



NEW SCHOOL COUNSELOR GUIDE

“A Model Introduction to the Professional Experience”

Updated 2017

As developed by the New Jersey School Counselor Association

Acknowledgements

A special “Thank You” goes out to the committee who worked diligently to create this amazing document that will help guide new school counselors and their supervisors.

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Introduction

The goal of the New School Counselor Guide is to provide new school counselors and their supervisors with a resource document to help new staff become acclimated in a new school. In surveying districts in the state of New Jersey, many schools did not have a document to assist new staff. Very often, new school counselors expressed that they were learning experientially and often reactively, sometimes after mistakes occurred. Even after completing their internship, many school counselors do not feel fully prepared to transition into a full time school counselor position.

It is the sincere hope of this committee of school counselors, their supervisors, and graduate students that created this document that this guide will be used and continually revised to provide the best possible resource and support to our new school counselors.

Updated 2017

Required Documents Checklist

As a new school counselor, it is highly recommended that you familiarize yourself with your district's version of the documents listed below. Each of the checklist items will help a new school counselor to get acclimated to the school district and be proactively prepared for situations that will likely occur.

- Policies & Regulations
 - School counselors should be provided with a list of all policies listed in this document (and any others a supervisor thinks are relevant) prior to or on the first day. This guide should be reviewed with new school counselors within the first two weeks to review any questions that may still exist.
- School Procedures
- Technology Systems Training
 - Student Information Systems (e.g., PowerSchool, Genesis, OnCourse, Skyward).
 - College and Career Systems (e.g., Naviance, Common App, NJCAN, O*Net, Collegeboard).
 - Additional Systems (e.g., 504 Direct, IEP Direct, RealTime, HIBster).
- Ethical Guidelines (see school policies/regulations and ASCA Ethical Guidelines)
- School Performance Report (<https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/SearchForSchool.aspx>)
- Glossary of Terminology
- Special Education
 - Sample IEP/ILP/504 forms
- Community Referrals
- Evaluation Information: [NJSCA Evaluation Guide](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Resources, Templates & Samples
 - Sample I&RS forms
 - Sample Classroom Lesson Plans
 - Sample Small Group Resources
 - Sample School Counseling Brochures
 - Sample Results Reports
 - Sample SMART goals
 - Samples & Tips for Writing Letters of Recommendation

Policies & Regulations

(Note: This guide uses Lakeland Regional High School as a model program.

Please see their policies and procedures for an example [here.](#))

- 2411 - Guidance Counseling
- 2415.05 - Pupil Surveys, Analysis and/or Evaluations
- 2417 - Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS)
 - An I&RS committee can reduce the overall “local” graduation credits to the minimum of 120 credits (state minimum).
- 4218 - Substance Abuse
- 4282 - Use of Social Networking Sites
- 4283 - Electronic Communications between Support Staff Members and Students
- 5114 - Children Displaced by Domestic Violence
- 5350 - Pupil Suicide Prevention
- 5460 - High School Graduation
- 5512 - Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying Investigation Procedure
- 5519 - Dating Violence at School
- 5600 - Pupil Discipline / Code of Conduct
- 8330 - Pupil Records
- 8461 - Reporting Violence, Vandalism, Alcohol, and Other Drug Abuse (regulation)
- 8462 - Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children
- 8462 - Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children
- 9560 - Administration of School Surveys

Supplement Policies:

(Note: This guide uses Lakeland Regional High School as a model program.
Please see their policies and procedures for an example [here.](#))

- 2414 - Programs for Pupils at Risk
- 2416 - Programs for Pregnant Pupils
- 2417/2481 - Home Instruction
- 2464 - Gifted and Talented Pupils
- 2480 - Alternative Education Programs
- 3211/4215 - Code of Ethics
- 4281- Inappropriate Staff Conduct
- 5116 - Education of Homeless Children
- 5130 - Withdrawal From School
- 5200 - Attendance
- 5465 - Early Graduation
- 5465.1 - Dual Enrollment for the Senior Year
- 5615 - Suspected Gang Activity
- 5770 - Pupil Right of Privacy
- 8335 - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- 8465 - Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Acts
- 8467 - Weapons
- 8468 - Crisis Response
- 9240 - Rights of Parents
- 9270 - Home Schooling and Equivalent Education Outside the Schools

Glossary of Terms

Please note: Most of these terms were defined using the US Department of Education Website or the NJ Department of Education Website.

- Affirmative Action
 - “A set of laws, policies, guidelines, and administrative practices” intended to end and correct the effects of a specific form of discrimination and promote a learning environment free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. Every district must select an Affirmative Action Office (AAO). The AAO, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:7 must form an affirmative action team to coordinate and implement the requirements as described (USDOE, 2016).
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (USDOE, n.d.)
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities that are like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.
- Bias Related Act
 - “An act directed at a person, group of persons, private property, or public property that is motivated in whole or part by racial, gender, disability, religion or sexual orientation, or ethnic prejudice. A bias-related act need not involve conduct that constitutes a criminal offense. All hate crimes are also bias-related acts, but not all bias-related acts will constitute a hate crime” (Lakeland Regional High School, 2016).
- Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA)
 - Plan, direct, and monitor effective behavioral modification programs for individual students based on data collected from functional behavioral analysis (FBA). They partner with families and educators to explain the behavior modification tool as well as data collection process required for best implementation to enable students to make safer choices.
- Child Study Team (CST)
 - The group of school professionals that assist in determining a student’s eligibility for and program in special education. The CST can consist of a School Psychologist, Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC), and Social Worker. For students under the age of 5, a Speech Specialist must also be on the CST. Other specialists may be added as needed (Peckman, 2016).
- Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P - formerly DYFS)

- “New Jersey's child protection and child welfare agency within the Department of Children and Families. Its mission is to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children and to support families. DCP&P is responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect and, if necessary, arranging for the child’s protection and the family’s treatment. Each year, DCP&P contracts with many community-based agencies throughout the state to provide services to children and families. Such services include counseling, parenting skills classes, substance abuse treatment, in-home services, foster care, and residential placement. If a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, DCP&P may ask the county family court to place the child in foster care and begin an adopting process” (NJDOE, 2015).
- DCP&P caseworkers forward Collateral Forms to school counselors asking for reports on a child’s academic progress and social/emotional concerns.
- Electronic Violence & Vandalism Report System (EVVRS)
 - “The EVVRS collects information only about those incidents that fall under the categories defined in the EVVRS Incident Definitions. To be reported on the EVVRS: 1. An incident must take place on school grounds, at a school-sponsored event, or on a school bus. 2. The student behavior must meet one of the EVVRS definitions of reportable incidents which include bias incident, gang related, assault, criminal threat, extortion, fighting, HIB, kidnapping, substance abuse (possession and distribution), weapons, robbery, sex offense, damage to property, arson, theft, bomb threats, and burglary” (NJDOE, 2015).
- English as a Second Language (ESL) / English Language Learners (ELL) / Limited English Proficient (LEP)
 - “English as a second language (ESL) program” means a daily developmental second-language program of at least one period of instruction based on student language proficiency that teaches aural comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing in English using second language teaching techniques, and incorporates the cultural aspects of the students’ experiences in their ESL instruction. A period is the time allocated in the school schedule for instruction in core subjects (NJDOE, 2016).
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer
 - Directs, implements, and oversees Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action programs and activities, and assures compliance with Federal, State, or

municipal legal requirements, utilizing knowledge of agency’s purposes, rules, regulations, procedures, and practices.

- [“Every Student Succeeds Act”](#)

- In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed to provide new education funding to ensure equitable access to educational resources and opportunities for all students. ESEA provides requirements that states and schools districts must follow to qualify for funding. Every several years, Congress reauthorizes and revises ESEA. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, and Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA in 2015 are the acts that most recently reauthorized ESEA. Here's a great ESSA [video overview](#). How can new ESSA revisions enhance afterschool and out-of- school (OST) programs? ESSA offers opportunities for coordinating afterschool/OST and school day supports for student success. [Click here](#) to learn more about ESSA.

- [Title I](#)

- [Planning](#)- ESSA requires state and local level education agencies to solicit stakeholder input in determining accountability measures, supports, and tracking measures for student outcomes.
- [Accountability](#)- Requires states to choose one or more indicators of school quality and student success as part of their accountability system, such as school climate, chronic absenteeism, or student engagement, much of which afterschool and OST programs support.
- [Intervention](#)- ESSA requires targeted assistance for schools specifically mentioning after school programs as an instructional strategy to increase student academic achievement.

- [Title II Part B](#)

- “Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation” provides states opportunities to use afterschool programming to enhance educational success. This section provides grants to “develop or enhance comprehensive literacy instruction” to entities serving children of low-income families. ESSA specifically states that these literacy activities can be “augmented by after-school and out-of- school time instruction.”

- [Title IV](#)

- [Part A](#)- “Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants” provide opportunities at the LEA level for expanding funding opportunities to coordinate partnerships and increase collaborations between schools and STEM afterschool programming.

- Part B- 21st Century Community Learning Centers revisions require state agencies to solicit input from stakeholders in the proposal process for 21CCLC funds. All of the examples above are ways in which OST programs and professionals can be a part of New Jersey's submitted ESSA plan.
- FERPA
 - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are “eligible students.”
 - Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.
 - [FERPA FAQ](#)
- [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)
 - Federal Student Aid, a part of the U.S. Department of Education, is the largest provider of student financial aid in the nation. FAFSA provides more than \$150 billion in federal grants, loans, and work-study funds each year to more than 13 million students paying for college or career school. These funds are allocated the form of grants, loans, and work-study funds to students attending college or career school.
- [Free appropriate public education \(FAPE\)](#)
 - For purposes of Section 504, FAPE “refers to the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met and is based upon adherence to procedures

that satisfy the Section 504 requirements pertaining to educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards” (USDOE, 2016).

- Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying (HIB)
 - Each school district is required to adopt a policy prohibiting HIB, and the policy must include a procedure for prompt investigation of reports of violations and complaints.
 - Anti-Bullying Specialists (ABS) - School counselors may be designated as Anti-Bullying Specialists.
 - HIB [FAQ](#)
- Hate Crime
 - “Any criminal offense where the person or persons committing the offense acted with a purpose to intimidate an individual or group of individuals because of race, color, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity” (Lakeland Regional High School, 2016).
- Health Plans
 - A written plan by a certified school nurse that specifies the delivery of healthcare accommodations and services needed by a student.
- Home Instruction
 - Provision of one-to-one or small group instruction in the student’s place of residence or other appropriate setting due to a health condition, need for treatment, court order or exclusion from general education for disciplinary or safety reasons. Within 5 days of the student leaving the school they must be put on home instruction. If they are on home instruction for greater than 30 days they need an IPP (District Policies, 2016).
- Home Schooling
 - N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 states that students are required to be educated between the ages of 6 and 16. However, there is also the provision that students can receive “equivalent education elsewhere,” which can include the parent home schooling the child.
 - Please see the [FAQ](#) document for more information and make sure to reference your school’s policy on home schooling.
 - Note: Students who are homeschooled do not receive a high school diploma from the state of New Jersey.
- Homeless Liaison
 - “Responsible for assisting homeless students and their parents or guardians with such activities as: enrolling in school and accessing school services; obtaining immunizations or medical records; informing parents, school personnel, and

others of the rights of homeless children and youth; working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement; helping to coordinate transportation services for homeless children and youth; and collaborating and coordinating with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and Youth” (NJDOE, 2016).

- Individual Personalized Plan (IPP)
 - A written plan “developed for a general education student who has been assigned by the district board of education to home instruction or an alternative education program, or who is being provided either in or out of school other educational services that are comparable to those provided in public school for students of similar grades and attainments. The IPP sets forth the student’s present level of performance, measurable goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks that encompass behavioral and social competency, as well as curriculum and individually designed instructional activities to achieve the goals and objectives” (NJDOE, 2015).
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (USDOE, 1990).
 - Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Each IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly *individualized* document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.
 - School counselors cannot change an IEP student’s schedule without the review of the case manager and consent from the parent. The IEP is a legal document, and changing the schedule without parental consent can be a violation of the student’s rights.
 - Reasonable modifications: under a regulatory provision implementing Title II of the ADA, public entities are required to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- “Law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B” (Family Resource Center on Disabilities, 2017).
- Placement: Within the context of IDEA, placement refers to regular and/or special educational programming in which a student receives educational and/or related services.
- Related services
 - Developmental, corrective, and other supportive services, including but not limited to psychological, counseling and medical diagnostic services, and transportation.
- Intervention & Referral Services
 - “Establish and implement a coordinated system in each school building for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties...” [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a)]; and which are “designed to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students’ learning, behavior, or health needs” (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1[a]).
 - Action Plan
 - A plan created by the I&RS committee that employs various interventions designed to increase that particular student’s success. This plan is created by the I&RS team, with parental input considered. Interventions are based on teacher observations and interventions already used. No testing is required.
- Learning-Disability Training Consultant (LDTC)
 - A member of the CST who tests and evaluates a student’s achieved knowledge and academic learning, as well as determining the nature of the student’s academic disability. An LDTC may also serve as a case manager (Peckman, 2016).
- Mandated School Reporter
 - “Individuals designated as mandatory reporters typically have frequent contact with children. Such individuals may include: Social workers, Teachers, Principals, and other school personnel such as Physicians, Nurses, and other health-care workers, Counselors, Therapists, and other mental health

professionals, Child care providers, Medical examiners or coroners, and Law enforcement officer. New Jersey requires all persons to report without specifying any professions” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016).

- [McKinney-Vento](#)

- [Best Practices](#)

- “(1) Each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths. (2) In any State that has a compulsory residency requirement as a component of the State's compulsory school attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to ensure that homeless children and youths are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths. (3) Homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. (4) Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held” (NJDOE, 2015).

- [Megans Law](#)

- Notification statute applies to all sex offenders who are required to register pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2C:7-1 et seq. (New Jersey Department of Justice, 2000).

- [NJ Mobile Response and Stabilization Services](#)

- Services “available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to help children and youth who are experiencing emotional or behavioral crises. The services are designed to defuse an immediate crisis, keep children and their families safe, and maintain the children in their own homes or current living situation (such as a foster home, treatment home or group home) in the community. Parents must be present if Mobile Response is called from the school” (NJDFS, 2016).

- [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment \(PPRA\)](#)

- The PPRA applies to the programs and activities of a State Educational Agency (SEA), local educational agency (LEA), or other recipient of funds under any program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It governs the administration to students of a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight protected areas:

- political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
 - mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
 - sex behavior or attitudes;
 - illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 - critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 - legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
 - religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or,
 - income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).
 - PPRA also concerns marketing surveys and other areas of student privacy, parental access to information, and the administration of certain physical examinations to minors. The rights under PPRA transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.
- [Recognized ASCA Model Program \(RAMP\)](#)
 - The Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) recognizes exemplary school counseling programs that follow the ASCA National Model. Implementing the ASCA National Model takes three to five years. A recognized program has measurable goals that tie into the school’s goals, has administrator support, has an advisory council dedicated solely to the school counseling program that includes all the stakeholders, and has annual and weekly calendars that reflect the suggested use of school counselor time. It also has a yearly classroom guidance action plan through which counselors regularly deliver classroom guidance lessons tied into program goals. It is has counselors regularly deliver small-group lessons based on students’ and the school’s specific needs. Counselors must also regularly collect process, perception, and results data on all areas of the program and analyze and evaluate the data to guide the program. Additionally, counselors must identify achievement and learning gaps and develop interventions to address the gaps. Finally, counselors must regularly evaluate and reflect on the program and how leadership, advocacy, and collaboration efforts have an impact on systemic change in your school and district (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2016).
 - [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

- “Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including federal funds. Section 504 provides that: ‘No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . .’” (USDOE, 2016).
- School Crisis Intervention Team
 - “School crisis response teams need to determine which crisis events are likely to require or benefit from a team response. In general, the following four crisis categories are included: Death of a student, a staff member, or a community member whose death affects a significant portion of the school population, major environmental crisis, such as a flood or fire, situation that involves a threat to the physical safety of students, such as a school bus accident, even in the absence of injuries, situation that involves a perceived threat to the emotional well-being of students, such as may be precipitated by hate-crime graffiti or repetitive bomb threats. Situations that involve only a few students, especially when trying to maintain privacy or confidentiality, are better addressed through means other than a school crisis response team, perhaps by a student assistance team or guidance counselor” (New Jersey Department of Children and Families, 2017).
- School Psychologist
 - “Uniquely qualified members of school teams that support students’ ability to learn and teachers’ ability to teach. They apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior, to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. School psychologists partner with families, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community” (National Association of School Psychologists, 2017).
- School Social Worker
 - Professionals who address social and psychological issues that may impede academic progress for students. School social workers often perform counseling, crisis intervention, and create and implement crisis prevention programs.
- SMART Goals
 - A SMART goal has qualities that help students (and interns) to reach larger goals through smaller steps. SMART is an acronym that stands for:
 - Specific

- Measurable
- Attainable
- Results-Oriented
- Timely
- Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC)
 - “Assist with the provision of in-service training of school district staff concerning substance abuse issues and other state-mandated topics including suicide, physical/sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying; assist in implementing substance abuse policies and procedures and programs and events, serve as an information resource for substance abuse curriculum development and instruction; provide counseling and referral services to pupils regarding substance abuse and other behavioral or mental health issues” (Student Assistance Counselor, 2016).
 - Suspicion
 - “Any educational staff member or other professional to whom it appears that a student may be currently under the influence of alcohol or other drugs on school grounds shall report the matter as soon as possible to the principal or, in his or her absence, to his or her designee and either the certified school nurse, noncertified nurse, school physician, or student assistance coordinator, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-12. If at any time it is determined that the student's use of alcohol or other drugs presents a danger to the student's health and well-being, an individual who holds the educational services certificate with the student assistance coordinator endorsement issued by the New Jersey State Board of Examiners or an individual who holds one of the following educational services certificate endorsements: school nurse; school nurse/non-instructional; school psychologist; school counselor; school social worker; or student personnel services and is trained in alcohol and other drug abuse treatment referral shall initiate a referral for alcohol or other drug abuse treatment” (NJDOE, 2015).
 - Hearsay
 - “The standards for ensuring confidentiality and scope of authorized disclosure of alcohol or other drug testing information that protect, at a minimum: the identities of students who have been selected to be tested or who have been tested; the results of alcohol or other drug tests; the billing and management reports associated with alcohol or other drug tests; and information, prior to the time of an alcohol or other drug test, that a test is to take place. Any educational or non-educational district board of

education employee who in good faith reports to the principal or his or her designee a student in compliance with the provisions of this subsection shall not be liable in civil damages as a result of making a report, as specified in N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-13 and 14” (NJDOE, 2015).

- Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)
 - “Long-term academic goals for groups of students set by teachers in consultation with their supervisors. SGOs promote reflective and collaborative teaching practices, alignment among standards, instruction, and assessment, and improvements in student learning. SGOs must be specific and measurable academic goals that are aligned to state academic standards; Based on student growth and/or achievement using available student learning data; Developed by a teacher in consultation with his or her supervisor; and Approved by a teacher’s supervisor” (NJDOE, 2015).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- Should I be a member of both ASCA and ACA?
 - Yes. ACA is a great resource and you can get liability insurance as a graduate student and professional school counselor. ASCA is your national organization and has excellent resources (e.g., ASCA Scene) and professional development (e.g., conference, webinars).
- Can a student graduate early from high school?
 - Yes. There should be a policy and regulation for “early graduation” that you can access and review your school’s individual requirements. It is also advisable to discuss students considering this option with the director of school counseling, principal and the parent.
 - The state of New Jersey has an alternative option allowing students to accrue 30 college credits and pass the state assessment (e.g., PARCC) to get a high school diploma.
- How do I find the weaknesses of a school?
 - It’s all about data, and it is very much accessible!
 - Begin by creating a school data profile with the template you would receive with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model book. By creating a data profile of a three year period or longer, then data trends can be identified. The trends that you are able to identify will be the “gaps” that need to be addressed through the counseling curriculum, individual and group counseling.
 - The NJ School Performance Report found at <https://homeroom5.doe.state.nj.us/pr/> and the NJ Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse (EVVRS) report found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/vandv/> are excellent resources to start to build your school data profile.
- How do I create positive working relationships with other school counselors?
 - Be a team player! As a new school counselor, you are joining a team. Take the opportunity to observe and learn from others who have been in the school. They can teach you the in’s and out’s of the school policies, politics, and other areas that are of importance. Also, it is important to remember that working together is a two way street. If other people are helping you, find ways to share your strengths to help build up other school counselors, the department and the school. In the end, we are all here for the students, so working together to achieve those goals is paramount!
- How can I make a positive impact in my school?

- The answer to this question is really individualized! I would suggest speaking with the other school counselors, your supervisor of school counseling, and your school principal on this question. Reviewing the school data profile you created earlier will also help you to identify areas that need to be addressed in your school. By focusing on the “gaps” in the school and creating proactive program goals for students, it is likely you will see improvement that will positively impact the students and your school.

Resource Websites

- ACT - <http://www.act.org/>
- A Model for School-based Crisis Preparedness and Response- <http://www.ovc.gov/publications/bulletins/schoolcrisis/pg3.html>
- ASCA - www.schoolcounselor.org
- College Board - www.collegeboard.org
- Common App- <http://www.commonapp.org/>
- FAFSA- <http://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Fastweb Scholarships- <http://www.fastweb.com/>
- HESAA - <http://www.hesaa.org/>
- LRHS Counseling - <http://www.lakeland.k12.nj.us/domain/28>
- LRHS HomePage - <http://www.lakeland.k12.nj.us/>
- Naviance - <https://succeed.naviance.com/main/dashboards/dashboard.php>
- NCAA - <http://www.ncaa.org/>
- NJACAC - <http://www.njacac.org/>
- NJCAN - <https://njcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html>
- NJDOE - <http://www.state.nj.us/education>
- NJSCA - www.njsca.org
- O*NET - <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Possible School Counselor Exercises

Exercise I - Get to know the school staff. Find each administrator, supervisor, and at least one teacher and introduce yourself.

- Identify the school's Chain of Command
- Make sure you have a copy of department directory, specific titles & extensions (i.e. administrators, school counselors, and supervisors)

Exercise II - Identify, become knowledgeable, and become a member of School Counseling associations

- American Counseling Association
- American School Counseling Association
- New Jersey School Counselor Association
- County School Counselor Associations

Exercise III - Research School Performance Report, and Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)

- Identify patterns and program goals in the school's performance report and EVVRS
- Update ASCA School Profile Template
- Based on identified school patterns, research past group curriculums or past successful initiatives
- Receive Board of Education/school administrator approval for commencing identified group or initiative
- Begin forming group lesson plans or initiative action plan
- Create consent forms (if required by your school) or begin implementing identified initiative
- If initiating a group, seek school counselor as group co-facilitator

Exercise IV - Identify and Utilize Technology Systems

- Student Information Systems (e.g. PowerSchool, Genesis, OnCourse, Naviance)
 - Explore your school's information system(s)
 - Complete tutorial or training if applicable
 - Become knowledgeable in order to aid students in navigating the system(s)
- College and Career Systems (e.g. Common App, NJCAN, FAFSA, HESAA, Naviance)
 - Explore your school's information system(s)
 - Complete tutorial or training if applicable
 - Become knowledgeable in order to aid students in navigating the system(s)

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