

THE CALIFORNIA CONTINUUM FOR ADVANCING SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICE: DEFINING STANDARDS IN PRACTICE (CASCP)



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The **California Association of School Counselors, Inc. (CASC)** is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to advancing the school counseling profession across California. Founded in 2000, CASC has championed a whole-child approach to education, promoting not only academic success but also students' social, emotional, and postsecondary development. CASC delivers state-wide professional development, technical assistance for Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and advocacy at the state Capitol. Its services include in-person training and CASC Campus, an e-learning platform offering graduate-level coursework and professional training designed to meet the evolving needs of California's diverse student population. Through shaping legislation, influencing policy, and setting professional standards, CASC leads the way in strengthening school counseling and ensuring all students are prepared to learn, thrive, and succeed in school, career, and life.

The ***California Standards for the School Counseling Profession (CSSCP)***, adopted in 2023, is the foundational document for the *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practice: Defining Standards in Practice*. It defines the scope, skills, and professional expectations for school counselors across the state, providing a framework to guide practice, inform professional learning, and strengthen accountability. It is the first set of state-level standards of its kind (based on performance) in the nation. The full document can be accessed on CASC's website: California Standards for the School Counseling Profession.
CASC Standards 2023 FINAL - Digital Copy.pdf

For more information about CASC go to www.schoolcounselor-ca.org



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**THE CALIFORNIA CONTINUUM FOR
ADVANCING SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICE:
DEFINING STANDARDS IN PRACTICE (CASCP)**

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside an extraordinary team of school counseling leaders in the development of the *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practice: Defining Standards in Practice (CASCP)*. The CASCP represents the culmination of many years of foundational work to define school counseling practices across the state of California. As one of the first to develop state-specific school counseling standards, California now has a framework that not only articulates those standards but also provides a clear progression of observable practices. This work helps school counselors and educational partners alike to more fully understand and support the vital role of the school counselor.

The creation of this document was truly a collaborative process. Over the course of just one year, school counseling leaders, partners, community members, and policymakers engaged in meaningful dialogue, carefully reviewed language and educational policy, and contributed valuable insight into the design and content of the CASCP.

I am especially thankful to Dr. Loretta Whitson, who entrusted me with the role of chairing the CASCP workgroup. Together, we selected 25 dedicated school counseling leaders, allies, and policymakers to craft a progressive continuum of observable practices aligned with our state's professional standards. Their diligence, wisdom, and unwavering commitment served as our guiding light throughout this work.

My deepest thanks also go to the CASC Leadership Team and our emerging leaders, whose thoughtful revisions ensured clarity, precision, and alignment with CASC's vision and California's educational policy.

Finally, I wish to extend heartfelt gratitude to Drs. Josh Godinez, Caroline Lopez-Perry, and Loretta Whitson, the leadership team for the CASCP. Their contributions were essential in connecting the CASCP to the California Standards for School Counseling Practice (CSSCP). Their vision, guidance, and support ensured that the CASCP reflects not only the standards themselves but also the deeper purpose and promise of school counseling in California.

Dr. Natalie Edirmanasinghe, NCC, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

California State University, Long Beach

The *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practice: Defining Standards in Practice (CASCP)* represents a groundbreaking step forward for the field of education. This work is the product of vision, collaboration, and dedication by school counseling leaders across our state. No other state has yet conceptualized the profession through a performance-based lens that quantifies growth and practice in such a comprehensive way. While accountability through data-driven decision-making and program evaluation has long been emphasized in school counseling, this continuum is unique in its focus: it illuminates the growth of the individual counselor along a developmental trajectory. In doing so, it provides not only a roadmap for professional learning and performance evaluation but also a framework that defines the broad scope of practice for school counselors.

As Executive Director of the California Association of School Counselors, I am proud that this document is the result of a peer-driven and peer-reviewed process. Over the course of a year, leaders from across education and the school counseling profession contributed their expertise to ensure the CASCP reflects the depth and breadth of our profession. The language was intentionally designed so that administrators, teachers, policymakers, and community members alike can understand the responsibilities and competencies of school counselors.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Continuum Workgroup and to the team's leader, Dr. Natalie Edirmanasinghe, professor at California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Edirmanasinghe and the workgroup leadership, scholarship, and unwavering commitment made this vision a reality. This Continuum will guide our profession for years to come, offering both inspiration and direction as we continue to expand the impact of school counseling in California.

Dr. Loretta Whitson

Executive Director

California Association of School Counselors

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of school counselors is well established as a critical lever for improving student outcomes. Research consistently demonstrates that when counselors are provided with appropriate training, resources, and role clarity, they positively influence academic achievement, social-emotional development, and postsecondary readiness, particularly for historically underserved student populations. In California, school counselors serve as integral members of the educational team, uniquely positioned at the intersection of education and mental health.

Recognizing the need for greater alignment between training, expectations, and practice, the *California Standards for the School Counseling Profession (CSSCP)* were adopted in 2023 to define statewide performance benchmarks. When paired with a continuum of practice, these standards create a developmental framework that acknowledges the evolving expertise of school counselors and promotes excellence in service delivery.

The *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practices: Defining Standards in Practice (CASCP)*, builds on this foundation. Designed as a companion to the CSSCP, the CASCP translates professional standards into a practical tool for growth, accountability, and policy alignment. It provides school counselors with a structured means for self-reflection, goal setting, and systematic examination of practice, while also offering district leaders actionable data to guide and accelerate professional development.

Grounded in updates to Education Code 49600, the 2019 revision of the Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Standards, and the broader reforms of the California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), the CASCP bridges policy and practice. Organized around six standards and 19 supporting elements, it defines four progressive levels of practice—Emerging, Applying, Integrative, and Innovative—that reflect increasing expertise, leadership, and systemic impact.

By establishing measurable benchmarks, the CASCP advances both individual professional growth and systemic accountability. Its adoption strengthens workforce investment, resource allocation, and evaluation frameworks within Local Education Agencies (LEAs), ensuring that accountability systems align with California's priorities for equity, mental health integration, and whole-child support.

Taken together, the CSSCP and CASCP form a bridge from vision to implementation and from aspiration to action. They represent a turning point in California's strategic investment in school counseling, an investment grounded in law, shaped by research, and responsive to the realities of diverse school communities. Most importantly, they reinforce a core commitment: that every student, regardless of background or zip code, deserves access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate support from a well-prepared school counselor.

The six core standards from the CSSCP are as follows::

1. Professional School Counselor Development
2. School-Based Mental Health
3. School Counseling Domains
4. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
5. Indirect Services
6. Creating and Maintaining Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environments for Student Wellbeing

Together, these standards and developmental levels establish a roadmap for school counselors to continuously expand their practice, from early professional readiness to innovative leadership in the field.

PURPOSE AND APPLICATION OF THE CASC

The *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practice (CASC)* serves as a comprehensive framework to support the development, implementation, and sustainability of high-quality school counseling programs. It defines the scope of practice for school counselors and addresses the longstanding challenge of role confusion by establishing a shared understanding of effective practice at each stage of professional growth.

The CASC delineates the breadth of knowledge and skills required for school counselors in meeting the diverse and evolving needs of students, while also supporting reflective practice and ongoing professional learning. It provides a framework for formative assessment grounded in standards, criteria, and evidence, enabling school counselors to set short- and long-term professional goals and to track growth across the span of their careers.

In practice, the CASC can inform job descriptions, guide performance evaluations, and shape professional development plans. It also offers credentialing programs and district leaders a tool to better align fieldwork, supervision, and mentoring with evolving professional expectations. By centering the unique contributions of school counselors and fostering their continuous development, the CASC advances systems of equity, wellness, and student success throughout California schools.

FORMAT AND FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR-PART CASCP CONTINUUM

The *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practice (CASCP)* extends the framework of the California Standards for the School Counseling Profession (CSSCP) by providing greater specificity and practical application. While the CSSCP defines six standards and nineteen elements, the CASCP translates these into developmental progressions that illustrate increasingly advanced levels of school counseling practice.

Each element is presented in a consistent two-page format: the left page introduces the standard element with CSSCP indicators and a brief narrative, while the facing page depicts the developmental continuum. This structure highlights observable practices that deepen over time in complexity, skill, and systemic influence. Although these practices are comprehensive, they are not intended to capture every possible behavior; instead, they provide a clear framework for understanding professional growth.

The CASCP is designed to reflect the evolving expertise of school counselors, from those beginning their careers to those leading innovation in the field. Grounded in the CSSCP, the framework identifies four developmental levels: **Emerging, Applying, Integrative, and Innovative**. Each level describes the progression of knowledge, practice, and impact. These levels illustrate the dynamic and developmental nature of the profession, recognizing that growth is shaped by experience, mentorship, context, and reflection. Each level serves as a guidepost for practice, helping school counselors continuously expand their capacity to support all students academically, socially-emotionally, and in preparing for postsecondary success.

School counselors whose practice is emerging have the foundational knowledge and basic competencies needed to begin supporting students effectively. At this level, counselors understand key concepts, frameworks, and responsibilities associated with the profession. They are developing awareness of school policies, counseling standards, and student needs. They are often focused on compliance-based tasks or introductory experiences. Emerging counselors typically engage in observation, begin contributing to teams, and carry out essential responsibilities with supervision or guidance. They are also forming their professional identity and becoming familiar with the broader ecosystem of education and student support.

School counselors whose practice is applying move beyond foundational understanding and begin to implement what they've learned in meaningful, student-centered ways. They are increasingly confident in their skills and begin tailoring interventions to meet individual and group needs. Counselors at this level engage more actively in collaboration with staff, families, and community partners. They begin using data to inform practice, deliver more targeted services across tiers, and build intentional partnerships to support student outcomes. Their work begins to reflect strategic alignment with school goals, equity initiatives, and district priorities. As they apply their learning, these counselors grow in autonomy and influence.

School counselors whose practice is integrative demonstrate fluency in their roles and responsibilities. They lead through collaboration, data use, and systemic thinking. These counselors coordinate and align their programs with schoolwide systems, such as MTSS. They participate in the design and refinement of interventions, professional learning, and policy implementation. They serve as thought partners to administrators and colleagues and use data to track student outcomes and continuously improve practices. At this level, counselors are deeply invested in advancing equity, designing services that are culturally responsive and trauma-informed, and helping their schools eliminate systemic barriers to student success.

School counselors whose practice is innovative exemplify leadership and strategic influence. They not only refine and elevate existing practices but also design and lead innovative approaches that shift schoolwide culture and systems. These counselors contribute to policy development, lead district- or region-wide initiatives, and mentor others within the profession. They build coalitions, secure resources, and advocate for structural changes that promote equity, safety, and opportunity for all students, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds. Innovative counselors serve as role models within and beyond their school communities, advancing the profession through research-informed practice, advocacy, and systemic reform.

Summary: The CASCP articulates the professional trajectory of school counselors through descriptions that illustrate the progression of knowledge, task complexity, and collaborative engagement. This development is characterized by a shift from reactive to proactive approaches, from incidental actions to intentional strategic planning, and from basic implementation to advanced, sophisticated practice. Recognizing the wide variation in school site contexts, spanning small rural districts, large urban systems, and elementary through alternative settings, the CASCP employs flexible language to ensure broad applicability. This design maintains clarity regarding professional expectations while honoring the diverse conditions in which school counselors serve, ultimately underscoring the full potential of the profession.

STANDARD 1 | PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT

Emphasizes leadership. continuous professional growth and commitment to evolving student needs

Standard One highlights how professional school counselors are not just practitioners but *leaders, advocates, ethical decision-makers, lifelong learners*, and culturally responsive educators. It defines a dynamic and evolving practice rooted in continuous growth and accountability. Within this standard, school counselors operate through four interconnected elements: leadership, ethical practice, professional development, and cultural responsiveness.

ELEMENT 1A: LEADERSHIP - Effective school counselors emphasize leadership in the creation of comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors exhibit leadership qualities through collaboration, advocacy, utilizing measurable student outcomes, and a dedication to social justice and equity.

Example Indicators of Practice:

1A-1: Develop action plans to yield measurable student outcomes that demonstrate intentionality within the scope of services delivered to all students.

1A-2: Promote meaningful change within school communities by strategizing on programmatic needs and gaps in service delivery, and by inspiring solution-focused transformations that benefit students, teachers, administrators, caregivers, and district leaders.

1A-3: Communicate the appropriate roles, responsibilities, and duties related to the school counseling profession with educational partners, including, but not limited to, students, teachers, administrators, district leaders, board members, families, caregivers, and community partners.

1A-4: Model for students and staff, the importance of mutual respect and embracing the social, cultural, and linguistic diversities of the school community.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
1 Professional School Counselor Development	ELEMENT 1A: LEADERSHIP - Effective school counselors emphasize leadership in the creation of comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors exhibit leadership qualities through collaboration, advocacy, utilizing measurable student outcomes, and a dedication to social justice and equity.	Emerging school counselors demonstrate foundational knowledge in developing comprehensive school counseling programs. They create an awareness of school-specific needs. They align counseling services to student needs. They perform fundamental tasks while becoming familiar with best practices, data-informed decision-making grounded in measurable student outcomes that drive continuous improvement and support equitable student success.	Applying school counselors exhibit greater responsibility for planning and delivering their school counseling program. They identify and address social justice and equity needs, use data to inform services, and implement research-informed strategies aligned with student needs. They link program goals to measurable outcomes that demonstrate student growth and program impact, showing increasing independence in school leadership.	Integrative school counselors design, implement, and lead ongoing improvements of the school counseling program, aligning services with data-driven student needs. They refine practices, implement systems, and engage in learning communities that support student learning and promote equity and inclusion. Their collaborative leadership advances social justice and student achievement, fostering shared commitment and collective action within the school.	Innovative school counselors design and lead data-driven, transformative programs. They implement equity-focused strategies to tackle systemic challenges and broaden access to educational opportunities, using measurable student outcomes to evaluate effectiveness. They collaborate with educators, families, and community leaders to drive improvement of student supports. They participate in conversations around policy, funding, and public awareness of their school counseling program.

STANDARD 1 | PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT
Emphasizes leadership, continuous professional growth and commitment to evolving student needs

ELEMENT 1B: REFLECTIVE & ETHICAL PRACTICE - Effective school counselors emphasize the importance of upholding ethical mandates and developing a critical reflective practice.

Example Indicators of Practice:

1B-1: Operate consistently within the parameters of federal, state, and local laws, policies, regulations, and statutory requirements.

1B-2: Follow mandated reporting protocols.

1B-3: Actively integrate ethical practices into their daily work as outlined by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).
Indicator.

1B-4: Assess and develop a plan for areas of professional growth through self-reflective practice.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
1 Professional School Counselor Development	ELEMENT 1B: REFLECTIVE & ETHICAL PRACTICE - Effective school counselors emphasize the importance of upholding ethical mandates and developing a critical reflective practice.	Emerging school counselors begin by understanding professional ethical standards, including ASCA guidelines and relevant laws. They recognize the importance of ethical reflection in working with all students. They start prioritizing ethics and reflection in their decisions and support practices.	Applying school counselors apply ASCA's decision-making model and state laws in their professional practice. They engage in professional dialogue to align with professional ethical standards, including ASCA guidelines and relevant laws.	Integrative school counselors exemplify ethical competence and intentionally model self-reflection in decision-making. They develop and apply comprehensive ethical strategies aligned with ASCA ethical standards, state law, best practices, and policies. Collaboration with colleagues and supervisors guides their student-centered responses to ethical challenges. They regularly evaluate their professional growth and create action plans for ongoing improvement grounded in ethical accountability.	Innovative school counselors lead with ethical clarity and advanced reflective insight. They apply ASCA ethical standards, state laws, best practices, and policies while creating innovative strategies to address emerging ethical challenges. They mentor others in ethical reflection and cultivate a culture of professional accountability.

STANDARD 1 | PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT
Emphasizes leadership, continuous professional growth and commitment to evolving student needs

ELEMENT 1C: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors continuously refine their skills, expand their knowledge base, and enhance their effectiveness in supporting the academic, personal, and social growth of their students through ongoing professional development.

Example Indicators of Practice:

1C-1: Stay current on innovations in the field of school counseling and education by reviewing relevant literature, staying up to date with research, and being informed on best practices.

1C-2: Participate in professional learning activities, such as workshops, seminars, trainings, and conferences, to enhance their skills and knowledge with the intent of expanding their expertise and staying current within professional practices.

1C-3: Belong to state and national professional associations and participate in professional leadership to support the advancement of the profession.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
1 Professional School Counselor Development	ELEMENT 1C: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors continuously refine their skills, expand their knowledge base, and enhance their effectiveness in supporting the academic, personal, and social growth of their students through ongoing professional development.	Emerging school counselors seek professional development opportunities and engage in initial training, often compliance-based or skill-focused for immediate duties. Their participation is beginning to build capacity to support students in their school context. The counselor will be a member of one or more professional organizations.	Applying school counselors exhibit intentionality in the selection of professional development opportunities to specific growth areas that align with broader counseling goals. They apply newly acquired skills in practice and incorporate past experiences to guide learning choices. They incorporate input from district, staff, families, and students to ensure training meets student needs and school-wide objectives, reflecting a strategic, lifelong learning mindset.	Integrative school counselors exemplify a sustained, strategic commitment to professional growth. They foster collaborative learning through shared inquiry and reflection, embedding their growth in the continuous improvement of the entire school counseling program.	Innovative school counselors are strategic in linking their ongoing learning to effective practices and improved student outcomes. They develop and lead data-informed professional learning strategies that address complex challenges and elevate counseling effectiveness. By promoting curiosity, growth, and research-informed practice, they elevate school counseling program impact and advance the profession.

STANDARD 1 | PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT

Emphasizes leadership, continuous professional growth and commitment to evolving student needs

ELEMENT 1D: CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING - Effective school counselors recognize and leverage the cultural assets and resources of students of diverse backgrounds, rejecting biased or stereotypical materials and enhancing the curriculum to embrace their heritage.

Example Indicators of Practice:

1D-1: Address individual assumptions, values, and beliefs to support students' diverse academic, linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, physical, and economic strengths and requirements.

1D-2: Integrate students' diverse cultural backgrounds and life experiences into school counseling practices.

1D-3: Identify and address systemic bias within a school system.

1D-4: Lead comprehensive and culturally sustaining school counseling programs.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
1 Professional School Counselor Development	ELEMENT 1D: CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING - Effective school counselors recognize and leverage the cultural assets and resources of students of diverse backgrounds, rejecting biased or stereotypical materials and enhancing the curriculum to embrace their heritage.	Emerging school counselors demonstrate a foundational understanding of cultural responsiveness and its role in helping all students. They recognize the need to integrate culturally and linguistically responsive strategies, critically evaluate curriculum for bias, and focus on awareness and prevention, while developing skills for more strategic practices that address the needs of all students.	Applying school counselors utilize culturally responsive strategies and demonstrate growing leadership and confidence in addressing and supporting students' diverse strengths and needs. They design and implement programs and services that promote cultural affirmation and address bias, while collaborating with educators and families to advance culturally responsive practices schoolwide.	Integrative school counselors advance comprehensive, collaborative efforts to promote cultural responsiveness by supporting each student's background and experiences. They support staff through consultation, coaching, and professional development, address systemic bias, align initiatives with schoolwide goals, and engage the entire school community to create environments that amplify student voice and achievement.	Innovative school counselors demonstrate expertise in culturally and linguistically responsive practices, designing and leading innovative, diverse strategies that produce measurable outcomes for all students. They nurture partnerships within and beyond the school, collaborating with staff, families, and leaders to embed cultural responsiveness into systems and structures. Their leadership fosters a school culture that adapts to meet all students' needs.

STANDARD 2 | SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH**Address students' emotional well-being | Provides necessary support to ensure a conducive learning environment**

Standard Two establishes the school counselor's role as central to the promotion, identification, and treatment of student mental and behavioral health. It emphasizes that mental well-being is a factor for academic success, and that school counselors play a vital, non-clinical role in prevention, early intervention, treatment, and care coordination. Working within a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors address both the systemic and individualized needs of students by using developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and data-informed approaches.

ELEMENT 2A: SCHOOL-WIDE MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROMOTION - Effective school counselors focus on preventive care rather than reactive care. Activities associated with this standard include preventing academic and/or social problems by building a healthy learning environment for students. This includes building systems and addressing policies where mental and behavioral health are valued and prioritized, and by employing inclusive and culturally responsive strategies that reduce stigma and remove systemic barriers.

Example Indicators of Practice:

2A-1: Collaborate within educational systems to foster a robust, welcoming, and encouraging school environment by employing diverse delivery models and methods such as classroom education, trauma-informed practices, restorative approaches, and culturally responsive techniques.

2A-2: Use various mental and behavioral health assessments to understand students' needs, analyze schoolwide data, set up screening procedures, and keep a record of resources for addressing these needs. Indicator

2A-3: Facilitate culturally responsive and inclusive mental and behavioral health training and educational programs for students, staff, and parents, including, but not limited to, early warning sign recognition, trauma-informed care, and restorative practices.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
2 School-Based Mental Health	ELEMENT 2A: SCHOOL-WIDE MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROMOTION - Effective school counselors focus on preventive care rather than reactive. Activities associated with this standard include preventing academic and/or social problems by building a healthy learning environment for students. This includes building systems of support and addressing policies where mental and behavioral health are valued and prioritized by employing inclusive and culturally responsive strategies that reduce stigma and remove systemic barriers.	Emerging school counselors familiarize themselves with the foundational policies and frameworks related to mental and behavioral health at the school, district, state, and federal levels. At Tier 1, they can identify mental health promotion strategies and the various educational partners involved in creating a supportive mental health infrastructure. They can describe the systems and resources currently in place to support student wellness. They engage in schoolwide prevention efforts.	Applying school counselors actively support schoolwide mental health awareness by engaging in policy discussions and identifying systemic gaps. They integrate research-informed schoolwide practices and assess the impact of culturally responsive interventions on school climate and student wellness. They develop action plans for prevention services and seek out resources and partnerships that reduce stigma and promote mental health awareness.	Integrative school counselors lead the design and delivery of data-driven, schoolwide initiatives that promote the mental and behavioral health of both students and staff. They collaborate with administrators, staff, and other partners to design responsive systems, advocate for a positive school climate, and adapt interventions to support evolving student needs. They educate school community partners on mental health best practices as central to schoolwide wellness initiatives.	Innovative school counselors lead in advancing student mental health, wellness, and behavioral well-being by designing and implementing research-informed prevention strategies. They build school community capacity by facilitating professional learning on wellness and cultural responsiveness. Their leadership drives initiatives that reduce stigma, promote positive behavior, and embed mental health in school culture. Through partnerships and advocacy, they ensure student wellness is prioritized in policy and practice.

STANDARD 2 | SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH

Address students' emotional well-being | Provides necessary support to ensure a conducive learning environment

ELEMENT 2B: COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR IDENTIFIED STUDENTS - Effective school counselors play a vital role in early identification of students or subgroups who display early signs and symptoms of mental health problems through specialized support services.

Example Indicators of Practice:

2B-1: Design and monitor systems for early identification of students needing additional mental health support.

2B-2: Provide targeted interventions that are delivered through individual and group counseling services.

2B-3: Facilitate peer mentoring programs to enhance social support on campus.

2B-4: Provide immediate support to students, staff, and families during times of crisis.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
2 School-Based Mental Health	ELEMENT 2B: COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR IDENTIFIED STUDENTS - Effective school counselors play a vital role in early identification of students or groups who display early signs and symptoms of mental health problems through specialized support services.	Emerging school counselors develop identification mechanisms to identify students' needs and provide appropriate interventions. They recognize signs in students of emerging mental health concerns and provide treatment in the form of short-term individual and group counseling services. They consult, collaborate, and respond to critical incidents and crises.	Applying school counselors offer short-term treatment services for students utilizing different proven modalities that are seen as effective in school settings (i.e., Motivational Interviewing, Solution-Focused Counseling) and proactively design mental health service frameworks for students with identified needs. They implement individualized intervention plans and collaborate with families, teachers, and staff to provide coordinated support. As their practice evolves, their services become more structured and strategically integrated into the school's overall support system.	Integrative school counselors lead coordinated, data-driven efforts to provide short-term mental health treatment services. Collaborating with educators, administrators, and mental health professionals, they deliver counseling via small groups, individual sessions, and peer support grounded in research. They support early identification by working with school teams to develop effective systems, respond with targeted interventions, and create structured follow-up plans to ensure student well-being, academic progress, and sustainable support.	Innovative school counselors facilitate partnerships with school-based and community-based mental health professionals to connect students with tiered levels of support. They strategically oversee comprehensive mental and behavioral health treatment services within schools. Using data, they evaluate and refine interventions to improve outcomes. They proactively establish and update crisis response protocols and design accessible systems prioritizing early intervention, holistic care, and continuous support for students with critical mental health needs.

STANDARD 2 | SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH

Address students' emotional well-being | Provides necessary support to ensure a conducive learning environment

ELEMENT 2C: ADDRESSING ACUTE AND CHRONIC MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS - Effective school counselors are at the intersection of education with intensive support systems to address acute and chronic mental health needs of students. This includes conducting suicide assessments and working as a conduit for therapeutic treatment of students.

Example Indicators of Practice:

2C-1: Participate in interdisciplinary teams to provide care coordination, including identifying, referring, monitoring, and evaluating progress.

2C-2: Catalog a list of internal and external resources to meet the diverse mental and behavioral health needs of all students and families.

2C-3: Monitor and document student progress within an Individual Service Plan, which could also include Targeted Case Management (TCM) service.

2C-4: Work as service providers within reimbursable billing structures such as MediCal, Manage Care, or other medical billing programs.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
<p>2</p> <p>School-Based Mental Health</p>	<p>ELEMENT 2C: ADDRESSING ACUTE AND CHRONIC MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS -</p> <p>Effective school counselors are at the intersection of education with intensive support systems to address acute and chronic mental health needs of students. This includes conducting suicide assessments and working as a conduit for therapeutic treatment of students.</p>	<p>Emerging school counselors demonstrate foundational competence in coordinating appropriate supports for acute and chronic mental health needs. They utilize industry-standard screening tools to provide suicide and risk assessments. They adopt a holistic approach by offering initial counseling and facilitating referrals. They develop awareness and apply basic procedures to respond to mental health needs.</p>	<p>Applying school counselors respond to acute and chronic mental health needs by delivering timely and short-term treatment services. They conduct risk and suicide assessments using validated tools. They provide supports aligned with the severity of need and follow district protocols, such as notifying caregivers, contacting crisis response teams, and facilitating referrals to mental health support services. They provide ongoing case management, student progress monitoring, and school-family-student collaboration to support reentry and continuity of care following mental health crises.</p>	<p>Integrative school counselors utilize validated tools to assess risk and respond to acute and chronic mental health needs. As key members of interdisciplinary teams, they collaborate with administrators and other school and community-based mental health partners to provide an intervention and monitoring plan that addresses immediate and long-term student and family needs.</p>	<p>Innovative school counselors lead the development, evaluation, and improvement of schoolwide and/or districtwide systems supporting students with acute and chronic mental health needs. They use data to assess intervention effectiveness and inform systemic improvements. They engage in crisis debriefs and team evaluations to improve procedures and outcomes. They coordinate care with school and community-based mental health professionals, ensuring continuity and a strong support infrastructure for students with significant mental health challenges.</p>

STANDARD 3 | SCHOOL COUNSELING DOMAINS**Academic, Postsecondary, and Social Emotional Development | Fostering a balanced and holistic approach to student development**

Standard Three reflects the heart of school counseling practice, supporting all students through a developmentally appropriate approach to academic success, postsecondary readiness, and social-emotional well-being. School counselors implement tiered, standards-aligned strategies that foster student agency and ensure all students are prepared for lifelong success. This work is grounded in the school counselor's unique role in integrating support across these three domains: academic, postsecondary, and social-emotional development.

ELEMENT 3A: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors foster academic excellence and success for all students by considering individual strengths, needs, and challenges. School counselors collaborate with various educational partners to provide appropriate support, eliminate barriers, and guide students on their educational pathways, contributing to a positive and empowering learning experience for all students within the school community.

Example Indicators of Practice:

3A-1: Collaborate with students to develop academic plans and equitably address academic needs by implementing an ongoing review system that includes, but is not limited to, credit recovery, tutoring, skill-based interventions toward meeting promotion and graduation requirements. Indicator

3A-2: Work with students, teachers, parents, caregivers, and community members to ensure student academic achievement.

3A-3: Provide transitional services between pivotal grade levels that communicate academic expectations and engage students and families in academic planning to meet requirements for continued success.

3A-4: Promote rigorous coursework aligned with grade-level expectations, state and national standards, and college and career pathways.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
3 School Counseling Domains: Academic, Postsecondary, and Social Emotional Development	ELEMENT 3A: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors foster academic excellence and success for all students by considering individual strengths, needs, and challenges. School counselors collaborate with various educational partners to provide appropriate support, eliminate barriers, and guide students on their educational pathways, contributing to a positive and empowering learning experience for all students within the school community.	Emerging school counselors demonstrate foundational understanding school counseling supports for academic achievement across the P–12 continuum. They identify key academic supports appropriate to their setting—such as personalized planning, intervention services, enrichment opportunities, and promotion or graduation requirements. They identify students’ strengths and challenges to address academic needs and promote access to learning.	Applying school counselors analyze data to identify student needs, design and implement developmentally appropriate services that promote equity and access to rigorous learning opportunities. They integrate academic skills into direct services and support, applying a tiered approach to tailor interventions. They collaborate, consult, and participate in student support teams (e.g., IEP, 504, SST) with educators, administrators, and families to develop personalized academic plans that promote achievement and access.	Integrative school counselors develop proactive systems that connect academic achievement with postsecondary success across the P–12 continuum. They partner with educators and leaders to improve systems that advance student achievement. They set measurable goals, evaluate effectiveness, and remove barriers to ensure equitable access. Collaborating with teachers, families, and staff, they analyze data to guide decisions that enhance student engagement, readiness, and lifelong learning.	Innovative school counselors lead, design, and refine developmentally appropriate, data-driven academic programs that are vertically aligned, scaffolded, and tiered within a student-centered, outcome-focused system. They anticipate emerging needs and influence schoolwide policies and initiatives to elevate practices that enhance academic achievement.

STANDARD 3 | SCHOOL COUNSELING DOMAINS

Academic, Postsecondary, and Social Emotional Development | Fostering a balanced and holistic approach to student development

ELEMENT 3B: POSTSECONDARY DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors work within a cradle-to-career support system. In a scope and sequence frame, they educate students at all grade levels and prepare students to access various postsecondary options and provide comprehensive information regarding career pathways and financial aid to support informed decision-making. Additionally, they educate students and caregivers on the sequential steps needed to prepare for admission into postsecondary institutions and workforce opportunities.

Example Indicators of Practice:

3B-1: Create a robust, equitable, and inclusive preschool to professional career and college-going system that is differentiated to the diverse needs and interests of all students, including leveraging technology and engaging business community partnerships.

3B-2: Provide personalized counseling for students, accounting for their intellectual strengths, unique aspirations and interests, advising students about postsecondary eligibility criteria and options available.

3B-3: Inform students and families about the necessary steps to apply for postsecondary and work-based learning opportunities. This includes providing guidance on academic requirements such as the A-G and college admission requirements, financial aid application processes, and the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application.

3B-4: Provide learning opportunities through classroom instruction on topics related to career development, college, and all postsecondary options, as well as workplace and employability skills. These lessons and workshops cover essential topics around employability.

3B-5 Work within college and career readiness systems to administer career inventories that help both students and families gain a deeper understanding of the students' career and personal interests and skills.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
3 School Counseling Domains: Academic, Postsecondary, and Social Emotional Development	ELEMENT 3B: POSTSECONDARY DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors work within a cradle-to-career support system. In a scope and sequence frame, they educate students at all grade levels and prepare students to access various postsecondary options and provide comprehensive information regarding career pathways and financial aid to support informed decision making. They educate students and caregivers on the sequential steps needed to prepare for admission into postsecondary institutions and workforce opportunities.	Emerging school counselors identify and analyze components of the cradle-to-career support system across the P–12 continuum, including the statewide indicators of college and career readiness. They describe developmentally appropriate steps in college, career, and workforce readiness, and provide foundational support with admissions, career exploration, and local postsecondary opportunities. They begin networking with community partners to support students' current and future aspirations. They demonstrate initial capacity to support readiness efforts aligned with student individual and developmental needs.	Applying school counselors integrate college and career education and workforce preparation into developmentally appropriate classroom lessons, small groups, individual counseling, and family engagement across the P–12 continuum. They support students and their families through key steps for postsecondary access. Their expanding knowledge of the cradle-to-career system is demonstrated through purposeful interactions, activities, and contributions to students' long-term academic, career, and life planning.	Integrative school counselors analyze cradle-to-career data to guide individualized, student-centered postsecondary planning and support. They design a developmentally appropriate school counseling curriculum to align with students' interests and skills, preparing all learners for postsecondary opportunities. Through communication with students and families, they promote awareness of key opportunities for college and career exploration. Their approach is proactive, equity-driven, and integrated into academic and career skill-building across the P–12 continuum.	Innovative school counselors develop and lead comprehensive, vertically aligned, and tiered postsecondary curriculum incorporating cradle-to-career data to assess needs, guide services, and ensure smooth grade-level transitions. They design and evaluate developmentally appropriate lessons that reflect diverse aspirations, build confidence, and expand access to college and career pathways. Through collaboration with families, staff, and community partners, they provide supports for all students. Their work advances a schoolwide culture of equity, lifelong learning, and postsecondary success.

STANDARD 3 | SCHOOL COUNSELING DOMAINS

Academic, Postsecondary, and Social Emotional Development | Fostering a balanced and holistic approach to student development

ELEMENT 3C: TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors provide grade-level appropriate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons, fostering emotional intelligence and well-being in students. This comprehensive approach integrates SEL principles into a schoolwide skill-building system, aligned with grade-level standards and SEL benchmarks, ensuring a positive and lasting impact on students' lives both inside and outside the school environment.

Example Indicators of Practice:

3C-1: Develop and implement grade-level appropriate SEL lessons integrated into the instructional program that foster emotional intelligence and well-being in students.

3C-2: Provide self-management and relationship skills to help students understand the impact of their actions on themselves and others as a guide to navigating challenging situations and promoting their emotional growth.

3C-3: Prepare and disseminate resources and training for school staff members, parents, and caregivers on SEL strategies.

3C-4: Develop comprehensive schoolwide systems that incorporate SEL principles aligned with grade-level standards and SEL benchmarks. These systems are integrated into various aspects of the school, including classroom instruction, school culture, and extracurricular activities.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
3 School Counseling Domains: Academic, Postsecondary, and Social Emotional Development	ELEMENT 3C: TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Effective school counselors provide grade-level appropriate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons, fostering emotional intelligence and well-being in students. This comprehensive approach integrates SEL principles into a schoolwide skill-building system, aligned with grade-level standards and SEL benchmarks, ensuring a positive and lasting impact on students' lives both inside and outside the school environment.	Emerging school counselors demonstrate a foundational understanding of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and its role in student development. They identify schoolwide SEL needs and recognize the importance of aligning instruction with grade-level standards and benchmarks. They begin delivering SEL activities and contribute to the early implementation of a cohesive, schoolwide SEL approach.	Applying school counselors design and deliver SEL tailored to students' developmental needs across classrooms, groups, and individual sessions. They assess SEL learning outcomes and adapt strategies based on student needs and feedback. Their growing skill in integrating SEL into schoolwide frameworks supports students' emotional awareness, self-regulation, and social competence. They use formative and summative assessments to measure learning outcomes.	Integrative school counselors embed social-emotional learning (SEL) into the broader educational experience, aligning it with schoolwide goals and student needs. They integrate current research-informed strategies to refine SEL instruction and support schoolwide implementation. They select curricula that reflect developmental appropriateness, school priorities and effectiveness. They use learning outcomes to refine and enhance instruction.	Innovative school counselors utilize research-informed curriculum to foster inter- and intra-personal relationships. They design developmentally appropriate SEL instruction and use data to continuously improve delivery and measure schoolwide impact, demonstrating a positive shift in school climate and student well-being metrics. They crosswalk SEL interventions within academic content areas and collaborate with teachers to co-develop approaches to ensure that SEL is implemented across all classrooms, grade levels, and schoolwide systems.

STANDARD 4 | MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Implements a tiered approach to intervention and assistance to address the diverse needs of students through a Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Standard Four emphasizes the critical role of school counselors in implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). MTSS is a comprehensive framework that addresses students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs across a continuum of support: from universal (Tier 1) to targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) interventions. School counselors apply this model to ensure that each student receives the appropriate level of support when it is needed. Grounded in collaboration, equity, and data-informed decision-making, school counselors serve as key leaders in designing and sustaining schoolwide systems of care.

ELEMENT 4A: CA MTSS FRAMEWORK - Effective school counselors design and deliver programs and services aligned with the California MTSS framework.

Example Indicators of Practice:

4A-1: Design and deliver Tier 1 universal interventions in the form of a whole child approach through universal screening, classroom instruction, schoolwide programming, and parent education.

4A-2: Provide Tier 2 interventions, including small group and individual counseling, consultation and collaboration with school personnel, families, and community partners. Indicator

4A-3: Support Tier 3 services through individual counseling, suicide risk and threat assessments, safety and reentry plans, brief behavior support plans, intensive progress monitoring, consultation, collaboration, and facilitation of referrals.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
<p>4</p> <p>Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</p>	<p>ELEMENT 4A: CA MTSS FRAMEWORK - Effective school counselors design and deliver programs and services aligned with the California MTSS framework.</p>	<p>Emerging school counselors demonstrate foundational proficiency with the California MTSS Framework and understand the counselor's role in delivering tiered supports. They differentiate between Tier 1 (Universal), Tier 2 (Supplemental), and Tier 3 (Intensified) interventions and are developing the skills to match students to services across tiers.</p>	<p>Applying school counselors proactively collaborate with school teams to plan and deliver instruction and interventions across all three MTSS tiers. They work with educators and specialists to support student needs in academics, behavior, mental health, and postsecondary readiness. They analyze student data to monitor progress and adjust services to better align with evolving student needs within the MTSS framework.</p>	<p>Integrative school counselors design, coordinate, and refine services across Tiers 1, 2, and 3—addressing academic, behavioral, social-emotional, mental health, and postsecondary domains. Their school counseling services are embedded within schoolwide MTSS structures, informed by data, and aligned with school improvement goals. They collaborate across teams and use outcome data to demonstrate impact on student success.</p>	<p>Innovative school counselors apply advanced expertise to design, implement, and evaluate MTSS-aligned school counseling services. They participate in school-based decision-making teams, using data to identify systemic barriers and address student needs across all tiers. They lead culturally responsive, equitable, and adaptive practices that ensure access to the school counseling program. They lead within integrated systems that support whole-child development and drive measurable student success.</p>

STANDARD 4 | MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Implements a tiered approach to intervention and assistance to address the diverse needs of students through a Multi-Tiered System of Support.

ELEMENT 4B: DATA INFORMED DECISION MAKING - Effective school counselors utilize data to inform decision-making and drive improvements in student outcomes.

Example Indicators of Practice:

4B-1: Collaborate with the MTSS team to collect, disaggregate, and analyze school-wide data (e.g., attendance, discipline, etc.) to identify systemic barriers and equity gaps.

4B-2: Use data to identify and improve student outcomes, including setting measurable goals and monitoring the impact of implementation.

4B-3: Employ various data sources, encompassing screening and progress monitoring information, to guide instructional choices and counseling interventions and determine transitions within the multi-level prevention framework.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
<p>4</p> <p>Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</p>	<p>ELEMENT 4B:</p> <p>DATA INFORMED DECISION MAKING -</p> <p>Effective school counselors utilize data to inform decision-making and drive improvements in student outcomes.</p>	<p>Emerging school counselors develop a data-informed mindset by identifying key data sources at the school, such as the Single Plan for Student Achievement, the California Dashboard, and the Local Control and Accountability Plan. Counselors explore how to use data to inform decisions and connect services to student outcomes.</p>	<p>Applying school counselors take steps to use data in aligning services with school and district priorities. They identify relevant metrics to target student groups for intervention, set outcome goals tied to equity and school improvement. Their efforts are aimed at reducing achievement gaps and improving wellness outcomes for identified students.</p>	<p>Integrative school counselors are able to disaggregate data from multiple sources to guide decisions and drive student outcomes. They design, implement, and evaluate school counseling interventions across all MTSS tiers based on defined goals. Using ongoing data analysis, they refine strategies, close equity gaps, and reach students who are most in need, while improving learning conditions schoolwide.</p>	<p>Innovative school counselors leverage data to enhance support systems, promote student achievement, and impact student-centered school policies. They ensure school counseling services effectively meet the needs of all students. They lead teams in data analysis, using student-centered insights to drive improvement and foster systemic change.</p>

STANDARD 4 | MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Implements a tiered approach to intervention and assistance to address the diverse needs of students through a Multi-Tiered System of Support.

ELEMENT 4C: SYSTEMS - Effective school counselors foster a school-wide approach aimed at enhancing and refining MTSS to better meet the needs of all students through establishing collaborative partnerships.

Example Indicators of Practice:

4C-1: Work in conjunction with educational partners to address challenges specific to MTSS implementation, such as building consensus that identifies and removes barriers that hinder the development of an effective multitiered system during the implementation process.

4C-2: Evaluate MTSS supports to ensure they are strengths-based, culturally responsive, and designed for equitable access and engagement for every student.

4C-3: gather input from community partners, including staff, families, and the community, to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to MTSS decision-making.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
<p>4</p> <p>Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</p>	<p>ELEMENT 4C: SYSTEMS - Effective school counselors foster a school-wide approach aimed at enhancing and refining MTSS to better meet the needs of all students through establishing collaborative partnerships.</p>	<p>Emerging school counselors build relationships with key educational partners. They demonstrate an understanding of how systems like MTSS, advisory councils, and community support influence student outcomes.</p>	<p>Applying school counselors build and strengthen their school's MTSS by engaging diverse voices—including students, caregivers, and community partners—to enhance interventions provided to students. They use this feedback to refine services and ensure responsiveness to all students' needs. They develop collaborative systems with educators and families to inform student-centered decision-making within MTSS.</p>	<p>Integrative school counselors lead systemic improvements by formally engaging school and community partners to plan, implement, and refine data-driven MTSS frameworks. They collaborate with administrators to align efforts with school goals within the scope of school counseling. They ensure that tiered interventions are comprehensive, equitable, and effective in improving outcomes for all students.</p>	<p>Innovative school counselors serve as system-level change agents, mobilizing school and community partnerships to sustain an effective and responsive MTSS framework which meets the needs of all students. They lead efforts to integrate systemic thinking into school culture by embedding collaborative decision-making into MTSS structures. They create systems for feedback loops and collaboration when addressing complex challenges with innovative student-centered solutions.</p>

STANDARD 5 | INDIRECT SERVICES:

Coordination, Collaboration, Consultation, & Supervision | Focuses on the collaborative efforts of coordination, consultation, and supervision to establish a nurturing and collaborative ecosystem that supports student success through indirect services.

Standard Five emphasizes the critical, though often less visible, work of school counselors: fostering the conditions that make student success possible through indirect services. Rather than working exclusively one-on-one with students, school counselors also influence outcomes by coordinating resources, facilitating communication with stakeholders, and supervising other service providers. These indirect services are central to a comprehensive school counseling program and are grounded in ethical practice, professional standards, and California law.

ELEMENT 5A: COORDINATION & COLLABORATION - Effective school counselors emphasize working together with various partners within the school and the broader community to enhance school-based services.

Example Indicators of Practice:

5A-1: Coordinate school and community resources to meet the needs of students and families.

5A-2: Actively coordinate and participate in interdisciplinary teams, including union representation, school site council, and other advisory committees.

5A-3: Coordinate school counseling professional learning communities (PLCs) to facilitate the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs and services.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
5 Indirect Services: Coordination, Collaboration, Consultation, & Supervision	ELEMENT 5A: COORDINATION & COLLABORATION - Effective school counselors emphasize working together with various partners within the school and the broader community to enhance school-based services.	Emerging school counselors begin to identify school and community resources available to assist them in supporting students and families. They participate in interdisciplinary meetings and begin understanding effective collaboration. They also participate in grade-level or subject-specific Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to explore how these teams contribute to a broader system of student support.	Applying school counselors participate on school and community-based teams, contributing ideas and feedback in collaborative meetings. They coordinate with community resources to enhance access to student services and align support systems to reduce duplication, ensure access, and enhance service delivery. In PLCs, they begin using student data to align academic, postsecondary, and social-emotional services, strengthening their program through purposeful collaboration.	Integrative school counselors serve as contributors on interdisciplinary teams—including union representatives, site councils, and advisory committees—to align efforts across the school community. They facilitate school counseling PLCs, guiding colleagues in delivering data-informed services. Their leadership builds a cohesive support system that promotes academic success, emotional well-being, and equitable access through sustained collaboration with educational and community partners.	Innovative school counselors lead interdisciplinary teams, educational partners and community agencies to address complex student needs. They advocate for expanded resources, spearhead collaborative conversations, and lead training and education for staff, family, district, and community advisory groups to meet the needs of students and families. They lead PLC teams beyond the school site—driving systemic improvements in student outcomes and service delivery.

STANDARD 5 | INDIRECT SERVICES:

Coordination, Collaboration, Consultation, & Supervision | Focuses on the collaborative efforts of coordination, consultation, and supervision to establish a nurturing and collaborative ecosystem that supports student success through indirect services.

ELEMENT 5B: CONSULTATION - Effective school counselors engage with consultees (parent, teacher, administrator, etc.) with the primary objective of fostering positive change in students.

Example Indicators of Practice:

5B-1: Provide consultative support to teachers and other school staff to effectively address student-related issues and foster academic success.

5B-2: Offer consultative support to parents/caregivers, guiding them on matters about their child's academic, postsecondary, and social-emotional needs.

5B-3: Engage in consultations with community-based service providers, including state-licensed practitioners, to ensure effective communication regarding student progress. Indicator 5B-4: consulting with teachers, staff, and families in comprehending how issues are interconnected within broader systems.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
5 Indirect Services: Coordination, Collaboration, Consultation, & Supervision	ELEMENT 5B: CONSULTATION - Effective school counselors engage with consultees (parent, teacher, administrator, etc.) with the primary objective of fostering positive change in students.	Emerging school counselors embrace their developing role as collaborative consultants within the school community. They work with educators, families, mental health, postsecondary and community partners to address academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and postsecondary needs. Counselors recognize the importance of partnering with families, establishing clear communication, and developing their knowledge of current educational and community partners to support student success and family engagement.	Applying school counselors address student concerns by developing collaborative support plans with staff and families. They use best practices to aid families in supporting academic and social-emotional growth. They engage with educators, families, mental health, postsecondary and community partners. Counselors participate in multidisciplinary teams focused on student-centered planning.	Integrative school counselors implement systems that broaden consultation services to educators, families, mental health, postsecondary and community partners. They analyze complex, interconnected student issues—such as barriers to learning, social-emotional distress, or family-system challenges—and co-create sustainable solutions through consultation. They align support strategies, guide effective intervention planning, and drive measurable improvements in student success and well-being as a result of their consultation.	Innovative school counselors develop and lead formal consultation that enable educators, families, mental health, postsecondary and community partners to collaboratively address complex student needs. They lead parent education initiatives and advocate for families facing access or communication barriers. Through consultation, they drive systemic change, influence policy, and co-create transformative solutions that improve outcomes for students and families. They maintain deep expertise in resources to support the diverse school community.

STANDARD 5 | INDIRECT SERVICES:

Coordination, Collaboration, Consultation, & Supervision | Focuses on the collaborative efforts of coordination, consultation, and supervision to establish a nurturing and collaborative ecosystem that supports student success through indirect services.

ELEMENT 5C: SUPERVISION - Effective school counselors take on the responsibility of overseeing and guiding various professionals, agencies, volunteers, paraprofessionals, and pre-service school counselors who provide pupil personnel-related services within the school setting as required in law (80049.1(c)).

Example Indicators of Practice:

5C-1: Supervise school-based activities by community-based service providers who do not hold a valid Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential but are involved in delivering psychology and counseling services on school campuses.

5C-2: Oversee the activities of volunteers and paraprofessionals who are involved in delivering counseling and psychology-related support within the school setting.

5C-3: Maintain structured supervisory relationships with preservice school counselors, adhering to effective practices from literature and university fieldwork guidelines.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
5 Indirect Services: Coordination, Collaboration, Consultation, & Supervision	ELEMENT 5C: SUPERVISION - School counselors take on the responsibility of overseeing and guiding various professionals, agencies, volunteers, paraprofessionals and pre-service school counselors who provide pupil personnel related services within the school setting as required in law (80049.1(c)).	Emerging school counselors begin learning about their legal and professional responsibilities in supervising others, as outlined in California Ed Code 80049.1(c), California Ed Code 49600.	Applying school counselors supervise pupil support systems provided by educational partners, including volunteers, paraprofessionals, wellness coaches, graduate students, and licensed mental health professionals. They collaborate with school staff and external providers to ensure credentialed and non-credentialed professionals work cohesively to address student needs and maintain a supportive school environment.	Integrative school counselors oversee the integration of equity-focused pupil support systems to ensure the effective coordination of services. They provide structures for a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities within the school setting while upholding ethical, legal, and professional standards across providers. They implement supervision structures that include feedback tools, reflective protocols, and performance data to ensure quality, equity, and compliance.	Innovative school counselors proactively develop and orchestrate the coordinated supervision of pupil support systems that produce measurable positive student outcomes. They apply structured techniques such as goal-setting, reflective dialogue, analysis of relevant data, and performance feedback to continually improve the coordination of services to meet student needs. They align these services with schoolwide priorities and protocols to ensure a cohesive, collaborative, and ethical service delivery model that enhances student well-being and improves provider effectiveness.

STANDARD 6 | CREATING & MAINTAINING SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENT WELLBEING

Ensures that the school environment is inclusive, safe, and supportive for the overall well-being of students.

Standard Six recognizes the fundamental connection between student well-being and a positive learning environment. School counselors lead and support initiatives that promote emotional and physical safety, nurture inclusive school climates, and build student engagement, which are prerequisites for academic and personal growth. Their work in this area centers on proactive strategies that strengthen relationships, reduce barriers, and uphold dignity for every student.

ELEMENT 6A: SCHOOL CLIMATE - Effective school counselors foster a positive school climate promoting inclusivity, empathy, and respectful interactions among students and staff in order to reduce conflict.

Example Indicators of Practice:

6A-1: Assist students with examining their identities, personal values, biases, and assumptions while fostering understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and experiences.

6A-2: Create opportunities for students to learn communication, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution skills that help them achieve their goals and establish successful relationships.

6A-3: Engage in prevention programs and activities aimed at antibullying, anti-harassment, and violence prevention, while also facilitating peer mediation and conflict resolution.

6A-4: Collaborate with school leadership to monitor and evaluate attendance, discipline, and other pertinent data to improve overall school climate.

6A-5: Ensure that students from historically marginalized backgrounds, including those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic subgroups, English learners, youth in foster care, youth experiencing homelessness, students with special needs, and LGBTQI+, are not subjected to discrimination based on identity factors.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
6 Creating & Maintaining Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environments for Student Wellbeing	ELEMENT 6A: SCHOOL CLIMATE - Effective school counselors foster a positive school climate promoting inclusivity, empathy, and respectful interactions among students and staff in order to reduce conflict.	Emerging school counselors recognize that a positive, inclusive, and respectful school climate supports student success and reduces conflict. They begin reviewing school climate-related data, as well as suspension and expulsion rates, to inform initial strategies that support a safe and respectful learning environment. They contribute to schoolwide initiatives, such as bullying and violence prevention campaigns.	Applying school counselors engage with the school community to foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful school environment. They analyze data, such as attendance, discipline, and survey data, to improve the overall school climate. They build partnerships across school, district, and community systems to promote responsiveness and mutual respect. Counselors support programs that strengthen student communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills, and help implement restorative practices, culturally responsive interventions, and peer mentoring.	Integrative school counselors lead efforts to foster a safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive school climate. They align their programs and services with district and statewide accountability measures. They analyze and disaggregate data to identify opportunity gaps and contribute to the development of targeted strategies to improve school climate. They implement interventions that strengthen school climate and promote student well-being. They lead schoolwide initiatives in conflict resolution and violence prevention, collaborating with educational partners to embed restorative practices across systems.	Innovative school counselors lead, develop, and evaluate transformative initiatives that position the school as a center of physical, emotional, and social safety. They design programs focused on topics such as student self-awareness, mutual respect, and cross-cultural understanding. They lead responsive, community-informed initiatives to prevent bullying and violence. Through continuous collaboration and data-informed planning, they implement action plans that create lasting, systemic improvements in school climate.

STANDARD 6 | CREATING & MAINTAINING SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENT WELLBEING

Ensures that the school environment is inclusive, safe, and supportive for the overall well-being of students.

ELEMENT 6B: SCHOOL SAFETY - Effective school counselors contribute to a safe and secure learning environment by being accessible for reporting threats, intervening with students involved in unsafe behaviors, and incorporating substance abuse prevention measures.

Example Indicators of Practice:

6B-1: Conduct suicide, threat, and risk assessments to identify potential safety concerns and collaborate with relevant educational partners to develop appropriate interventions.

6B-2: Educate students, families, and the school community about topics related to substance abuse prevention, including but not limited to conducting awareness campaigns and providing support to individuals at risk of substance misuse.

6B-3: Participate in district and school response team planning and practices, and assist in helping students and staff can process/understand crisis response drills.

6B-4: Create a structured reintegration program for students who are returning to school following suspension or expulsion, incorporating ongoing monitoring and counseling support.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
6 Creating & Maintaining Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environments for Student Wellbeing	ELEMENT 6B: SCHOOL SAFETY - Effective school counselors contribute to a safe and secure learning environment by being accessible for reporting threats, intervening with students involved in unsafe behaviors and incorporating substance abuse prevention measures.	Emerging school counselors understand crisis response policies, identify warning signs of unsafe behaviors (e.g., substance use, self-harm, harm to others). They use risk assessment tools to evaluate student safety. They view safety as a continuum—from prevention to response and repair—and apply trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and restorative practices to support a safe school and learning climate.	Applying school counselors actively contribute to school safety by leading awareness campaigns and delivering lessons that promote safety, empathy, and prevention. They use validated risk assessment tools to evaluate student safety and also support timely interventions aligned with school protocols. These counselors apply trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and restorative practices in their work with students and staff. They are instrumental in reintegrating students returning from suspension, expulsion, or health-related interruptions.	Integrative school counselors provide coordinated oversight to ensure early identification systems are in place to recognize students at risk of harming themselves or others. They participate on crisis response teams and incorporate trauma-informed and restorative practices into school safety efforts. Counselors lead schoolwide prevention campaigns. They also design and monitor reintegration plans, offering counseling and academic support to help returning students successfully transition back into the school environment.	Innovative school counselors lead strategic, data-driven safety initiatives aligned with their school community's needs. They collaborate with educational partners to develop trauma-informed policies and lead and train educators in risk, suicide, and threat assessments. They create schoolwide awareness campaigns on complex safety issues and deliver focused support for students who have heightened needs. Counselors design and evaluate multi-tiered, equity-focused reintegration plans for students returning from crisis or health issues. Their reflective and adaptive practices ensure a safe school environment for all students.

STANDARD 6 | CREATING & MAINTAINING SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENT WELLBEING

Ensures that the school environment is inclusive, safe, and supportive for the overall well-being of students.

ELEMENT 6C: SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT - Effective school counselors foster academic, social, and personal engagement through strategies that promote involvement, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the school community.

Example Indicators of Practice:

6C-1: Promote school-wide practices that are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and restorative, that foster environments that are inclusive and equitable.

6C-2: Identify and address underlying issues such as learning difficulties, lack of interest, external stressors, attendance, and disciplinary issues, thereby enhancing students' academic engagement with specialized interventions.

6C-3: Encourage students to establish connections within peer-to-peer relationships, as well as with younger and older students, teachers, administrators, student support staff, and the broader school community.

6C-4: Empower students to identify personal interests, set goals, and explore extracurricular activities or projects that foster personal engagement and a sense of purpose.

STANDARDS	ELEMENTS	EMERGING	APPLYING	INTEGRATIVE	INNOVATIVE
6 Creating & Maintaining Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environments for Student Wellbeing	ELEMENT 6C: SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT - Effective school counselors foster academic, social, and personal engagement through strategies that promote involvement, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the school community.	Emerging school counselors promote student engagement and belonging by using affirming language that supports inclusivity and safety. They collaborate with staff to communicate clear behavioral expectations. They support staff in recognizing and celebrating student achievements, fostering a positive and respectful school culture.	Applying school counselors foster student engagement by organizing events that promote belonging and reflect the school community. They communicate clear behavioral expectations and collaborate with staff to celebrate academic and social achievements. Recognizing engagement as key to success, they implement intentional strategies to create inclusive opportunities where all students feel valued and connected.	Integrative school counselors lead the implementation of comprehensive programs that support students' academic, social, and emotional growth. They collaborate with staff to establish behavior systems centered on prevention, accountability, and restorative practices. Leading initiatives that celebrate student and staff achievements, they use data-driven reviews to identify and overcome barriers to engagement. Their efforts foster a safe, equitable, and responsive environment that addresses the diverse needs of all learners.	Innovative school counselors contribute new ideas that refine systemic efforts, which strengthen student engagement through collaborative, data-driven dialogue with students, staff, families and educational partners. They design new approaches to promoting inclusive, respectful environments that foster an increased sense of belonging and celebrate student achievement that supports a connected, growth-oriented school culture.

The *California Continuum for Advancing School Counseling Practice (CASCP)* Glossary of Terms to establish shared language and promote consistent understanding across the school counseling profession and the broader field of education. Several terms also align with legal definitions specific to California, ensuring both accuracy and clarity in their application. Its purpose is to provide practitioners, administrators, policymakers, and educators with a common reference for terminology central to school counseling. By offering concise definitions, the glossary reduces ambiguity, supports accurate interpretation, and enhances coherence throughout the document.

Academic Advising

Guidance provided by school counselors to help students plan, monitor, and achieve educational goals, including course selection, graduation requirements, and preparation for postsecondary opportunities.

Accountability

The responsibility of school counselors to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs through data collection, analysis, and reporting of student outcomes.

Advocacy

Actions taken by school counselors to remove barriers, promote equity, and ensure that all students have access to resources, opportunities, and supports necessary for success.

ASCA National Model

A framework developed by the American School Counselor Association that provides a comprehensive, data-driven structure for school counseling programs.

California Education Code §49600

The California statute that establishes the scope of educational counseling in public schools. Amended by AB 2508 (2022), it requires districts to provide access to comprehensive counseling programs that address students' academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and postsecondary development. The law defines both direct services (e.g., individual/group counseling, mental health support, crisis intervention, postsecondary planning) and indirect services (e.g., teacher/parent consultation, community referrals, climate strategies). It also emphasizes alignment with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), the promotion of mental wellness, and equitable access to postsecondary opportunities.

Certified Wellness Coach (CWC)

An emerging role in California, authorized to deliver and bill for certain Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports under the California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), supervised by PPS-credentialed professionals.

Confidentiality

An ethical obligation requiring school counselors to safeguard student information, with exceptions when disclosure is legally mandated or necessary to prevent harm (CA Ed Code 49602).

Crisis Response

Immediate, short-term support provided by school counselors in situations of trauma, emergency, or threat to student safety, often in collaboration with school crisis teams.

Culturally Responsive Practice

An approach to counseling that affirms and incorporates students' diverse cultural, linguistic, and identity backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to supports and opportunities.

CYBHI Fee Schedule

The California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative framework for standardized billing and reimbursement of school- and community-based behavioral health services, including those provided by PPS-credentialed counselors.

Data-Driven Decision Making

A systematic process in which school counselors use data—including student achievement, attendance, behavioral, and social-emotional indicators—to guide decisions about program design, intervention strategies, and resource allocation. This approach ensures that counseling practices are evidence-based, equitable, and aligned with student and school needs.

Data-Informed Practice

The systematic use of quantitative and qualitative data to identify student needs, design interventions, and evaluate program effectiveness.

Direct Services

Counseling services delivered directly to students, such as individual or group counseling, classroom lessons, and crisis intervention.

Equity

The commitment to ensuring fairness by addressing barriers and providing resources so all students, particularly those historically underserved, can achieve success.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

A federal law protecting the privacy of student education records and granting rights to parents and eligible students regarding access to those records.

Indirect Services

Supports provided on behalf of students through collaboration with staff, consultation with families, and referral to community agencies.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A legally binding document that outlines services, goals, and accommodations for students identified as eligible for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

A framework for providing academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports at increasing levels of intensity (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3). School counselors play a critical role across all tiers.

Postsecondary Development

The process of preparing students for success after high school by fostering the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for enrollment and persistence in college, career training, the military, or the workforce. School counselors guide students in exploring pathways, navigating financial aid, and developing a college- and career-going mindset.

Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Credential

A California credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) authorizing practice as a school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker.

Restorative Practices

Strategies used to build relationships, repair harm, and create inclusive school environments, often facilitated by school counselors as part of discipline alternatives.

School-Based Mental Health Services

A range of prevention, early intervention, and treatment supports delivered on school campuses to address students' mental and behavioral health needs. These services may include individual or group counseling, crisis intervention, wellness promotion, and referrals to community providers. School counselors, along with other PPS-credentialed professionals and licensed clinicians, play a central role in designing, coordinating, and delivering these services to ensure student well-being and readiness to learn.

School Counseling Domains

The three primary areas of focus for school counseling programs: academic development, postsecondary development, and social-emotional development.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

A framework for developing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Stakeholders

Individuals or groups invested in student outcomes and school counseling programs, including students, families, educators, administrators, policymakers, and community partners.

Supervision (School, Clinical)

A structured process in which a qualified supervisor provides oversight, guidance, and evaluation of individuals delivering related services. In California, supervision is defined under CCR §80049.1(c) for Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential holders, ensuring ethical practice, service coordination, and the protection of students.

Systemic Change

Efforts by school counselors to influence schoolwide or districtwide policies and practices to remove barriers and promote equitable outcomes.

Trauma-Informed Practice

An approach that acknowledges the impact of trauma on learning and behavior, emphasizing safety, trust, empowerment, and healing.

Wellness

A holistic state encompassing mental, emotional, physical, and social health. In school counseling, wellness includes student and staff support and school counselor self-care.

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