Career Development Association. The Montana Office of Public Instruction supports the MSCA School Counseling Program model for Montana Schools.

It is important to note that this model is intended to act as a framework or template for school counselors to use in designing a school counseling program for their respective schools. This model is NOT intended to be a mandated or required program. Designing a program from the beginning is a monumental task. We have drawn upon and adapted the work of several groups and individuals in order to create unique Montana model.

The Montana School Counseling Program would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the following people, who met for discussions of philosophy and content. Their continued support throughout the process produced the Montana's School Counseling Program Model.

Dr. Mark D. Nelson – Montana State University-Bozeman
Joy Jones, President – Montana School Counselor Association, 2004
The Executive Board of the Montana School Counselor Association

It is through the efforts and professional commitment of these Montana educators that the design and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program is possible. This effort represents both the concern for and the commitment to providing quality educational opportunities to all Montana students.

Montana School Counseling Program

A school counseling program is comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, and developmental in nature. The Montana School Counseling Program reflects a comprehensive approach that begins with a foundation, upon which delivery, management, and accountability systems are integrated. It is designed to enable all students to receive program benefits.

Comprehensive in Scope
A comprehensive school counseling program focuses on what all students, from kindergarten through 12th grade, should know, understand, and be able to do in three domains of student development: academic, career, and personal/social. The emphasis is on academic success for every student, not just those students who are motivated, supported, and ready to learn. The school counseling program helps all students achieve success in school and develop into contributing members of our society.

Preventive in Design
The purpose of the school counseling program is to impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive, preventive manner, ensuring all students can achieve school success through academic, career, and personal/social development experiences. Therefore, the school counselor's duties need to be limited to program delivery and direct counseling services. Prevention education is best accomplished through the implementation of a guidance curriculum in the classroom and through coordination of prevention education programs such as the conflict resolution and anti-violence programs. The management system delineates a recommended use of time for counselors. School counselors can use this guide when planning program services and curriculum including developing a calendar of the year's prevention activities.

Developmental in Nature
Montana's School Counseling Program is designed to meet the needs of students throughout various developmental stages. The *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (ASCA, 2003) establishes goals and expectations for all students. In addition, it provides a rationale for school counselors, school administrators, faculty, parents or guardians, businesses, and the community to engage in conversations about expectations for students' academic success and the role that the counseling program has to enhance student learning. The standards describe what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program.

National Standards:
1. Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school;

2. Ensure equitable access to school counseling services that are provided by a state-credentialed school counselor;

3. Identify the knowledge and skills all students might acquire as a result of the K-12 school counseling program; and

4. Ensure the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered systematically to all students.

Each standard is followed by a list of indicators enumerating desired learning outcomes. Indicators describe the specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should obtain or demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program see appendix). This listing is not meant to be all inclusive, nor is any individual program expected to include all of the indicators in the school counseling program. The indicators offer a foundation for what a standards-based program addresses and delivers. These can be used as a basis to develop measurable indicators of student performance.

The standards for academic development guide the school counseling program to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize student learning. Academic development includes acquiring attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span, employing strategies to achieve success in school, and understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work, to life at home, and in the community.

The standards for career development guide the school counseling program to provide a foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge enabling students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work and from job to job across the career life span. Career development includes the employment of strategies to achieve future career success and job satisfaction as well as fostering an understanding of the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

The standards for personal/social development guide the school counseling program to provide a foundation for personal and social growth of students as they progress through school and into adulthood. Personal/social development strongly influences academic and career success. Personal/social development includes the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that help students understand and respect self and others, acquire effective interpersonal skills, understand safety and survival skills, and develop into contributing members of our society.

Integral Part of the Total Educational Program
The Montana School Counseling Program supports the school's academic mission by promoting and enhancing the learning process for all students through an integration of academic, career, and personal/social development. It encourages school counselors to become catalysts for educational change and to accept a leadership role in educational reform. As specialists in child and adolescent development, school counselors coordinate the objectives, strategies, and activities of a developmental school counseling program. School counselors advocate for students as they address the challenges and demands of the school system and prepare for life after high school. School counselors are specially trained and call attention to situations within the schools that defeat, frustrate, and hinder students' academic success. They provide the

leadership necessary to assess a school's needs, identify issues or concerns, and collaborate with others to develop solutions.

The Montana School Counseling Program serves as an organizational tool to identify and prioritize the elements of a quality school counseling program. It describes the program components and serves as a framework for developing and writing a school counseling program.

A Delivery System
The delivery system describes activities, lessons, and other areas in which counselors work to deliver the program. School counselors use the four components below in the systematic delivery of the program.

- ❑ A curriculum component provides a method by which every student receives school guidance curriculum content in a systematic way.
- ❑ A student planning component provides all students an opportunity to work closely with their parents or guardians to plan, monitor and understand their growth and development and take action on their next steps personally, educationally, and occupationally.
- ❑ A responsive services component responds to the direct, immediate concerns of students and includes, but is not limited to, individual and group counseling, crisis counseling, referrals or consultations with parents or guardians, teachers or other specialists.
- ❑ A system support component enables the school counseling process to be effective through: leadership and advocacy, consultation, collaboration and teaming, program management and professional development. This component also provides appropriate support to other programs in the school.

Implemented by a State Credentialed School Counselor
School counselors are credentialed by the state of Montana, and possess a master's degree. It is important for school counselors to have training in student learning styles, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, student assessment, and student achievement.

Conducted in Collaboration
Professional school counselors work collaboratively with parents or guardians, community members, and other support services professionals as part of the student support services team. In addition, school resource officers, school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists are all part of the student support system that pulls together, often in the form of a student assistance team, helping students and their families identify student needs and to refer them to appropriate resources both within and outside of the school.

Monitors Student Progress
Monitoring is the process of reviewing data to determine if a student or group of students is demonstrating the desired results as delineated in the program goals and related student indicators. Counselors consistently monitor academic progress and

achievement. They also advocate for educational and career planning and strive to remove barriers to learning.

Driven by Data
School counseling programs are driven by both process and results data, which provide a means to focus the program's objectives on the school's academic mission. Process data provide evidence of what activities or tasks are undertaken. Results data answer the question "so what?" Results data provide evidence that a student competency is not just mastered but has affected course-taking patterns, graduation rates, knowledge attainment, attendance, behavior, or academic achievement. In addition, it is important to disaggregate data, which is the process of separating variables such as gender, ethnicity or socio-economic status, to examine equity issues and the needs of various student groups.

Seeks Improvement
The purpose of evaluation is to improve and enhance program delivery. School counseling programs receive valuable information from measuring results, enabling them to determine what is working and what is not working. School counselors can use this information to evaluate the program and make necessary adjustments in order to improve the program's efficiency and effectiveness.

Shares Successes
School counselors share their program successes. Informed stakeholders know and promote the value and necessity of school counselors in children's lives. School counselors market and share the results obtained in successful programs with school sites and local, state, and national stakeholders who need this information to advocate for the improvement of school counselor-to-student ratios.

Benefits of Montana's School Counseling Program

Our program provides a system that encourages and promotes academic, career, and personal/social development in preparation for the challenges of the 21st century. All stakeholders share the benefits of this organizational structure. School counseling programs have a positive impact on students, parents or guardians, teachers, administrators, boards of education, school counselors, counselor educators, post-secondary institutions, and the community.

Benefits for Students
- ❑ Monitors data to facilitate student improvement
- ❑ Provides strategies for closing the achievement gap
- ❑ Promotes a rigorous academic curriculum for every student
- ❑ Promotes commitment to learning
- ❑ Ensures student access to the school counseling program
- ❑ Ensures equitable access to educational opportunities
- ❑ Fosters advocacy for students
- ❑ Promotes peer facilitation skills
- ❑ Supports development of skills to increase student success

Benefits for Parents or Guardians

- Provides support in advocating for their children's academic, career, and personal/social development
- Supports partnerships in their children's learning and career planning
- Promotes relationships to ensure post-secondary planning
- Invites access to school and community resources
- Provides training and informational workshops
- Connects to community- and school-based services
- Provides data for continuous information on student progress

Benefits for Teachers

- Promotes an interdisciplinary team approach to address student needs and educational goals
- Increases collaboration with school counselors and teachers
- Fosters consultation
- Supports development of classroom management skills
- Provides a system for co-facilitation of classroom guidance lessons
- Promotes teaming to increase student achievement
- Analyzes data to improve school climate and student achievement

Benefits for Administrators

- Aligns the school counseling program with the school's academic mission
- Provides a school counseling program to promote student success
- Monitors data for school improvement
- Articulates a process for evaluating a school counseling program
- Uses data to jointly develop school counseling goals and school counselor responsibilities
- Provides useful data for grant applications and funding sources
- Provides a proactive school guidance curriculum addressing the students' needs and enhancing school climate

Benefits for the Boards and Departments of Education

- Provides a rationale based on data for implementing a school counseling program
- Ensures equity and access to a quality school counseling program for every student
- Demonstrates the need for appropriate levels of funding
- Articulates appropriate credentials and staffing ratios
- Informs the community about school counseling program success
- Supports standards-based programs
- Provides data about improved student achievement

Benefits for School Counselors

- Defines responsibilities within the context of a school counseling program
- Eliminates non-school counseling program activities
- Supports access to every student

- Provides a tool for program management, implementation, and accountability
- Recognizes school counselors as leaders, advocates, and change agents
- Ensures the school counseling program's contribution to the school's mission

Benefits to Counselor Educators
- Builds collaboration between counselor education programs and schools
- Provides a framework for school counseling programs
- Provides a model for site based school counseling fieldwork or internships
- Increases data collection for collaborative research on school counseling programs
- Establishes a framework for professional development to benefit practicing school counselors
- Promotes alliances with other educator training programs

Benefits for Post-Secondary Education
- Enhances 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 Student Services Personnel
- Defines the school counseling program
- Maximizes collaborative teaming to ensure individual student success
- Uses school counseling program data to maximize benefit to individual student growth
- Increases collaboration for utilizing school and community resources

Benefits for Community: Business, Labor, and Industry
- Increases opportunities for business, industry, and labor to actively participate in the school counseling program
- Builds collaboration, which enhances a student's post-secondary success
- Connects business, industry, and labor to students and families
- Provides a workforce with a stronger academic foundation

Components and Themes

Components

Foundation
The program's foundation serves as the solid ground upon which the rest of the program is built. The foundation includes philosophy and mission statements that guide the focus and process of the program. In addition, it identifies the domains, standards, and indicators that provide performance indicators for the program.

Domains: The school counseling program facilitates student development in three broad domains: academic, career, and personal/social to promote and enhance the learning process. Domains are the extension of the mission and focus on the results students will achieve by the time they graduate.

Standards and indicators: The ASCA National Standards and Indicators are the foundation for the Montana School Counseling Program. Student indicators describe the knowledge, attitudes, or skills students should obtain or demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program. They are developed and organized into content areas.

Delivery System
Guidance Curriculum: The guidance curriculum component consists of structured lessons developmentally designed to assist students in achieving the indicators and is presented systematically through classroom and group activities K-12. The purpose of the guidance curriculum is to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate to their developmental level.

Student Planning: The student planning component consists of school counselors coordinating ongoing systemic activities designed to assist the individual student in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.

Responsive Services: The responsive services component consists of activities to meet students' immediate needs. These needs may require counseling, consultation, referral, peer mediation, or information.

Systems Support: The systems support component consists of professional development; consultation, collaboration and teaming; and program operation activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program.

Management System
Agreements: School counselor and administrator agreements include statements of responsibilities by each counselor specifying the program results the counselor is accountable for achieving during the year. It also includes how counselors divide the program responsibilities. These agreements are negotiated with and approved by designated administrators at the beginning of each school year.

Advisory council: An advisory council is a group of people appointed to review counseling program results and to make recommendations. The group representatives may include students, parents or guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community members.

Use of data: A school counseling program is data-driven and is focused upon closing the achievement gap between high and low performing students. The use of data to effect change within the school system promotes that all students receive the necessary skills to achieve success. School counselors analyze data regarding student needs, program standards and indicators, student achievement, and related areas to determine program effectiveness. Collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement data may be systemic by district or specific to school site, grade, class or individual. Student needs surface when data are disaggregated and analyzed. Data are used to determine where the school counseling program is focused now and where it should be focused in the future.

Accountability

School counseling program accountability typically involves evaluation in three areas:

Program   *Personnel*   *Results*

Program evaluation audits structure and components and assesses whether each element of the program is in place and is conducted with intended outcomes in focus.

Personnel evaluation should include a clear counselor job description that outlines objectives and tasks necessary to implement the delivery system of the program. A school counselor evaluation should closely coincide with and be based upon the job description.

Results of the program are outlined in reports, which include process, perception, and results data. School counseling programs produce measurable outcomes in student development, specifically *academic, career, and personal/social development.* Sharing these reports with educators, parents, and the community provides accountability and advocates for the students and the program.

Themes

Leadership: School counselors serve as leaders who are engaged in system wide change to ensure student success. They help every student gain access to rigorous academic preparation that will lead to greater opportunity and increased academic achievement. Working as leaders, advocates and collaborators, school counselors promote student success by closing the existing achievement gap whenever found among students of color, poor or underachieving students and their more advantaged peers.

Advocacy: As advocates for students, school counselors advocate for students' educational needs and work to ensure these needs are addressed at every level of the school experience. School counselors believe, support and promote every student's goal to achieve success in school. School counselors work proactively with students to remove barriers to learning. As educational leaders, school counselors are ideally situated to serve as advocates for every student in meeting high standards. Advocating for the academic success of every student is the key role of school counselors and places them as leaders in promoting school reform.

Collaboration and teaming: School counselors create productive working relationships with all stakeholders, both inside and outside the school system, to develop and implement responsive educational programs that support the achievement of the identified goals for every student. School counselors build effective teams by encouraging genuine collaboration among all school staff to work toward the common goals of equity, access and academic success for every student. In addition, school counselors are a vital resource to parents or guardians, educators and the community agencies. Offering parent or guardian education, information and training in the community, school counselors are essential partners who enhance the educational opportunities of students and their families.

Systemic change: Change throughout a system occurs when policies and procedures are examined and changed in light of new data. Such change happens with the sustained involvement of all critical players in the school setting, including and often led by school counselors. With a school wide expectation to serve the needs of every student, school counselors are uniquely positioned to assess the school for systemic barriers to academic success. School counselors have access to critical data about student placement, students' academic success or failure and student course-taking patterns. Collaborating as leaders within the school, counselors have access to quantitative and qualitative data from the school and relevant community sources. They use these data to advocate for every student, ensuring equity and access to a rigorous curriculum, which maximizes post-secondary options.

School Counseling Program Structure

Components and Key Aspects			
Foundation	**Delivery System**	**Management System**	**Accountability System**
Definition • Comprehensive • Preventive • Developmental	**Guidance Curriculum** • Classroom presentations • Structured groups • Parent workshops	**Agreements** • Job descriptions	**Program** • Structure & design • Audit components
Philosophy & Mission • Assumptions • Integrated with school's vision	**Student Planning** • Appraisal • Advisement	**Advisory Council** • Collaborative input	**Personnel** • Supervision • Evaluation
Domains • Academic • Career • Personal/Social	**Responsive Services** • Individual counseling • Group counseling • Crisis counseling • Consultation • Referral & follow-up	**Use of Data** • Achievement • Analysis • Trends • Data-based decisions	**Results** • Measurable outcomes • Assessing how students are different • Reports
Standards/Indicators • Student competencies • Based on national standards • Outcome oriented	**System Support** • Professional development • Consultation • Program operations		

Themes
Leadership + Advocacy + Collaboration = Systemic Change

Suggested Percentages of Total Counselor Time

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Guidance Curriculum	35-40	25-35	15-25
Student Planning	5-10	15-25	25-35
Responsive Services	30-40	30-40	25-35
System Support	10-15	10-15	15-20

Foundation

The program's foundation provides the definition, assumptions, philosophy, mission, and standards for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the overall program. A well structured foundation is essential to ensuring the school counseling program is an integral part of the total educational program for student success.

Definition
A School Counseling Program is composed of a wide variety of educational personnel, activities, and services that are offered in kindergarten through senior high school settings in an effort to promote student success. Like other educational programs, school counseling programs contain characteristics such as
- Professionally trained and credentialed school counselors
- Student outcomes (based on national standards and indicators)
- Activities and processes that assist students in achieving these outcomes
- Materials and resources

A *team* approach is essential to comprehensive school counseling programs. There is an underlying assumption that all school staff must be actively involved in promoting student achievement. Throughout this program description, *team* refers to teachers, counselors, parents, administrators, psychologists, and other staff. At the core of this team are qualified school counselors who counsel and consult with students and parents and who collaborate with all team members.

Assumptions
The Montana School Counseling Program is founded upon numerous assumptions that guide program focus and implementation:
- Reaches every student and is comprehensive in scope
- Is preventative in design and is developmental in nature
- Is an integral part of a total educational program for student success
- Selects measurable student indicators based on local need in the areas of academic, career and personal/social development
- Has a delivery system that includes guidance curriculum, student planning, responsive services, and system support
- Is implemented by a credentialed school counselor
- Is conducted in collaboration with all stakeholders
- Uses data to drive program decisions and monitors student progress
- Measures both process and outcome results and analyzes critical data elements
- Seeks improvement each year based on results data
- Shares successes with other educators

Philosophy
Childhood and adolescence are not simply a time of innocence and "growing up," but a time when young people must confront and master a myriad of tasks such as:
- Mastering fundamental academic skills

- Building a positive self-concept and an awareness of their abilities, aptitudes, interests, and limitations
- Learning to get along with peers while becoming aware and tolerant of individual and group differences
- Developing a future-oriented focus and an awareness of and readiness for higher education and the world of work.

The school counseling program is centered on the belief that education provides a set of meaningful experiences that serve to prepare our children and adolescents to thrive and succeed in a changing world.

Mission Statement
The mission of the Montana Office of Public Instruction is to improve teaching and learning for all through education, communication, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve. In order to promote student success, the mission of school counseling programs is to enhance student development in the areas of academic, career, and personal/social development in an effort to improve teaching and learning for all students.

Domains, Standards, and Indicators
The Montana School Counseling Program facilitates student development in three domains to promote and enhance the learning process. Standards for each domain provide guidance and direction for developing an effective program. Student indicators describe the specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills students should obtain.

Domains are broad developmental areas that include standards and indicators, which promote behaviors that enhance learning for all students. These three domains are interrelated and interact. The three domains of student development are:
- Academic development
- Career development
- Personal/social development

Each of these areas of student development encompasses a variety of desired student learning standards, which in turn are composed of indicators of specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills (see appendix). The program reflects a progression of student development throughout the K-12 sequence. School counselors utilize a variety of strategies, activities, delivery methods, and resources to promote the desired student development.

Standards and goals are often used synonymously. Standards are those statements providing a description of what students should know and be able to do at the highest level of expectation. Standards specify the level or rate of performance the student will achieve against a particular competency or set of indicators. Montana's program utilizes ASCA's National Standards for School Counseling Programs.

Indicators describe the specific knowledge, skills or abilities that individuals demonstrate to meet a specific competency.

Delivery System

Within the delivery system there are four components: guidance curriculum, student planning, responsive services, and system support. The curriculum component delivers guidance content to every student in a systematic way. The student planning component provides all students an opportunity to work closely with parents or guardians to systematically plan, monitor, and understand their growth and development and take action on their next steps personally, educationally, and occupationally. The responsive services component responds to the direct, immediate concerns of students and includes, but is not limited to individual and group counseling, crisis counseling, referrals and consultation with parents or guardians, teachers or other professional specialists. The system support component enables the school counseling process to be effective through a variety of school counseling program support activities including staff development, testing, research, data analysis, curriculum development, and support to other programs in the school.

Guidance Curriculum

The guidance curriculum component consists of a written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventive and proactive, developmental in design, coordinated and delivered by school counselors and other educators. Guidance curriculum is designed to facilitate the systematic delivery of activities to every student consistent with the school counseling program's statements of philosophy, goals, and student indicators. The guidance curriculum promotes knowledge, attitudes and skills through instruction in three content areas: academic, career, and personal/social development. The counselor's responsibilities include planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating the guidance curriculum. The curriculum includes a clear explanation of the scope and sequence of its units of instruction. The curriculum includes standards for each grade level and the indicators that are identified and used in the assessment of student indicators. Guidance curriculum and the related indicators are documented in writing and are based on an assessment of the student population. The knowledge, skills and attitudes are taught using a variety of activities and materials. Student mastery of these indicators is assessed using pre-post tests. Curriculum planning and implementation include delivery methods and timelines. Delivery is typically provided through classroom instruction; small group discussions; presentations to parents or guardians; assemblies; and collaborative activities with teachers, support personnel, and other qualified educators.

Classroom instruction: Counselors provide instruction, team teach or assist in teaching the guidance curriculum, learning activities or units in the classrooms, the career center, or other school facilities.

Group activities: Counselors conduct planned small groups outside the classroom to respond to identified student needs or interests.

Parent workshops and Instruction: Counselors conduct workshops and informational sessions for parents or guardians to address the needs of the school community and to reflect the guidance curriculum.

Student Planning

Student planning consists of school counselors coordinating activities designed to help individual students establish personal goals and develop future plans. School counselors coordinate activities that help all students plan, monitor, and manage their own learning as well as meet indicators in the areas of academic, career, and personal/social development. Within this component, students evaluate their educational, occupational, and personal goals. School counselors help students make the transition from school to school, school to work, and school to higher education or career and technical training. These activities are generally delivered by working with students individually, or in small counseling and advisement groups. Parents or guardians and other school personnel are often included in these activities. Systematic delivery of individual planning for every student includes a variety of strategies aimed to promote student success.

Individual or small group appraisal: School counselors work with students analyzing and evaluating students' abilities, interests, skills, and achievement. Test information and other data are often used as the basis for helping students develop immediate and long term goals and plans.

Individual or small group advisement: School counselors advise students using personal/social, academic, career, and labor market information in planning personal, educational, and occupational goals. The involvement of students, parents or guardians and the school in planning students' programs that meet their needs is critical. Examples of topics within include:
- Test score review, interpretation, and analysis
- Promotion and retention information
- Career awareness
- Exploration of aspirations, hopes, and dreams
- Financial aid
- Interest inventories
- Senior exit interviews and surveys
- Four-year or six-year plans and yearly course selection
- Test-taking strategies
- College selection
- Job shadowing
- Senior planning appointments

Responsive Services

Responsive services include activities that meet students' immediate needs and concerns. These needs or concerns may require counseling, consultation, referral, information, and specific programs such as peer mediation. Responsive services are available to all students and are often student initiated through self referral. However,

teachers, parents or guardians or others may also refer students for assistance. Although school counselors have special training and effective skills to respond to these needs and concerns, the cooperation and support of the entire faculty and staff are necessary for successful implementation.

School counselors offer a range of services along the continuum from early intervention to crisis response to meet students' needs. School counselors consult with parents or guardians, school personnel and other identified parties when developing plans and strategies for facilitating student development. Specific ongoing responsive services provided by school counselors, such as individual and group counseling, crisis management and suicide prevention, are planned and goal-focused. There are written procedures to be used in crisis situations.

Consultation: Counselors consult with parents or guardians, teachers, other educators and professionals from community agencies regarding strategies to help students and families. School counselors advocate for strategies and support mechanisms that are in the best interest of the students.

Individual and small group counseling: Counseling is provided in a small group or on an individual basis for students expressing difficulties dealing with relationships, personal concerns, or normal developmental tasks. Individual and small group counseling helps students identify problems, causes, alternative, and possible consequences so they can take appropriate action. Such counseling is normally short term in nature. School counselors do not provide therapy. When necessary, referrals are made to appropriate community resources.

Crisis counseling: Crisis counseling provides prevention, intervention, and follow-up. Counseling and support are provided to students and families facing emergency situations. Such counseling is normally short term and temporary in nature. When necessary, referrals are made to appropriate community resources. School counselors provide a leadership role in the district's crisis intervention team process.

Referrals: Counselors use referral sources to deal with crises such as suicidal ideation, violence, abuse, depression, and family difficulties. These referral sources may include mental health agencies, employment and training programs, juvenile services, and other social and community services.

Peer mediation: Many counselors train students as peer mediators, conflict managers, tutors, and mentors. The techniques of peer mediation and conflict resolution are used to help students learn how to make changes in the way they get along better with others.

System Support

System support consists of management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program. School counselors use their leadership and advocacy skills to promote systemic change by contributing in a variety of areas.

Professional development: School counselors regularly update and share their professional knowledge and skills through:

- ❑ *In-service training:* School counselors attend school in-service training to ensure their skills are updated in areas of counseling techniques, curriculum design, technology, and data analysis.
- ❑ *Professional association membership:* As the school counseling profession continues to change and evolve, school counselors can maintain and improve their level of competence by attending professional association conferences and meetings.
- ❑ *Post-graduate education:* As school counselors are completing post-graduate course work, they are encouraged to contribute to the professional literature.

Consultation, collaboration and teaming: Through consultation, partnering, collaborating and teaming, school counselors provide important contributions to the school system.

- ❑ *Consultation:* Counselors must consult with teachers, staff members, and parents or guardians regularly in order to provide information, to support the school community and to receive feed-back on the emerging needs of students.
- ❑ *Partnerships with staff, parents or guardians and community relations:* This involves orienting staff, parents or guardians, business and industry, civic and social service organizations, and community members in the comprehensive school counseling programs through such means as partnerships, newsletters, local media, and presentations.
- ❑ *Community outreach:* Activities are designed to help counselors become knowledgeable about community resources, referral agencies, field trip sites, employment opportunities, and local labor market information. This may involve counselors visiting local businesses, industries, and agencies on a regular basis.
- ❑ *Advisory councils:* School counselors actively serve on school or community committees and advisory councils. By supporting other programs in the school and community, counselors gain support for the school counseling program.
- ❑ *District committees:* By serving on site and district department, curriculum committees, and advisory boards, school counselors assist in generating school and district support.

Program operations: This includes the planning and management tasks needed to support activities conducted in the school counseling program. It also includes responsibilities that need to be fulfilled as a member of the school staff.

- ❑ *Operations: These include budget, facilities, policies and procedures, research, and resource development.*
- ❑ *Data Analysis: Counselors analyze student achievement and counseling program related data to evaluate the program, conduct research on activity outcomes, and discover gaps that exist between different groups of students that need to be*

addressed. Data analysis also aids in the continued development and updating of the school counseling program and resources.

- *Fair share responsibilities: As team members within the educational system, school counselors perform fair share responsibilities that align with and are equal in amount to the fair share responsibilities provided by other educators in the school.*

Management System

The management system describes the various organizational processes and tools needed to manage a school counseling program. The management system is organized, concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school's needs. In order to systematically deliver the guidance curriculum and address every student's developmental needs, the school counseling program must be effectively and efficiently managed. Clear expectations and purposeful interaction with administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students promote student growth, systemic change, and a school counseling program that is integrated into the total educational program.

The organizational foundation of a school counseling program is built on systems of management agreements, active input of an advisory council, student monitoring, use of time, calendars, and a precise understanding of school counseling program and non school counseling program responsibilities. Management systems include efforts by administration to support school counselors in delivering the program. Administrators work collaboratively with counselors to analyze student data and develop timelines for implementation. Counselors set up calendars to ensure program implementation; careful monitoring of student progress and maximizing time spent executing the school counseling program.

Agreements

Management agreements within the school counseling program ensure effective implementation of the delivery systems to meet students' needs. The entire school counseling staff, including the administrator in charge of school counseling, must make management decisions based on site needs and data analysis. Site principals and administrators must be involved in this important process. When implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, management system decisions and agreements must be made regarding the organization and assignment of counselors. This should be accomplished in consultation with the principal or school counseling administrator prior to the next step in program implementation.

Advisory Council

An advisory council is a representative group of persons appointed to both advise and assist the school counseling program within a school district. The advisory council reviews the program goals, indicators and results, and participates in making recommendations to the school counseling department, principal, and superintendent. Ideally, advisory council membership reflects the community's diversity. It includes representative stakeholders of the school counseling program: students, parents or guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, school board members, business, and community members. The council should meet twice a year at a minimum.

Advisory council functions can vary. The area of specialization, number of years an educational program has been in existence, program size, community needs, and other

important items all affect the advisory council's functions. School counselors use data to analyze overall program effectiveness and to make decisions regarding changes in program content and delivery. The advisory council members, using their background and expertise, provide support, input, and recommendations for program development and improvement throughout the process. The advisory council, therefore, can be an effective tool to help build an excellent school counseling program. Like any tool, it must be adequately maintained and used properly.

Monitoring Student Progress
Using student and school site data to monitor student progress ensures all students receive what they need to achieve school success. School counselors are proficient in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement and related data. School counselors monitor student progress through three types of data: student-achievement data, achievement-related data, and standards-related data.

Student achievement data: Student-achievement data measure students' academic progress. Student achievement data might include:
- Standardized test data
- Grade point averages
- SAT and ACT scores
- Graduation rate
- Passing all classes
- Promotion and retention rates
- Completion of specific academic programs (i.e. honors, college prep, etc.)

Achievement related data: Achievement-related data measure those fields the literature has shown to be correlated to academic achievement. These data fields might include:
- Course enrollment patterns
- Discipline referrals
- Suspension and expulsion rates
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug violations
- Attendance rates
- Parent or guardian involvement
- Participation in extracurricular activities

Disaggregate data
To ensure every student achieves high academic standards and masters the National Standards, it is important to not just look at aggregate or global data from the entire student body but to also disaggregate the data. To disaggregate data, school counselors separate data by variables to see if there are any groups of students who may not be doing as well as others.

Although there are many variables by which data may be disaggregated, the common fields include:
- Gender
- Ethnicity

- ❑ Socio-economic status (free and reduced lunch)
- ❑ Vocational (vocational program track)
- ❑ Language spoken at home
- ❑ Special education
- ❑ Grade level
- ❑ Teacher(s)

School Counseling Program Activities
- ❑ Individual student academic program planning
- ❑ Interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests
- ❑ Counseling students who are tardy, absent, or have disciplinary problems
- ❑ Collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons
- ❑ Interpreting student records
- ❑ Collaborating with teachers regarding management of study halls
- ❑ Ensuring that student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations
- ❑ Working with students to provide small- and large-group counseling services
- ❑ Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams, and school attendance review boards
- ❑ Disaggregated data analysis

Non School Counseling Program Activities
- ❑ Registration and scheduling of all new students
- ❑ Administering cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests
- ❑ Responsibility for signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
- ❑ Performing disciplinary actions
- ❑ Teaching classes when teachers are absent
- ❑ Computing grade-point averages
- ❑ Supervising study halls
- ❑ Clerical record keeping
- ❑ Assisting with duties in the principal's office
- ❑ Data entry

Calendars

Calendars may assist with planning and ensuring program participation. The calendar will be aligned with school district calendar. The calendar establishes a site schedule for the school and counseling program activities. As the program grows and multiple activities are developed, a calendar validates the important support the school counselor program provides.

Calendars can:
- ❑ Identify grade levels, dates, and activities
- ❑ Be published and distributed to appropriate persons: students, staff, parents or guardians and community
- ❑ Be compared to locally established goals for time spent in the delivery of system components time in direct service to and contact with students.

- ❑ Be utilized to allocate time for data analysis and program evaluation
- ❑ Be used when designing and determining system priorities
- ❑ Be shared with the principal as an indicator of leadership, advocacy and foresight in the school counselor's professional approach

Accountability System

Accountability and evaluation of the school counseling program are essential. School counselors choose to answer the question, "How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?" School counselors collect data that demonstrate the link between the school counseling program and student academic success.

School counseling program evaluation typically involves three areas of assessment:

Program   Personnel   Results

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation demonstrates follow-through and professionalism. Program evaluation audits the program's structure and components: *ARE THEY IN PLACE?*
   ❑ Is there a program foundation: definition, philosophy, and standards?
   ❑ Is there a management system: job descriptions, data management?
   ❑ Is there a delivery system with appropriate time distributions?
      ✓ Guidance Curriculum - a list of standards & indicators with activities?
      ✓ Student Planning - what focus and how is it done?
      ✓ Responsive Services - what are services?
      ✓ System Support - what activities?
   ❑ Is there an accountability plan: how are students different?

Personnel

The supervision and evaluation of personnel is an important aspect of accountability. A job description provides means to evaluate school counselors. Counselors should be evaluated based upon the details of a job description.
   ❑ Are they doing what the program says they should be doing?
   ❑ Performance-based evaluation
      ✓ Formative evaluation: following observations of rating scale — how well are they doing:
      ✓ GC-SP-RS-SS — professional/interpersonal relationships — professional responsibilities
   ❑ Summative evaluation: a synthesis of formative evaluations

Results

School counseling programs produce measurable outcomes in student development, specifically *academic, career, and personal/social development.* While counseling programs collaborate with other school staff to affect school-wide outcomes (i.e., school climate, grades, attendance, tardiness, school violence, graduation rates, college going rates…), programs should be held accountable to the areas for which they are directly involved. ASCA's role statement recommends that school counselors spend 70% of their time providing direct services to students, promoting and enhancing student

development. Consequently, accountability must be conducted efficiently and effectively.

Outcome results should be focused on standards and indicators. The School Counseling Program presents three standards for each developmental domain: academic, career, and personal/social. In addition, it includes indicators to be used as a template. Counselors must assess the indicators for grade appropriateness and edit them by adding or deleting indicators based upon local needs. These indicators should not be seen as "one size fits all."

Once standards and indicators have been edited and finalized, assessment instruments can be created that provide feedback regarding program effectiveness. Assessments can be administered in a typical pre and post style. Evaluation may compare pre to post, participating to non-participating, and may include responsive observations of staff or students that indicate intended or unintended outcomes related to the program. Creating a results report compiles the data and recommendations for program improvement strategies.

Standards and competency related data: These data measure student mastery of the indicators outlined in the School Counseling Program's Standards and Indicators. These data might include:
- Pre/Post scores on Academic, Career, and Personal/Social assessment instruments
- Percentage of students who have set and attained academic goals
- Percentage of students with educational plans on file

Reporting Results as Technical Reports
- Describe the program, its philosophy, and objectives.
- Describe the evaluation design and summarize results
- Conclusions/discussion and recommendations
- Include any appropriate appendices
- Reports can be used to conduct staff development, make program decisions, and make administrative decisions.

Appendix

Montana School Counseling Program Standards
Montana Office of Public Instruction

10.55.1901 SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS
(In accordance with ARM10.55.603 and ARM 10.55.1001)

(1) In general, school counseling shall:

(a) meet the following conditions:

   (i)   Provide a comprehensive developmentally planned program;

   (ii)   Advocate for all students and encourage students to develop to their full potential;

   (iii) Respect the worth and dignity of all individuals by building trust and respecting confidentiality; and

   (iv)   Contribute as an integral part of the education process that is delivered through a variety of systems by school staff, students, parents, business, and industry.

(b) include the following practices:

   (i)   Maximize students' potential in the areas of academic, career, and personal/social development;

   (ii)   Develop a guidance curriculum presented through structured groups and classroom presentations;

   (iii) Conduct individual planning using assessment, advisement, placement, and follow-up;

   (iv)   Deliver responsive services through individual and group counseling, consultation, and referral; and

   (v)   Provide system support through management, consultation with staff, community outreach, and public relations.

Academic Development: Standards and Indicators

STANDARDS		
Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.	Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.	Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.
INDICATORS		
K-6 A. Take pride in work and in achievement B. Use communication skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed C. Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as a learner D. Accept mistakes as essential to the learning process E. Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning F. Take responsibility for their actions G. Demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other students	***K-6*** A. Establish challenging academic goals at each grade level B. Demonstrate the motivation to achieve individual potential C. Become self-directed and independent learners D. Understand the relationship between classroom performance and success in school E. Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers	***K-6*** A. Seek co-curricular and community experiences to enhance the school experience B. Understand the relationship between learning and work
7-8 A. Display a positive interest in learning B. Apply time management and task management skills C. Develop a broad range of interests and abilities	***7-8*** A. Apply the study skills necessary for academic success B. Use assessment results in educational planning C. Apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting D. Use knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance	***7-8*** A. Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and avocation opportunities B. Demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time, and family life
9-12 A. Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning B. Apply knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance C. Demonstrate dependability, productivity, and initiative D. Share knowledge	***9-12*** A. Learn and apply critical thinking skills B. Organize and apply academic information from a variety of sources C. Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement D. Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to assess progress toward educational goals E. Identify postsecondary options consistent with interests, aptitude, achievement, and	***9-12*** A. Understand that school success is the preparation to make the transition from student to community member B. Demonstrate an understanding of the value of lifelong learning as essential to seeking, obtaining, and maintaining life goals

STANDARDS		
Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.	Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.	Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.
	abilities	

Career Development: Standards and Indicators

STANDARDS		
Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.	Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.	Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.
INDICATORS		
K-6	***K-6***	***K-6***
A. *Learn how to interact and work cooperative in teams* B. *Learn about the variety of traditional and nontraditional occupations* C. *Learn to make decisions* D. *Learn how to set goals* E. *Acquire employability skills such as working on a team, problem-solving, and organizational skills*	A. *Demonstrate knowledge of the career planning process* B. *Identify personal skills, interests, and abilities and relate them to current career choices*	A. *Learn to work cooperatively with others as a team member* B. *Identify personal preferences and interests which influence career choices and success* C. *Learn how to use conflict management skills with peers*
7-8	***7-8***	***7-8***
A. *Develop a positive attitude toward work and learning* B. *Develop skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career information* C. *Develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests, and motivations* D. *Understand the importance of planning* E. *Develop hobbies and avocational interests* F. *Utilize time- and task-management skills*	A. *Apply decision-making skills to career planning, course selection, and career transitions* B. *Describe traditional and nontraditional occupations and how these relate to career choice* C. *Demonstrate awareness of the education and training needed to achieve career goals* D. *Learn how to use the Internet to access career planning information*	A. *Demonstrate how interests, abilities, and achievement relate to achieving personal, social, educational, and career goals* B. *Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success* C. *Explain how work can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction* D. *Understand that work is an important and satisfying means of personal expression*
9-12	***9-12***	***9-12***
A. *Pursue and develop competency in areas of interest* B. *Balance between work and leisure time* C. *Apply job readiness skills to seek employment opportunities* D. *Demonstrate knowledge about the changing workplace* E. *Learn about the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees* F. *Learn how to write a resume*	A. *Use employability and job readiness skills in internship, mentoring, shadowing, and/or other world of work experiences* B. *Select course work that is related to career interests* C. *Assess and modify their educational plan to support career goals* D. *Know the various ways which occupations can be classified* E. *Use research and information*	A. *Understand that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and acquiring new skills* B. *Describe the effect of work on lifestyle* C. *Understand the importance of equity and access in career choice* D. *Apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning situations such as internships, shadowing,*

Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.	Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.	Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.
G. *Understand the importance of responsibility, dependability, punctuality, integrity, and effort in the workplace* H. *Learn to respect individual uniqueness in the workplace*	*resources to obtain career information* F. *Understand how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training* G. *Maintain a career planning portfolio*	*and/or mentoring experiences*

Personal/Social Development: Standards and Indicators

STANDARDS		
Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.	Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.	Students will understand safety and survival skills.
INDICATORS		
K-6	**K-6**	**K-6**
A. *Develop a positive attitude toward self as a unique and worthy person* B. *Identify and express feelings* C. *Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors* D. *Learn how to make and keep friends* E. *Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it* F. *Learn the goal-setting process* G. *Recognize personal boundaries, rights, and privacy needs* H. *Demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups* I. *Identify personal strengths and assets* J. *Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities* K. *Recognize, accept, respect, and appreciate individual differences* L. *Recognize, accept, and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity*	A. *Demonstrate a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences* B. *Understand consequences of decisions and choices* C. *Demonstrate when, where, and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions* D. *Know how to apply conflict resolution skills*	A. *Demonstrate knowledge of personal information (i.e., telephone number, home address, emergency contact)* B. *Learn the difference between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact* C. *Demonstrate the ability to assert boundaries, rights, and personal privacy* D. *Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict* E. *Learn coping skills for managing life events*
7-8	**7-8**	**7-8**
A. *Identify values, attitudes, and beliefs* B. *Understand change as a part of growth* C. *Respect alternative points of view* D. *Use effective communication skills* E. *Know that communication*	A. *Use a decision-making and problem-solving model* B. *Identify alternative solutions to a problem* C. *Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems* D. *Know when peer pressure is influencing a decision* E. *Use persistence and*	A. *Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help* B. *Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices* C. *Learn about the emotional and physical dangers of substance*

STANDARDS		
involves speaking, listening, and nonverbal behavior	*perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills*	*use and abuse* D. *Learn how to cope with peer pressure*
9-12 A. *Recognize and respect differences in various family configurations* B. *Identify and discuss changing personal and social roles* C. *Identify and recognize changing family roles*	***9-12*** A. *Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals* B. *Identify long-term and short-term goals* C. *Identify alternative ways of achieving goals*	***9-12*** A. *Learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety, and the protection of an individual's rights* B. *Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help*