



The New Jersey
School Counseling Initiative:
A Framework for Developing Your
Comprehensive School Counseling Program
Second Edition

*A project of the
New Jersey School Counselor Association*



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CONTENTS

Table of Contents	II
Acknowledgements	III
New Jersey School Counseling Initiative-Advisory Board	IV
Foreword	V
NJSCI Executive Summary	VI
NJSCI Icon Guide	VII
Section 1 The New Jersey School Counseling initiative: New directions in school counseling	
1.1 The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative	2
1.2 New Jersey School Counseling Initiative's vision for school counseling	3
1.3 The evolving role of the school counselor	4
1.4 Benefits of a comprehensive school counseling program	6
1.5 What New Jersey's students need	9
1.6 Time line of critical events influencing the New Jersey School Counseling Initiative	12
1.7 Before you start	16
Section 2 Framework for a comprehensive school counseling program	
2.1 Overview of a comprehensive school counseling program	23
2.2 Rationale: Why develop a comprehensive school counseling program	24
2.3 Identify the beliefs and philosophy of your program	26
2.4 Develop your program's mission statement	28
2.5 Benefits of your local program for the constituents	30
2.6 The needs assessment process	30
2.7 Develop program goals	37
2.8 Design the delivery system of the new program	40
2.9 Counseling	41
2.10 Consultation and Student Planning: Empowering the student	42
2.11 Enhancement/System Support	47
2.12 School Counseling Curriculum	48
2.13 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and National Career Development Guidelines	49
Section 3 Monitoring and enhancing your program	
3.1 Prepare for the transition	59
3.2 Create an Advisory Board	60
3.3 Use a School Counseling Team approach	61
3.4 Develop your School Counselor Role Statement	63
3.5 Implement the Program	63
3.6 Develop a Master Calendar	63
3.7 Evaluate the results	69
3.8 Using data: Who said data had to be mined?	74
3.9 MEASURE	78
Section 4 Putting it all together: An integrative approach to comprehensive school counseling	
4.0 An integrative approach to comprehensive school Counseling	83
4.1 Character Education	83
4.2 Intervention and Referral Services	84
4.3 Integrative Programs	86
4.4 Diversity, Equity, and Access	96
Section 5 Legal and Ethical Primer	103
Appendix	175
Kinnelon High School: Linking District Goals with The ASCA Standards	176
Appendix A: The New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA)	182
Appendix B: NJ Certification Requirements	194

Acknowledgments

The New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) gratefully acknowledges the participation of the following people who played roles in the development of the New Jersey School Counseling Initiative (NJSCI). While this was in theory a simple revision of the previous editions, much has changed: the profession has advanced to new levels, new immigrants and shifting demographics have presented new issues, and we are in a new millennium. Therefore, this small project became a massive undertaking.

The publishing of this document and the NJSCA web site were made possible through a generous grant from:

Verizon of New Jersey
through its
NJ Access Initiative
(ANJ)

The NJSCA would like to acknowledge:
The New Jersey Principals & Supervisors Association
(NJPSA)

for its ongoing contributions to the New Jersey School Counselor Initiative

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Foreword

“We need to be the change we want to see happen.
We are the leaders we have been waiting for.”

Mahatma Ghandi

My vision for guidance and counseling is for every school district in the United States to have a fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling program, serving all students and their parents and staffed by active, involved school counselors working closely with parents, teachers, administrators and community members. When guidance and counseling is organized and implemented as a program, it places school counselors conceptually and structurally in the center of education, making it possible for them to contribute directly and substantially to their local school districts' educational goals. As a result, guidance and counseling becomes an integral and transformative program in the district, not a marginal and supplemental activity.

Norman Gysbers, Ph.D, 2003

School counseling programs can have a powerful impact on student learning and academic achievement. *The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative II: A Framework for Developing Your Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Program* provides the tools necessary to help school districts and counselors examine current school counseling practices and services and then work to align them with the *ASCA National Standards and National Model*, *NJ Core Content Curriculum Standards*. It will also help them to address the mandates of *No Child Left Behind*, *Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Legislation*, and *NJ Administrative Code*. *The Framework* will help counselors to clarify their roles, eliminating clerical and non-guidance tasks, and to design and promote the management and delivery of a school counseling program comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, and developmental in nature.

With national, state, and local expectations up, standards raised, and resources limited, it is time for schools to re-examine their district resources and find creative ways to meet the demands. One of the most valuable assets in school districts is the school counseling program. School counseling programs are not reactive; they are proactive. They are not restrictive; they are holistic. They aren't stagnant; they are ever-changing. As the needs of the district change, as the needs of the students change, the school counseling program must change, and the school counselor must be the change agent.

School counseling promotes and enhances the learning process. The goal of the program is to enable all students to achieve success in school and develop into contributing members of our society. A school counseling program based on national standards provides all the necessary elements for students to achieve success in school. This programmatic approach helps school counselors to continuously assess their students' needs, analyze school data, identify barriers and obstacles that may be hindering student success, and advocate programmatic efforts to eliminate these barriers. School counselors work with all students, school staff, families and members of the community as an integral part of the education program. School counseling programs promote school success through a focus on academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy and social/emotional and career development.

American School Counselor Association, 1997

There is no person better positioned to assess the needs of a school, a program, or a student than a school counselor who is instrumental in the management and delivery of comprehensive, developmental school counseling. The social and emotional needs of students are met, and the skills are taught, through small and large group instruction and activities and classroom lessons, for example. Their social, emotional, academic, and career needs are also addressed through counseling that can be preventative, developmental, or responsive. Academic needs are assessed regularly, for example, after every progress report and standardized test. *The Framework* will help counselors understand and assess the data they are bombarded with and design programs to meet student needs. Students, whose social and emotional needs are being met, and those who have developed the life skills they need at a particular developmental stage, are most likely to strive for higher academic goals. Then they are ready to make thoughtful and courageous career and educational choices with the help of a carefully designed and implemented program, begun in the early elementary years.

None of these goals can be reached if the climate of the school is threatening, or if students are afraid. With the passage of the anti-bullying legislation passed in 2003, the New Jersey Department of Education clearly states it is concerned about bullying and that school districts must be on board. The model policy states, "The district should make resources (e.g., counseling) available to individual victims of harassment, intimidation and bullying and respond in a manner that does not stigmatize victim(s). Social skills training for all students, is an example of a school or district-level response for addressing victimization." School counselors can implement programs that include conflict-resolution, peer mediation, and counseling lessons on pro social behavior, communication skills, and anger management. Such direct counseling services lead to the lessening of tension and anxiety, positive interpersonal relationships, and reduction in violence. These changes can improve school climate and thus promote higher academic achievement, positive social adjustment, and better attendance rates.

The Framework is not a pattern; it is not a one-size-fits-all document. The 561 school districts in New Jersey are as diverse as the population, the landscape, the socioeconomics. *The Framework* is designed to be a resource, a working document for you to use to develop your own mission statement and vision, program, and goals based on the needs of your own school and community. You know your families and their needs as well as how best to reach out to the faculty and staff of your individual schools. You know what kind of parent outreach and in-service is needed, what community resources are available. *The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative II: A Framework for Developing Your Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Program* will help you. School counselors can lead the way. You are the leaders New Jersey needs.

NJSCI Icon Guide

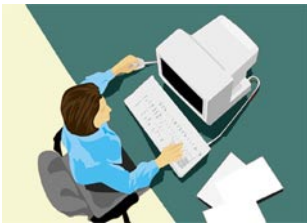
Three different icons are located throughout the NJSCI document. They are designed to provide you with the tools needed to complete your journey in developing a comprehensive School Counseling Program. These icons are for use by an individual or your team.



This icon suggests information about school counseling research and other related research.



This icon suggests work that has been completed by schools and school districts in New Jersey.



This icon suggests a writing exercise for you and your team.