

# New Jersey School Counselor Evaluation Model

The Road to Highly Effective School Counselor:



New Jersey School Counselor Association, Inc., 2017

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# Dedicated to New Jersey School Counselors

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Professional school counselors work in an educational environment and strive to meet the personal/social, academic, and career goals of students in their school. School counselors work tirelessly every day responding to student needs: helping them work through emotional challenges, providing those at risk with supportive individual group counseling, assisting them in developing future college and career goals, and coordinating services to students.

Counselors are the unsung heroes in schools, dedicating their professional lives to improve schools by adapting to an ever-changing environment. The work of all school counselors is applauded and recognized, and the New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) hopes this evaluation model will contribute to further improving the school counseling profession in New Jersey, an ongoing process begun by NJSCA in the first School Counseling Initiative.

# Acknowledgements

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The New Jersey School Counselor Association would like to acknowledge those individuals, organizations and models used in research and development of the New Jersey School Counselor Evaluation Model.

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The New Jersey School Counselor Association would like to acknowledge the New Jersey Department of Education liaisons:

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Timothy Matheney

The New Jersey School Counselor Association would like to acknowledge the New Jersey Principals & Supervisors Association liaisons:

Jay Doolan

David Nash

Patricia Wright

The New Jersey School Counselor Association would like to acknowledge organizations whose models were used in building this model for New Jersey School Counselors:

American School Counselor Association

Arizona School Counselor Association

Danielson Evaluation Model

Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

New Jersey Frameworks

North Carolina School Counselor Association

Pennsylvania School Counselor Association

Stronge Evaluation Model

West Virginia School Counselor Association

# The Conceptual Framework: A Brief History

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The New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) evaluation model began development in 2012, and was adopted by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) on August 23, 2013. The initial model was a two-year pilot program with the goal of assessing the value of a school counselor specific evaluation model, as opposed to the many teacher-based evaluation models on the market. The NJSCA evaluation model was created by school counselors, directors of school counseling and counselor educators. In the past, school counselors were evaluated using a vague narrative, which offered very little insight or advisement for professional growth and development in the future. Even now, most models are geared towards a teacher's model, heavily focused on classroom instructional practices.

NJSCA provided the tool free of charge to evaluation companies (to include in their software packages) so that districts would not view its implementation as an additional cost or burden. NJSCA representatives also provided training to districts, upon request, that were interested in piloting the evaluation model. Training was also provided during the association fall and spring state school counselor conferences, as well as to administrators at the state NJ Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) conference.

Martin & Rallis (2014) state "it is crucial that we invest more heavily in understanding, improving and promoting both practitioner and administrative program evaluation." That being said, NJSCA has revised its evaluation model after two years of data to better reflect school counselor evaluation. The model received feedback over the two year period, which is included but not limited to, comments at trainings and state school counselor conferences, feedback at the summer leadership development institute (pilot school review and comments) and through a survey sent to all of NJSCA membership asking how the tool could be improved. Very few comments were received; however, those that were centered on the following themes:

- Clarify some of the language on the use of "indicators" so that there is further consistency between evaluator and school counselor.
- Provide additional training to directors/supervisors of school counseling and other administrators that may use the instrument.
  - Directors/supervisors were looking for more examples and specifics on how the model could be used and customized to meet district needs.
  - Administrators whose specialization is not in school counseling appeared to have the largest deviation in proper use of the model and evaluation of appropriate school counseling duties.

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- Update the forms so that they include more descriptive information and options, which will in turn allow them to be more flexible and adaptable to district needs.
  - Provide additional examples on program goals and student growth objectives.
  - Provide examples of “best practices” from model schools.

New training ideas:

- Web discussions via Google Hangout or Skype
- Web video trainings that can be viewed on-demand
- Web-based, on-demand professional development webinars

One of the major challenges in New Jersey is that there are several different models and competing expectations. With principals and teachers at the forefront, all other school professionals appear to be getting grouped together, and their evaluations not tied specifically to their professional standards. More research by practicing school counselors and counselor educators is needed to quantify the benefits of certain practices over one another. However, additional research supports the benefits of comprehensive school counseling programs, and the benefits of school counselors on student outcomes. Hurwitz and Howell (2014) state “an additional high school counselor is predicted to induce a 10 percentage point increase in 4-year college enrollment,” which is significant when working towards the development of school counselor student growth objectives or program goals.

The necessity of administrators in a school setting to understand the benefits of school counselors, how they can be used, and how they should not be used (non-essential duties) is critical. The benefits of school counseling can only be realized when school counselors have reasonable student to school counselor ratios, and are not mired with administrative, non-essential tasks, to properly aid students in meeting their potential. “Results link lower student-to-school counselor ratios to better graduation rates and lower disciplinary incidents” (Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, & Pierce, 2012). “In high-poverty schools, those schools that met the ASCA criteria of having at least one professional school counselor for every 250 students had better graduation and school attendance rates, and lower disciplinary incidents.” (Lapan et al., 2012). These results illustrate to the benefits that can be realized with a well-structured and organized, comprehensive school counseling program.

# BEST PRACTICES

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At Lakeland Regional High School in Wanaque, New Jersey, the program goals (more recently referred to as student growth objectives) were developed using a professional learning community (PLC).

## Professional Learning Communities:

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are becoming more prevalent in education settings. The following information is not intended as a prescribed means of addressing all department objectives, but as an alternative means to informing department practices.

Every Monday, there is a department meeting planned at 9 a.m. for the entire school counseling department. The goals of the meeting are to discuss and plan what is coming up for the week or weeks ahead. The school counselors ask questions and information needed to help counselors in planning their comprehensive programming is shared. The school counselors then meet with or without the director (as needed) to plan out the components of upcoming programs (e.g. guidance lesson on bullying prevention). The school counselors collaboratively plan the components or break them up into parts to discuss the product and suggest changes at a future meeting. The components generally include a presentation of information, handouts (e.g. SAT/ACT registration), pre/post assessment (usually digital via Naviance or Google Docs to expedite processing), and assessment of the results.

The best part of this whole process is that it creates a team environment and not a sense of “every man or woman for themselves.” Resources and ideas are shared and help to improve each school counselor professionally. In addition, the students benefit from a data-driven program that is developed in response to student feedback, and the program is continually refined and improved based on the results from the recent delivery. What many school counselors do not realize is that this is mutually beneficially for all school counselors involved, improves student outcomes, and the results (even materials created) can be used as artifacts in the school counselor evaluation model review at the end of the year.

# STUDENT GROWTH OBJECTIVES (SGOs)

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The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) does not require Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) for school counselors at this time. However, the NJDOE supports districts that choose to have school counselors set SGOs. The summative evaluation with SGOs combines measures of both school counselor performance and the achievement of SGOs that are aligned with the roles and responsibilities of school counselors.

Research shows that high-quality SGOs can be an effective measure of educator performance. However, research also indicates that SGO quality improves over several years. Specialists who have engaged in the SGO process this year will not only have another measure of their performance, but will be better prepared to write an SGO if they are required by the state in the future. In addition, having all staff members in the district engaged in the process of SGO training and writing adds to the richness of the professional discussions that will occur around teaching, learning and educational support. Lastly, the SGO process has great value outside of evaluation; setting SMART goals is something from which all educators can benefit and has been shown to improve both teacher and student performance.

The following are suggested procedures for school counselors in developing and evaluating SGOs that contribute to student learning and development if they are required.

1. Review school data to identify student needs and develop two Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) that are aligned with the School Counselor standards based on School Counselor roles and responsibilities in the school.
2. Select or develop an appropriate assessment to measure the success of each SGO.
3. Meet with the Principal/Supervisor to collaboratively refine and to approve SGOs by November 15.
4. Track progress toward goals and adjust interventions, where necessary.
5. Meet with the Principal/Supervisor to adjust SGOs, if needed by February 15.
6. Meet with the Principal/Supervisor to review the success of the SGOs as part of multiple measures used in the Summative Evaluation process by June 15.

School Counseling Program Goals describe desired outcomes such as improved:

1. Student Achievement
2. Attendance
3. Behavior
4. School Safety



## 2 – Elementary School Counselor SGOs (RAMP Camp on 10/12/13)

- 75% of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students will be able to define 3 calming down techniques (pre/post survey), and the overall number of behavioral referrals will decrease by 15%.
- 80% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will be able to name the process of reporting HIB, and to reduce the number of overall HIB incidents by 15%.

### Examples from “Making Data Work”, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (written by C. Kaffenberger and A. Young):

- Fourth grade students with six or more absences in the previous school year will decrease absences by 50 percent by the end of the school year.
- Seventh grade students identified with two or more D/F grades in the first marking period will increase their GPA by 35% by the end of the semester.
- Eighth-grade students with three or more discipline referrals in the first quarter will reduce referrals by 75 percent by the end of the school year.
- Identified ninth grade students with one or more first-quarter F’s will increase their GPA by 1.0 by the end of the school year.

### Examples created at the “SGOs for School Counselors” workshop at NJPSA on 10/21/13:

- Reduce the number of confirmed bullying reports (on HIB report) by 10% by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. (Outcome Goal)
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will see a 70% increase in knowledge and skills by identifying at least three study skill techniques by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. (Perceptual Goal)
- 5% increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students taking AP classes by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. (Outcome Goal)
  - This was determined based on this subgroup registering at a much lower rate than peer groups.
- Increase student attendance by 2% (90% to 92%) by the end of the 2013 – 2014 school year. OR Increase student attendance rate for “at-risk” (4 or more Absences) population by 2% by the end of the 2013 – 2014 school year.

*Remember to consider root cause (identification of the problem), is the goal attainable, strategies to achieve, etc...*

Goal examples from Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) Applications:

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Students who were suspended out of school 3 or more days in the 2010-2011 school year will increase their instructional time by 10% in the 2008-2009 school year.   |
| 2. By the end of year two, the achievement gap in mathematics for African-American students will decrease by 50 percent.   |
| 3. To reduce the number of aggressive or disruptive behaviors of identified 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students by 30%  |
| 4. By the end of the school year, the number of students who can identify at least two of the legal consequences associated with the misuse of technology will increase by 10%, as evidenced by post-test data collected from classroom guidance lessons. (This is a goal that is tied to perception data, no outcome data identified) |

Pilot District SGO Samples:

- Reduce failure rate for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students by 5% by the end of the 2013 – 2014 school year.
- Increase “college and career” knowledge by 10% as evidenced on pre/post test by the end of April 2014.
- Increase enrollment in high school honors and AP courses by 2% by the end of the 2013 – 2014 school year.
- Decrease marking period failures in high school by 50% by the next marking period.
- Increase netiquette in middle school girls group by 20% based on pre/post test.
- Decrease 50% of failures in middle school afternoon classes by 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period.
- 70% of students labeled “at-risk” on progress report will pass that marking period in Math and English (elementary).
- 30% of students in the homework recess club will be dismissed by the end of the next marking period (elementary).

Student Growth Objective Form (Sample)

Name	Grade	Course/Subject	Number of Students	Interval of Instruction
Test Dummy	9	Freshman Transition	300	Sept. 1, 2014- April 30, 2015

Standards, Rationale, and Assessment Method

Name the content standards covered, state the rationale for how these standards are critical for the next level of the subject, other academic disciplines, and/or life/college/career. Name and briefly describe the format of the assessment method.

Standards Addressed:

- A:A1.1 Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners
- A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning
- A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed
- A:A2.4 Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance
- A:A3.1 Take responsibility for their actions
- A:A3.5 Share knowledge
- A:B1.3 Apply the study skills necessary for academic success at each Level
- A:B1.4 Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family and peers
- A:B2.6 Understand the relationship between classroom performance and success in school
- C:B1.1 Apply decision-making skills to career planning, course selection and career transition
- C:B1.2 Identify personal skills, interests and abilities and relate them to current career choice
- C:B1.6 Learn to use the Internet to access career-planning information
- C:B2.4 Select coursework that is related to career interests
- C:C1.1 Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success
- PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings

PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior  
 PS:B1.2 Understand consequences of decisions and choices  
 PS:B1.5 Demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions  
 PS:C1.6 Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help  
 PS:C1.7 Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices  
 PS:C1.8 Learn about the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse

These standards are critical for students' academic, career and social/emotional transition to the high school as demonstrated by research in the Professional School Counselor journal, June 2013. Additional data from students and parents via needs assessment demonstrates the need to help students identify supports, and that they can meet with their school counselor for social/emotional issues as well as college/career in the high school. Assessment will be based off increase in knowledge and skills on a pre/post assessment in collaboration with multiple measures of students attending the orientation program to determine preparedness groups.

	Pre-Test	Attendance at Summer Orientation Program & Academic Failure (8 <sup>th</sup> grade)
High	80 - 100	0-1
Medium	51 - 79	2-4
Low	<50	5+

### Student Growth Objective

State simply what percentage of students in each preparedness group will meet what target in the space below, e.g. "80% of students in each group will meet the target score." Describe how the targets reflect ambitious and achievable scores for these students. Use the table to provide more detail for each group. Modify the table as needed.

SGO: 40% Increase in the transitional knowledge and skills of freshman students in Connections program by April 30, 2015.

Preparedness Group (e.g. 1,2,3)	Number of Students in Each Group	Target Score on SGO Assessment
High	52/300 (17.33%)	90
Low	52/300 (17.33%)	70

### Scoring Plan

State the projected scores for each group and what percentage/number of students will meet this target at each attainment level. Modify the table as needed.

Preparedness Group	Student Target Score	Counselor SGO Score Based on Percent of Students Achieving Target Score			
		Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)
High	90	≥85%	≥75%	≥65%	<65%
Medium	80	≥85%	≥75%	≥65%	<65%
Low	70	≥85%	≥75%	≥65%	<65%
<b>Approval of Student Growth Objective</b>  Administrator approves scoring plan and assessment used to measure student learning.					
Counselor _____			Date Submitted _____  Date Approved _____		
Signature _____					
Evaluator _____					
Signature _____					

Results of Student Growth Objective

Summarize results using weighted average as appropriate. Delete and add columns and rows as needed.

Preparedness Group	Students at Target Score	Counselor SGO Score	Weight (based on students per group)	Weighted Score	Total Counselor SGO Score
High	45/52 (87%)	4	.1733	.6932	
Medium	150/196 (77%)	3	.6534	1.9602	
Low	35/52 (67%)	2	.1733	.3466	

Notes

Describe any changes made to SGO after initial approval, e.g. because of changes in student population,

other unforeseen circumstances, etc.

Review SGO at Annual Conference

Describe successes and challenges, lessons learned from SGO about teaching and student learning, and steps to improve SGOs for next year.

Counselor \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_



Sample Scoring of “Tiered” SGO:

<b>SCORING PLAN</b>					
State the projected scores for each group and what percentage of students will meet this target at each attainment level. Modify the table as needed.					
Preparedness Group	Student Target Score	Attainment Level in Meeting Student Growth Objective Target Score			Percentage of Students Achieving
		Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	
High	90	≥85%	≥75%	≥65%	<65%
Medium	80	≥85%	≥75%	≥65%	<65%
Low	70	≥85%	≥75%	≥65%	<65%

<b>Results of Student Growth Objective</b>					
<b>Summarize results using weighted average as appropriate. Delete and add columns and rows as needed.</b>					
<b>Preparedness Group</b>	<b>Students at Target Score</b>	<b>Counselor SGO Score</b>	<b>Weight (based on students per group)</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Total Counselor SGO Score</b>
High	45/87%	4	0.1733	0.6932	3.00
Medium	150/76%	3	0.6534	1.9602	
Low	35/67%	2	0.1733	0.3466	
<b>Preparedness Group</b>	<b>Number of Students in Each Group</b>	<b>Number of Students in the entire group</b>	<b>Percentage of Students in Each Group</b>	<b>Weight Assigned to Attainment Score</b>	<b>Total Counselor SGO Score</b>
High	52	300	17%	0.17	3.00
Medium	196	300	65%	0.65	
Low	52	300	17%	0.17	

Preparedness Group	Number of Students at Target Score	Objective Attainment Level	Weight	Weighted Score	Total Counselor SGO Score
High	45	4	0.17	0.68	3.00
Medium	150	3	0.65	1.95	
Low	35	2	0.17	0.34	
			Total	2.97	<i>* Note the impact a few decimal places can have on the final score!</i>

# Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP)

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Many school counselors receive little to no training in their master's programs, or during their internships, on data analysis and program evaluation. The Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) is the ultimate prize! It is recognition by your peers that your school counseling program is comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, and data-driven.

*Why would anyone want to spend the time applying for the RAMP?*

Research completed on this topic is starting to shed light on the major benefits of having a comprehensive school counseling program, most notably those programs that have received the RAMP recognition. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) professional school counselor journal highlighted the impact of RAMP vs. Non-RAMP schools. "School-wide proficiency rates in ELA and Math were significantly higher in RAMP elementary schools when compared with their elementary control schools." (Wilkerson, Pérusse, & Hughes, 2013).

*How do you apply for the RAMP? It seems so overwhelming!*

It's easy to get overwhelmed when looking at all the components needed to be a comprehensive program. Lakeland High School started with the basics. First, they developed three [program goals](#) that they wanted to achieve over the course of the first school year that that started, and they made sure that they tracked the results. There are always many skeptics, some of which may be the very school counselors working side by side with you in your schools. The program goals became the catalyst to all the other components because they set short term and long-term goals, and also committed to showing the impact of interventions. They shared the results of their three program goals with all stakeholders (e.g. Board of Education, faculty, parents) to show the impact that school counselors can have on student achievement, behaviors, attendance, and school safety. This set in motion the energy needed within that department, as well as within the school community.

With the program goals in place, they began to work on the Foundational elements. They created a [Guidance Advisory Committee](#), which provided invaluable information and feedback that helped guide their understanding of student, parent, teacher and other school members "perceptions" and "needs." Needs are critical, but so are perceptions. Even if you are providing an invaluable school counseling program, if people do not know about it or perceive it to be poor, than perception will win over reality.

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That same first year, with the involvement of the Guidance Advisory committee, they created their [mission](#), [philosophy](#) and vision for the school counseling department. In the second year, they added additional program goals based on the data they collected, as well as from needs assessment and the Guidance Advisory committee. They also developed a yearly calendar (e.g. [event calendar](#)) so that they could communicate with all stakeholders when programs would take place, as well as ensure they had the space and resources needed to implement. It was also beneficial to see whether they were meeting the needs of each grade level in each domain (academic, career, social/emotional) through a [domain calendar](#) view.

During the second year of implementation, they also created their curriculum map, aligned with the standards and developed an [annual agreement](#) with the principal. Also, in year 2 they expanded the understanding and use of data beyond to all of the school counselors. They began meeting weekly as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to ensure that they were communicating the [results](#) of all prior programs. They also planned and developed [curriculum](#), programs, and surveys to monitor the data for the upcoming week(s).

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, they expanded their program to include detailed [results reports](#) that were created by the school counselors, school counselor interns, and student assistance counselor. With a strong foundation in place and outstanding data coming in via services and activities, they realized that they had developed a program that began to grow on its own. As they reviewed and modified each intervention, they ensured that it was even better for the next year! By year four, the rest is history, as they are now the first school in New Jersey to ever receive the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) award.

Many schools will want to implement this quickly to get the award and recognition. However, developing a comprehensive school counseling department based on the ASCA Model is a process. It takes time, strong motivation, school counseling leadership, and most of all patience. Dr. Norman Gysbers suggests that it takes three to five years to develop a comprehensive school counseling program, and based on this case history, that estimate is accurate. DO NOT try to do all of this in one year, as it will become overwhelming. Change takes time! It took a multi-year process to build the program and instill change in the school environment, but the reward is absolutely worth the time and effort it takes.

- [RAMP Checklist](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Sample RAMP Applications](#)

# The Role of the Professional School Counselor

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Professional school counselors are certified/licensed counselors holding a minimum of a master's degree in counseling, making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, personal/social, and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools; in district supervisory positions; and counselor education positions.

Professional school counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student success (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Stone & Dahir, 2006). Through leadership, advocacy and collaboration, professional school counselors promote equity and access to rigorous educational experiences for all students. Professional school counselors support a safe learning environment and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community (Sandhu, 2000) and address the needs of all students through culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program (Lee, 2001). The American School Counselor Association recommends a school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250.

## The Professional School Counselor's Role

Professional school counselors have a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling, meet the state certification/licensure standards, and abide by the laws of the states in which they are employed. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of ASCA and other applicable professional counseling associations, and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability.

### Foundation

Professional school counselors identify a philosophy based on school counseling theory and research/evidence-based practice that recognizes the need for all students to benefit from the school counseling program. Professional school counselors act on these philosophies to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of a culturally relevant and comprehensive school counseling program. Professional school counselors create a mission statement supporting the school's mission and collaborate with other individuals and organizations to promote all students' academic, career, and personal/social development.

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### Delivery

Professional school counselors provide culturally competent services to students, parents/ guardians, school staff, and the community in the following areas:

- School Counseling Curriculum – This curriculum consists of structured lessons designed to help students achieve the desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The school counseling curriculum is delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and is systematically presented by professional school counselors in collaboration with other professional educators in K-12 classroom and group activities.
- Individual Student Planning – Professional school counselors coordinate ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish personal goals and develop future plans.
- Responsive Services – Responsive services consist of prevention and/or intervention activities to meet students' immediate and future needs. These needs can be necessitated by events and conditions in students' lives and the school climate and culture, and may require any of the following:
  - individual counseling
  - group counseling
  - consultation with parents, teachers, and other professionals
  - referrals to other school support services or community resources
  - peer helping
  - psychoeducation
  - intervention and advocacy at the systemic level
- Professional school counselors develop confidential relationships with students to help them resolve and/or cope with problems and developmental concerns.
- System Support – System support consists of management activities establishing, maintaining, and enhancing the total school counseling program. These activities include professional development, consultation, collaboration, supervision, program management, and operations. Professional school counselors are committed to continual personal and professional development and are proactively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state, and national levels.

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### Management

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

- agreements developed with and approved by administrators for each school year addressing how the school counseling program is organized and what goals will be accomplished;
- advisory councils including: students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators and community members to review school counseling program goals and results and to make recommendations;
- the use of student data to effect systemic change within the school system so every student receives the benefit of the school counseling program;
- action plans for prevention and intervention services defining the desired student competencies and achievement results;
- allotment of the professional school counselor's time in direct service with students as recommended in the ASCA National Model;
- the use of annual and weekly calendars to keep students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders informed and to encourage active participation in the school counseling program.

### Accountability

Professional school counselors develop and implement data/needs-driven, standards-based and research-supported programs, and engage in continuous program evaluation activities. They also create results reports that demonstrate immediate, intermediate, and long-range effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs. Professional school counselors analyze outcome data to guide future action and improve future results for all students. The performance of the professional school counselor is evaluated using an instrument based on the School Counselor Performance Standards found in the ASCA National Model and the ASCA School Counselor Competencies. These standards of practice are expected of professional school counselors when implementing a school counseling program.

### Summary

Professional school counselors are certified/licensed counselors with the minimum of a master's degree in counseling and are uniquely qualified to address the developmental needs of all students through a comprehensive school counseling program addressing the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.



# Observation and Evaluation Forms

## School Counselor Pre-Observation

Directions: Complete this Pre-Observation form and share it with your observer prior to discussing your responses at the pre-observation conference.

School Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade/Program Observed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Standards Observed: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4

1. Briefly describe the session, the participant(s), and the goal(s).
2. How will you conduct the session?
3. What materials and/or technology will be used?
4. How will you engage the participant(s)?
5. What difficulties or concerns do you anticipate in the session? How will you address these concerns?
6. Should the observer be aware of any special circumstances?
7. Do you want the observer to provide feedback on any specific elements?
8. How will you assess the success of your goals?

\*If more space is needed, please add additional pages.

# Formal Observation/Summative Evaluation

## Domain 1: Program Planning, Implementation & Evaluation

The school counselor collaboratively plans, implements, and evaluates a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate school counseling program.

**Indicators:** *Indicators are examples, and not meant to serve as a prescriptive checklist. Additional indicators may be added that are appropriate based on national professional school counselor standards:*

- Collaborates to facilitate a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate school counseling program that meets the needs of all students.
- Reviews the school counseling program and goals with the school administrator and stakeholders.
- Shares the school counseling program calendar with students, parents/guardians, administrators, and other stakeholders.
- Uses a variety of data to develop and evaluate activities, lessons, and action plans based on student needs.
- Conducts an annual assessment to determine program implementation and effectiveness and to modify services as needed.
- Monitors and assesses students' academic progress, attendance, behavior, development, and safety to inform and improve the school counseling program.
- Develop lessons and assessments that are aligned to professional standards.
- Assess outcomes of programs and interventions, and use data to improve program delivery.

Criteria	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Not Indicated
<b>Program Planning</b>	Does not facilitate, plan, evaluate and modify components,	Inconsistently facilitates, plans, evaluates, and modifies components,	Consistently facilitates the planning, monitoring, and evaluating--on an	Leads efforts to consistently facilitate, plan, monitor, evaluate, and modify	

	activities, and services of the comprehensive school counseling program.	activities, and services of the comprehensive school counseling program.	annual basis--and modifying components, activities, and services of the comprehensive school counseling program.	components, activities, and services of the comprehensive school counseling program.	
<b>Analyzing Data</b>	Does not analyze data to assess student needs and evaluates outcomes.	Sometimes analyzes a variety of data to assess student needs and evaluates outcomes.	Analyzes a variety of data to assess student needs and evaluates outcomes.	Regularly analyzes a variety of data to assess student needs and evaluates outcomes.	
<b>Collaboration</b>	Does not collaborate with the counseling department and supervisor in the development and evaluation of program goals and action plans.	Inconsistently collaborates with the counseling department and supervisor in the development and evaluation of program goals and action plans.	Collaborates with the counseling department and supervisor and stakeholders in the development and evaluation of program goals and action plans.	Leads the counseling department and collaborates consistently with the supervisor and stakeholders in the development and evaluation of program goals and action plans.	
<b>Student Outcomes</b>	Demonstrates limited capacity to accurately monitor students' progress.	Inconsistently monitors student progress with accuracy.	Consistently monitors student progress with accuracy	Monitors student progress on a regular basis and serves as a resource for other staff members.	

<b>Program Evaluation</b>	Shows limited capacity to inform the counseling program.	Inconsistently informs the improvement of the school counseling program.	Consistently informs and improves the school counseling program.	Leads efforts to coordinate and implement the counseling program.	
<b>Evidence/Artifacts:</b>					

**Standard 1 - Sample Artifacts**

- Action Plan
- Assessments/audits
- Calendars
- Committee meeting minutes and reports
- Comprehensive school counseling program
- Counseling curriculum
- Data and survey results
- Handbooks and school forms
- Lesson plans aligned with standards
- Logs
- Plans
- Program audit
- Technology integration

## Domain 2: Program Delivery

The school counselor uses the majority of time to provide direct services that promote optimal student development.

**Indicators:** *Indicators are examples, and not meant to serve as a prescriptive checklist. Additional indicators may be added that are appropriate based on national professional school counselor standards:*

- Develops trusting and caring relationships with students that promote their personal/social, career, and academic development.
- Provides individual counseling, group counseling, and crisis intervention using evidence-based practices.
- Conducts activities that assist students in developing educational goals and career plans.
- Delivers the counseling curriculum through structured activities and lessons that provide all students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills appropriate for their developmental level.
- Communicates and consults with parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community organizations to identify resources and make referrals.
- Creates a culture of trust, collaboration and respect with students and staff.
- Collaboratively works with students to set goals and have high expectations.
- Uses technology, materials, and other resources as appropriate to deliver services and programs.

Criteria	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Not Indicated
<b>Knowledge of Students/Respect and Rapport</b>	Displays little or no knowledge of child and adolescent development nor of students' skills, special needs, interests and culture.	Displays limited knowledge of child and adolescent development and some knowledge of the varied students' skills, special needs, interests and culture.	Demonstrates an understanding of the typical developmental characteristics of the age group, as well as exceptions to the general patterns of	Demonstrates extensive knowledge of students, systematically acquiring knowledge from several sources about individual students' knowledge, skills,	

	<p>Does not promote positive interactions among students, parents, or staff.</p> <p>The counseling environment is not a place where students, teachers, and/or parents feel safe and respected</p>	<p>Occasional attempts to promote positive interactions are made among students, parents, or staff.</p> <p>Students, teachers and/or parents feel somewhat safe and respected in the counseling environment.</p>	<p>development.</p> <p>Displays accurate and detailed knowledge of students' skills, special needs, interests and cultures.</p> <p>School Counselor's interactions with students, parents and staff are respectful and appropriate to the ages, cultures, and developmental levels of the students.</p> <p>The counselor actively promotes positive interactions and is one in which participants feel safe and respected.</p>	<p>special needs, interests and cultural heritages.</p> <p>Interactions reflect genuine warmth, caring and sensitivity.</p> <p>Successful involvement in promoting positive student-to-student interactions.</p>	
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<b>Student Services</b>	No evidence of delivering direct student services for the personal/social, career, and academic development of all students.	Inconsistently delivers direct student services for the personal/social, career and academic development of all students.	Consistently delivers evidence-based direct student services for the personal/social, career, and academic development of all students.	Consistently models high quality evidence-based practices delivering direct student services for the personal/social, career, and academic development of all students.	
<b>Responsive Services</b>	No evidence of the delivery of responsive services using individual counseling, and group counseling, crisis intervention, individual planning, and classroom lessons in the counseling curriculum.	Inconsistently delivers some responsive services using individual counseling, and group counseling, crisis intervention, individual planning, and classroom lessons in the counseling curriculum.	Consistently delivers evidence-based responsive services using individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, individual planning, and classroom lessons in the counseling curriculum.	Consistently models high quality evidence-based practices delivering responsive services using individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, individual planning, and classroom lessons in the counseling curriculum. Serves as a role model and mentor to the school counselors and stakeholders.	
<b>Consultation</b>	Consistently models high	Inconsistently collaborates with	Consistently consults with	Consistently models high quality	

	quality evidence-based practices that enhance consultations with parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community organizations to identify resources and referrals, as needed.	the counseling department and supervisor in the development and evaluation of program goals and action plans.	parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community organizations to identify resources and referrals, as needed.	evidence-based practices that enhance consultations with parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community organizations to identify resources and referrals, as needed.	
<b>Materials/Resources</b>	Demonstrates limited ability to utilize instructional materials and resources to address student needs.	Inconsistently utilizes instructional materials and resources to address student needs.	Consistently utilizes instructional materials and resources to address student needs.	Takes a lead in developing and utilizing instructional materials and resources to address student needs.	
<b>Evidence/Artifacts:</b>					



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## Standard 2 – Sample Artifacts

- Action Plans
- Calendar
- Committee minutes and reports
- Counseling Curriculum
- Data results
- Documents
- Lesson plans
- Logs
- Observations
- Student Personal Profiles
- Satisfaction surveys
- School Crisis Plan
- Technology integration

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## Domain 3: Leadership and Advocacy

The school counselor advocates for a safe, supportive, and inclusive school where all students can learn.

**Indicators:** *Indicators are examples, and not meant to serve as a prescriptive checklist. Additional indicators may be added that are appropriate based on national professional school counselor standards:*

- Collaborates with stakeholders to foster a positive school climate that respects and values the diversity of all members of the school community.
- Advocates for policies and programs that promote equity, access, and inclusion for all students regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, country of origin, ethnicity, language, ability, or socioeconomic status.
- Provides culturally responsive school counseling activities that promote student learning and achievement.
- Promotes prevention and intervention programs and activities that address student needs.
- Collaboration with peers through observation, leadership of professional learning community, coach or mentor.

- Lead and train staff in professional development.
- Participates in professional growth activities and incorporates learning into professional practices.
- Responds promptly to inquiries from all school stakeholders (e.g. students, parents, staff).
- Creates systemic change and improves academic and career success of all students.

Criteria	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Not Indicated
<b>Collaboration</b>	No evidence of collaboration with stakeholders to foster a school climate that respects and values the diversity of all members of the school community.	Sometimes collaborates with stakeholders to foster a school climate that respects and values the diversity of all members of the school community.	Consistently collaborates with stakeholders to foster a school climate that respects and values the diversity of all members of the school community.	Is a role model who consistently leads collaborative efforts with stakeholders to foster a school climate that respects and values the diversity of all members of the school community.	
<b>Equity and Access</b>	No evidence of developing policies and programs that promote equity, access, and inclusion for all students regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation,	Sometimes participants in the development of policies and programs that promote equity, access, and inclusion for all students regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation,	Consistently develops policies and programs that promote equity, access, and inclusion for all students regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, country of origin, ethnicity,	Leads in the development of policies and programs that promote equity, access, and inclusion for all students regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, country of origin, ethnicity, language,	

	country of origin, ethnicity, language, ability, or socioeconomic status.	country of origin, ethnicity, language, ability, or socioeconomic status.	language, ability, or socioeconomic status.	ability, or socioeconomic status.	
<b>Cultural Competency</b>	No evidence of providing culturally responsive school counseling activities that promote student learning and achievement.	Sometimes provides culturally responsive school counseling activities that promote student learning and achievement.	Consistently provides culturally responsive school counseling activities that promote student learning and achievement.	Leads counselors and stakeholders in providing culturally responsive school counseling activities that promote student learning and achievement.	
<b>Advocacy</b>	Uses few, if any, advocacy skills.	Uses advocacy skills to support student success.	Diplomatically advocates for all students.	Identifies allies and enlists support while diplomatically advocating for all students.	
<b>Systemic Change</b>	Does not create systemic change and improve academics and career success.	Leadership skills are emerging and systemic change can be identified.	Leadership skills are evident and systemic changes are present.	Recognizes barriers to learning and works collaboratively to implement systemic change.	
<b>Evidence/Artifacts:</b>					

### Standard 3 – Sample Artifacts

- Committee minutes and reports
- Calendars
- Cultural programs and activities
- Data and survey results
- Handbooks
- Newsletters
- Policies and procedures
- School climate reports
- School profile
- Self-assessment/reflection
- Website, listservs, blogs
- Examples of collaborative work with peer

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## Domain 4: Professionalism and Growth

The school counselor improves his/her knowledge, skills, and practices and advances the school counseling profession.

**Indicators:** *Indicators are examples, and not meant to serve as a prescriptive checklist. Additional indicators may be added that are appropriate based on national professional school counselor standards:*

- Acts ethically and maintains confidentiality with all students and stakeholders.[TC14]
- Seeks ongoing relevant professional development.
- Shares new knowledge and ideas with peers.
- Actively reflects on his/her professional practice and supervision feedback.
- Identifies and applies new ideas that improve the school and enhance the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.
- Promotes the professionalism of school counselors.
- Communicates and collaborates effectively with stakeholders.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Partially Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>	<b>Not Indicated</b>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<p>Little or no evidence of counselor professional development.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of reflective practice or seeking and using supervision.</p>	<p>Seeks some counselor professional development.</p> <p>Sometimes reflects on practice and seeks and uses supervision.</p>	<p>Consistently seeks counselor professional development.</p> <p>Actively reflects on professional practice and consistently seeks supervision.</p>	<p>Consistently seeks and contributes to the professional development of other school counselors.</p> <p>Consistently reflects on professional practice and applies supervision feedback.</p>	
<b>Ethics and Professionalism</b>	<p>Little or no evidence of ethical and professional practice with stakeholders.</p>	<p>Acts ethically and professionally with stakeholders.</p>	<p>Consistently acts ethically and professionally with stakeholders. Seeks consultation with counselors on ethical issues.</p>	<p>Takes initiative in leading and engaging stakeholders in ethical and professional practices, and consistently consults on ethical and professional matters with counselors and colleagues.</p>	

<b>Communication</b>	Little or no evidence of effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders.	Inconsistently communicates and collaborates with some stakeholders.	Consistently communicates and collaborates effectively with stakeholders.	Is a role model for other counselors on how to communicate and collaborate effectively with all stakeholders.	
<b>Demonstrating Professionalism</b>	Does not demonstrate effort to improve the school, the program, and the professionalism of school counselors.	Demonstrate some collaborative efforts to improve the school, the program, and the professionalism of school counselors.	Consistently demonstrates collaborative efforts to improve the school, the program, and the professionalism of school counselors.	Leads and serves as a role model for counselors in collaborative efforts to improve the school, the program, and the professionalism of school counselors.	
<b>Accurate and Confidential Records</b>	Is missing reports of student progress, records, and documentation, or they are late, inaccurate, resulting in confusion, and/or noncompliance with district policies and procedures.	Completes reports of student progress, records, and documentation that are generally adequate, timely, and compliant with district policies and procedures	Completes reports, records, and documentation that are accurate and compliant with district policies and procedures.	Uses an approach to record keeping that is highly accurate, systematic, comprehensive, compliant, and serves as a model.	
<b>Evidence/Artifacts:</b>					

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#### **Standard 4 - Sample Artifacts**

- Awards and recognition
- Best practices contributions
- Ethical and legal standards and regulations
- Professional association membership and involvement
- Professional development participation/presentations
- Mentoring
- Observations
- Publications
- School service
- Formal correspondences
- Self-assessment / Reflections
- Volunteer service

### Summary of Ratings

Standard	Rating 1-4 (average)	Weight	Total
1. Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation		.075	
2. Program Delivery		.800	
3. Leadership and Advocacy		.075	
4. Professionalism and Growth		.050	
Sum of the Weighted Scores		1.0	

School Counselor Evaluation Summary	Rating 1-4	Weight	Total
Sum of the Weighted Standard Scores		.85	
Student Growth Objectives (SGO) – <i>Optional</i>		.15	
Sum of the Weighted Scores		1.0	

Supervisor Comments:

School Counselor Comments:

School Counselor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# School Counselor Post-Observation

Counselor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduled: \_\_\_\_\_

Unscheduled: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-tenured: \_\_\_\_\_

Tenured: \_\_\_\_\_

Short: \_\_\_\_\_

Long: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity:

- |  |
|--|
| 1. What feedback did you receive from the participant(s) indicating that they achieved understanding and that the goal(s) were met for this session? |
| 2. Considering your plan, what were the strengths of the session?  |
| 3. What did you do to engage the participant(s)? Did it work? How do you know?   |
| 4. Did the participant(s) have difficulties? Did you have any concerns with the session? How were the concerns addressed?                            |
| 5. If special circumstances were identified, how did they impact the session?  |
| 6. If you had the opportunity again with the same participant(s), what would you do differently if anything?   |

School Counselor Comments:

School Counselor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix A: Websites

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- Implementing the common core standards: The role of the school counselor [www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org)
- Now is the Time: The President's plan to protect our children and our communities by reducing gun violence [www.wh.gov/now-is-the-time](http://www.wh.gov/now-is-the-time)
- The Center for Excellence in School Counseling and Leadership (CESCaL) [www.cescal.org](http://www.cescal.org)
- National Office of School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA); The College Board <http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/college-preparation-access/national-office-school-counselor-advocacy-nosca>
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA) [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)
- Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/about-asca/mindsets-behaviors> [TC18]
- The Education Trust [www.edtrust.org](http://www.edtrust.org)
- What Works Clearinghouse <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/findwhatworks.aspx> [TC19]
- The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research [www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling](http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling)
- New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) [www.njsca.org](http://www.njsca.org)
- The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards for School Counselors (NBPTS)  
<http://www.nbpts.org/sites/default/files/documents/certificates/nbpts-certificate-ecya-sc-standards.pdf>
- NJCCS <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/> <http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs/>
- Common Core Standards [www.corestandards.org/](http://www.corestandards.org/)
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards <http://www.p21.org/overview/skills-framework/351>
- Ways To Improve Your School Counseling Program <http://goo.gl/HOCnfe>

# Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What are the benefits of adopting the New Jersey School Counselor Evaluation Model?

- a. The Model was created by school counselors for school counselors and adopted by the New Jersey School Counselor Association. The use of this model is not required by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). However, the NJDOE recognizes the high quality of this instrument and supports districts that choose to adopt it for their counseling professionals.
- b. School counselors are evaluated using clear, counselor-focused standards, indicators, and rubrics rather than those designed specifically for teachers.
- c. Professional development can be planned to address the individual school counselor’s professional growth, recognizing that the needs within the state and communities vary widely.
- d. Common language used in the standards promotes school counselor professionalism across schools and districts.
- e. The model provides the opportunity to incorporate Student Growth Objectives to prepare for future NJDOE requirements.

2. Are Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) required for school counselor performance evaluations?

The NJDOE does not require SGOs for school counselors and other educational specialists at this time. However, because it considers the SGO process to have great value in improving educator practice, it supports districts that choose to have all professionals set SGOs.

3. Which students should be included in an SGO?

SGOs should be designed to include a school counselor’s caseload or a specific group of students with whom the school counselor works.

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4. I am new to the SGO process. How can I learn how to use them?

Although SGOs are not currently required for school counselor evaluations, school counselors can begin to learn about SGOs and set realistic and manageable goals. This process helps school counselors document what they are doing and shows the growth or change in students. Go to <http://goo.gl/E8Nrqp> for a presentation on SGOs for School Counselors and look for upcoming NJSCA workshops ([www.njsca.org](http://www.njsca.org)). The NJSCA is collaborating with the [New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association \(NJPSA\)](#) to conduct professional development sessions on the process.

5. What are the benefits of implementing SGOs?

Research shows that high quality SGOs can be an effective measure of educator performance. However, research also shows that SGO quality improves over several years. Specialists who have engaged in the SGO process this year will not only have another measure of their performance, but will be better prepared to write an SGO if they are required by the state in the future.

In addition, having all staff members in the district engaged in the process of SGO training and writing adds to the richness of the professional discussions that will occur around teaching, learning and educational support.

Lastly, the SGO process has great value outside of evaluation; setting SMART goals is something from which all educators can benefit and has been shown to improve both teacher and student performance. Program goals (SMART goals) are also the basis of the foundation for a comprehensive school counseling program working towards the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP).

6. I have never been observed in person and the anticipation of being observed concerns me.

The TEACHNJ Act requires three observations for tenured and non-tenured school counselors. Observations are a valuable experience that can identify strengths and needs by a certified supervisor or administrator. Observations are essential to the evaluation process and provide a way for school counselors to demonstrate their growth. Most graduate school counseling programs and all CACREP accredited programs require video/ audio recorded or live sessions for supervision. The observer is obligated to maintain confidentiality in instances where students and parents/guardians share personal information except where legally mandated to report.

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7. I am the only school counselor in two schools, and I have a very large caseload. I cannot deliver services to all students. How will I be evaluated?

The school counselor evaluation is based on what the individual school counselor does in his/her school setting, and standards are selected with the supervisor. If optional SGOs are used in the district, the goals will be developed by the school counselor with his or her supervisor. Goals should be developed collaboratively based on what school counselors can reasonably achieve considering their limitations (e.g., lack of materials, multiple buildings).

8. I work in a very diverse district with student needs that are hard to meet. How will this affect my evaluation?

According to AchieveNJ, in reviewing evaluation policy options for educational services staff, counselors, and other specialists, the Department considered that “roles such as these have varied job descriptions in districts across the state, which makes it difficult to create common evaluation practice instruments. Such differences in responsibilities might even require different components in evaluation frameworks.”

A school district may identify additional indicators in addressing the needs of students and school counselors during the pilot process (See NJSCEM Pilot School Program, p. 7). Feedback from school districts is encouraged in order to improve the pilot model.

9. My school does not have an approved school counseling program. How can I be evaluated on the standards that mention a “program”?

School counselors are evaluated on their responsibilities and what they do, such as direct services and activities. This is a collaborative process with their supervisors, and standards and indicators must be adjusted to address what counselors do in their school and the level of implementation of their school’s adopted counseling program.

## Appendix C: References

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Lapan, R. T., Gysbers, N. C., Stanley, B., & Pierce, M. E. (2012). Missouri Professional School Counselors:: Rations Matter, Especially in High Poverty Schools, *Professional School Counseling, 16*(2), 108-116.

Martin, I., & Rallis, S. (2014). Building on Strengths and Addressing Challenges: Enhancing External School Counseling Program Evaluation. *Journal of School Counseling, 12*(10), 1-29.

Wilkerson, K., Pérusse, R., & Hughes, A. (2013). Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and Student Achievement Outcomes: A Comparative Analysis of RAMP Versus Non-RAMP Schools. *Professional School Counseling, 16*(3), 172-184.