

# The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model

A Resource and Planning Guide

*By All...For All*

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# The Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model

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A comprehensive school counseling program is an essential and integral part of education. The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model provides the framework for the development and implementation of a program for every district that is comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, and developmental in nature.

This publication is designed to provide a comprehensive program that helps districts and communities support their students academic, career, and personal-social development in preparation for the challenges of the 21st Century, strengthening our New Wisconsin Promise, our commitment to ensure a quality education for every child. The programs content builds around the Model Academic Standards for School Counseling that represents lifelong development and learning goals.

The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model utilizes a framework in which school counselors switch their emphasis from service-centered for some students to program-centered for all students. It works toward the creation of a community where individuals have the capacity to interpret and apply relevant experiences and information in ways that are both personally enhancing and socially responsible. The process and objectives for a school district to use in making this important transition are described in this resource.

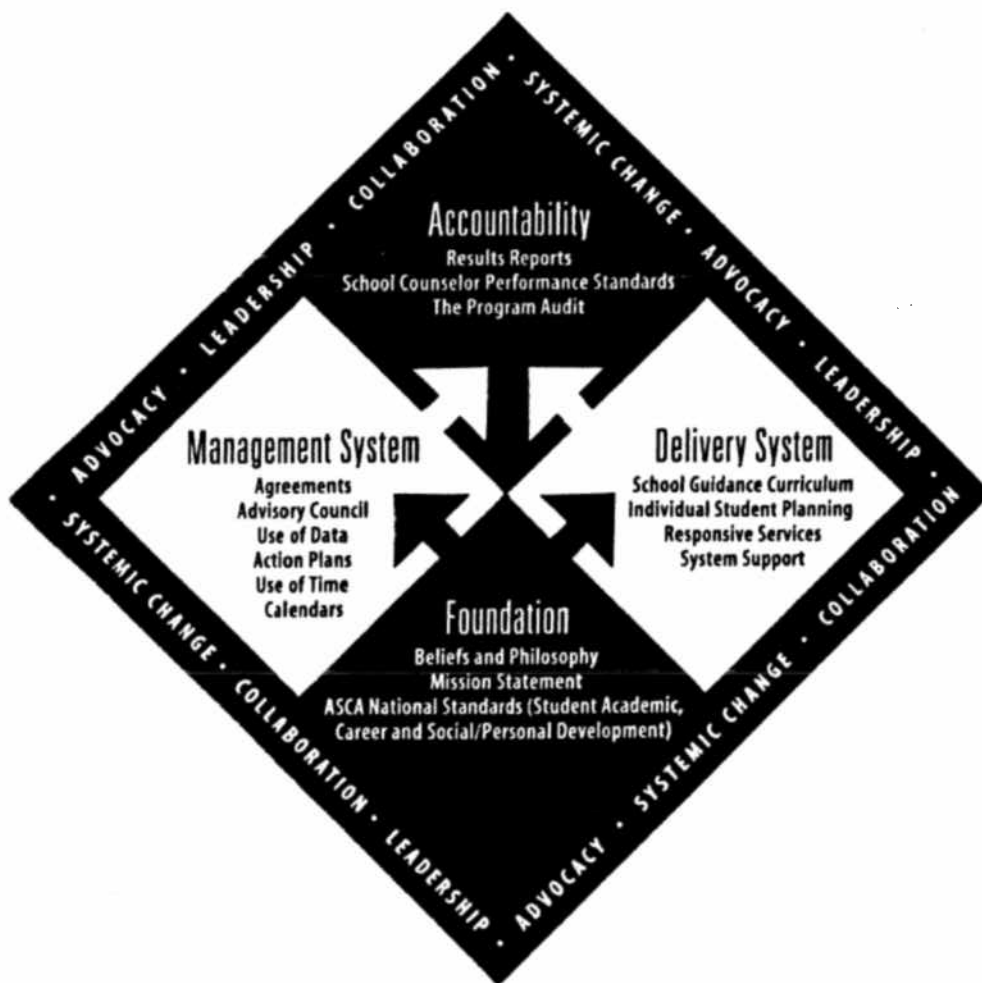
This resource and planning guide is a must have for every school counselor.

# Introduction

*“As soon as the first teachers were given part-time assignments as school counselors in the early 1900s, discussion began about what should be the focus, structure, positions, and leadership of guidance. How should guidance be organized and where should it be placed organizationally? Who should lead and manage the program? How should school counselors and other staff be evaluated and helped to improve their performance?”*

— Unknown

*School Counseling Programs: A Resource and Planning Guide* (Wilson 1986) provided a vision of developmental guidance programs for schools in Wisconsin and across the nation. Informally, the guide came to be known as the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model. Joining the formal name (School Counseling Programs) with the informal title (the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model or WDGM) blurred the distinction between school counseling programs



©American School Counselor Association (ASCA) 2003. The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. Alexandria, VA: ASCA.

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and developmental guidance programs. The Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model is an example of a multi-strategy, school-based model (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 1995). The intention of *The Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model: A Resource and Planning Guide for School-Community Teams* (Schutt, Brittingham, Perrone 1997) was to elaborate on the relevance of comprehensive, sequential developmental guidance programs in schools and outline the vision of a comprehensive school counseling program. *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (American School Counselor Association [ASCA] 2005) provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage, and evaluate their comprehensive school counseling programs for students' success. It provides a framework for the program components, the school counselor's role in implementation, and the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy, and systemic change. Utilizing this framework, school counselors switch their emphasis from service-centered for some students to program-centered for every student. The comprehensive school counseling program connects to the district and school's improvement plan.

*The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model* clearly outlines and details the shift described in the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model and the ASCA National Model. It continues the transition from a model of school counseling delivered by school counselors; to a model of developmental guidance; to a comprehensive school counseling program that draws upon all the resources in the school and the community. This shift in focus is meant to acknowledge the nature of school counseling programs while demonstrating the importance of everyone participating in a concerted effort to facilitate the development of students. The process and objectives for a school district to use in making this important transition are described in this resource.

More specifically, this introduction provides an overview of the program and a brief discussion of the school counseling curriculum within the framework of a comprehensive school counseling program and the relationship between comprehensive school counseling programs and comprehensive pupil services. Chapter 1 presents an introduction and overview of the transition taking place in school counseling. Chapter 2 presents an expanded vision for the foundation of a comprehensive school counseling program. Chapter 3 details the Model Academic Standards for School Counseling. Chapter 4 describes in detail the four delivery components of a comprehensive school counseling program. Chapter 5 addresses the management structure within a comprehensive school counseling program. Chapter 6 establishes a process for implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. Chapter 7 includes suggested strategies to evaluate programs using a systematic plan of action, including the full participation of all stakeholders. The appendices further clarify the role of the school counselor and include a list of resources for districts as they develop their comprehensive school counseling programs.

## **School Counseling For All Students**

Students should be at the center of planning within comprehensive school counseling programs. The fundamental goals of comprehensive school counseling

are twofold: provide for student achievement and success, and increase the options that students perceive for themselves, rather than limiting their options by insufficient knowledge of social, economic, and personal factors. School counselors have an enormous impact on student achievement and attainment. From the courses students take and the teachers to whom they're assigned to the goals they set and paths they pursue after they leave the school doors, school counselors are powerful forces in their schools and in the lives of their students. It is the responsibility of the comprehensive school counseling program to foster conditions within schools that ensure educational equity, access, and academic success for all students K–12 (The Education Trust 2007).

A comprehensive school counseling program addresses students' academic, personal/social, and career needs. It can affect a student's attitudes toward learning and career goals and one's feelings toward self, family, and community. The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model stresses the prevention of problems and the development of an individual learning plan. Wisconsin schools are encouraged to integrate a comprehensive approach to develop, support, and nurture healthy, resilient, and successful learners who have the skills necessary to carry out their unique and individual plans. Student programs serve as a natural extension of a comprehensive school counseling program. Programs such as student assistance programs, character education programs, bully prevention programs, cross-age tutoring programs, peer programs, suicide prevention programs, mental health programs, service learning programs, work experience programs, and conflict resolution programs provide opportunities for students to take proactive approaches to life issues they are facing. Student programs help address students' physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and career development needs that are foundations for lifelong health, learning, and success. They help students connect to the school and the greater community. The programs allow students to experience the value of working to achieve goals beyond personal, self-centered needs.

As students understand themselves, explore the world around them, and establish goals for their futures, they begin to see why an education is important. They no longer attend school simply to receive a diploma or avoid truancy. Instead, students understand the connection between success in school today and success in their careers tomorrow. To that end, the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model is aimed at developing healthy, resilient, and successful learners who have purpose and direction in their lives.

Comprehensive school counseling programs connect students with programs and services available in schools. A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the school's academic mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, driven by student data and based on standards in academic, career, and personal/social development, promote and enhance the learning process for all students. A comprehensive program

- ensures equity and access to a rigorous and relevant education for all students;
- identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K–12 comprehensive school counseling program;
- is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion;

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- is based on data-driven decision making; and
- is led by state-credentialed school counselors who manage, facilitate, and provide direct services within the program.

A factor that affects school counseling program effectiveness is the ratio of counselors to students. The American School Counselor Association (2007) recommends an ideal counselor/student ratio of 1 to 250. The United States Department of Education also prescribes a counselor/student ratio of 1 to 250 as found in ESEA/NCLB Subpart 2 Section 5421 Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs. *Pupil Services: A Resource and Planning Guide* (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 1995) recommends a ratio of 1 to 400 for grades K–6 and the recommended ratio for grades 7–12 is 1 to 250-300. Staff-to-student ratios must adequately support the district’s student population and be designed to promote student success. The more students assigned to a counselor, the less time a counselor has to work with individual students or groups of students and to coordinate the comprehensive school counseling program.

## **School Counseling and Comprehensive Services**

In a climate of declining school resources, organizing the delivery of services and programs to avoid duplication and overlap is critical. As *Wisconsin’s Framework for Comprehensive School Health Programs* (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 1995) points out, collaboration and teams are important to a comprehensive continuum of services, because meeting the needs of children requires the combined capacity of all segments of society. Many schools in Wisconsin have addressed this concern by strengthening collaboration among pupil services disciplines and related programs at the district level and by establishing collaborative pupil services teams. Collaborative teams function to promote student success, systemic change, and program development to accomplish national, state, and local educational goals. Collaborations usually develop because individual resources are scarce. Team members who approach collaboration with a willingness to share existing resources to accomplish district and building goals will be more likely to experience success (*Pupil Services: A Resource and Planning Guide* 1995).

The framework addresses the entire range of youth risk behaviors by suggesting that school districts develop a multi-strategy approach to promote the health, well-being, and positive development of students and other members of the school community. In addition, the framework suggests that to develop an integrated approach, school districts must consider six components: a healthy school environment; curriculum, instruction and assessment; pupil services; student programs; adult programs; and family and community connections.

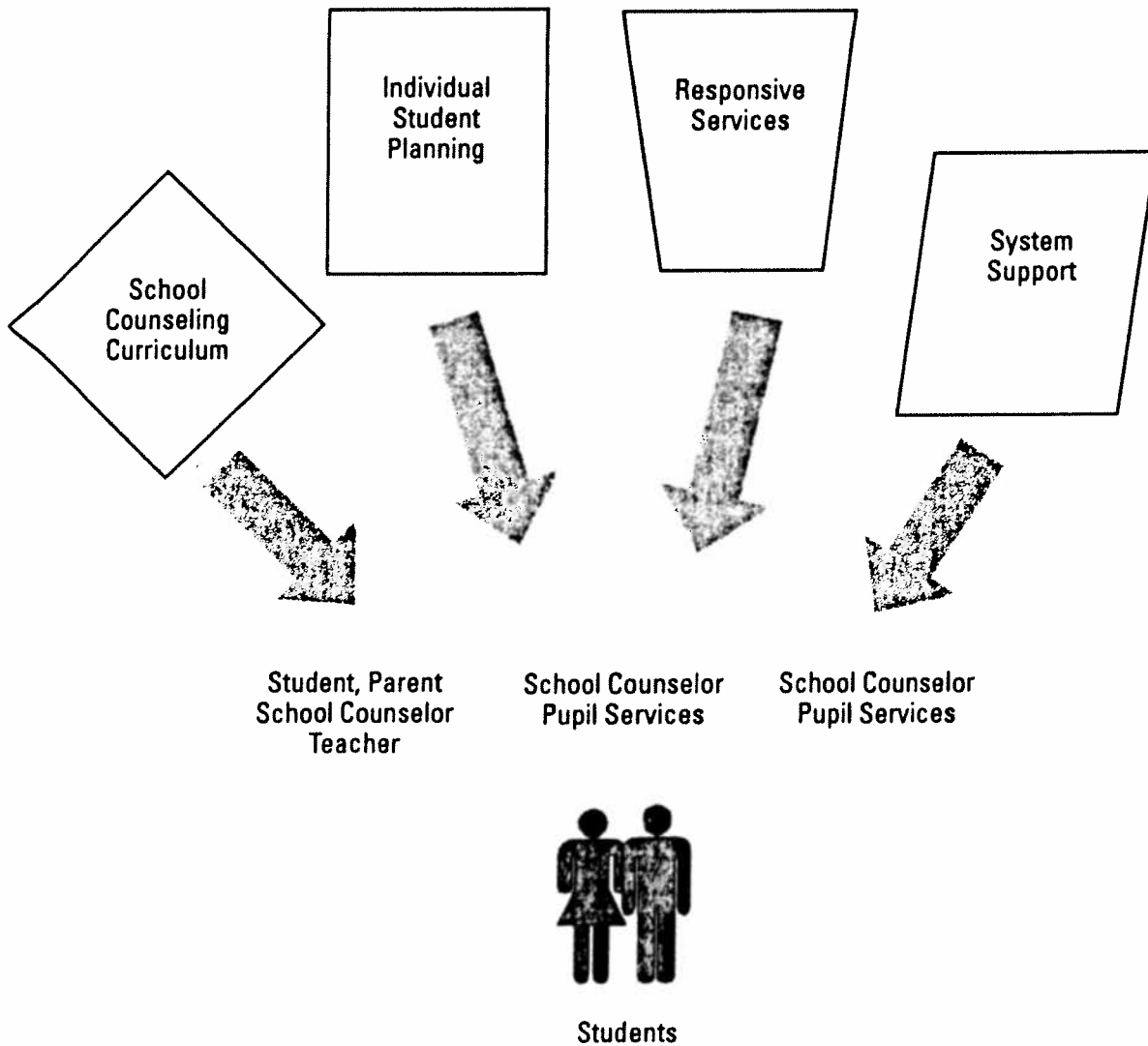
## **School Counseling By All**

In the past, school counselors have been primarily responsible for school counseling services. However, the content and delivery discussed in this publica-

tion involve the entire school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems. Moreover, comprehensive school counseling is strengthened when connected to the family and the community. School counselors, teachers, administrators, pupil service professionals, other school staff members, parents, members of business and industry, and community members all have a stake in the development of Wisconsin's young people.

One approach to serving all students is through a comprehensive school counseling program conducted by qualified school staff members and advised by parents, business, and industry members, and students. School counseling curriculum is the responsibility of all school staff members, family members, and the community.

### Delivery by All



*School counseling programs are broader than developmental guidance curriculum.*

## School Counseling and Developmental Guidance

Developmental guidance and school counseling programs are not synonymous. School counseling programs are part of the overall educational program (Borders and Drury 1992; Gysbers and Henderson 1994; Lapan and Gysbers 1995; Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski 2003). Developmental guidance curricula originate in school counseling programs and are a planned series of events and activities conducted on a systematic basis to assist students in achieving specific competencies.

School counselors and the school counseling curriculum are major factors in the successful implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. In addition to a developmental school counseling curriculum, counselors provide individual student planning, group and individual counseling, crisis counseling, consultations with staff and parents, community outreach, and management functions (Gysbers, Hughey, Starr, and Lapan 1992).

Because developmental guidance curriculum originated in school counseling programs, it shares a philosophical underpinning with these programs. Each is developmentally based, structured to serve all students, and comprised of a comprehensive structure integrated into a web of services. The distinguishing characteristic of developmental guidance curriculum is that its delivery involves the collaboration of people within and outside school, whereas other components of school counseling programs are delivered directly by school counselors.

School counseling programs are broader than developmental guidance curriculum in terms of services offered. Student needs, available counselor time, and program resources dictate the breadth and depth of counseling services. Counseling programs are often designed to react to situations for which other school staff members are not prepared or to which they are unable to respond. School counseling programs and the role of school counselors are discussed in detail in Appendix A.

The curriculum, instruction, and assessment component involves planning, implementing, and evaluating a sequential and developmentally appropriate school counseling curriculum (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade) based upon standards, which deals with all-important academic, personal/social, and career development issues. Curriculum and instruction efforts focusing on the well-being of children transcend several subjects and disciplines. The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model is an integral part of what schools provide to all children through classroom experiences and out-of-class activities. The model can become a curricular frame through which connections are made with other disciplines within the school setting. The nine student standards all are essential to developing healthy, resilient, and successful students.

In addition to providing a curricular lens, the model provides a vehicle through which school staff members can deliver instruction in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. This approach is broadened by the fact that comprehensive school counseling is proactive, serves all students, and is delivered as a multifaceted program through the collaborative efforts of counselors, teachers, administrators, pupil service professionals, other school staff members, community members, parents, and members of business and industry. The nine student standards of the



Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model are consistent with many of the competencies developed within other instructional subjects. The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model creates a foundation for integration among the various disciplines. This integration of disciplines ensures that the educational experiences schools provide students are connected and meaningful relative to the students' lives.

## **School Counseling and Community**

Schools have an important role in partnership with families and the greater community to help students learn how to be healthy and avoid risk-taking behaviors. This component of the framework is not about programs or services, but about relationships. These relationships provide the essential community context and support system for the schools' efforts in promoting the health and well-being of children.

Level III of the original developmental guidance model, as outlined in *School Counseling Programs: A Resource and Planning Guide* (Wilson 1986), articulated the importance of building these relationships. The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model focuses responsibility of delivery of the comprehensive school counseling program on the counselor, school staff members, community members, parents, and members of business and industry. All of these people have a vital impact on program effectiveness. Families and communities must be active partners in all aspects of programming and services schools provide to children.

Adult programs provide information, skill development, and support to adults directly involved in assisting students to become healthy, resilient, and successful learners. Adult programs involve three primary elements: professional development for staff and interested community members, parent education and support programs, and employee assistance and staff wellness programs. Professional development is necessary for program improvement, reform, and restructuring of education.

Implementing the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model in a school necessitates professional development for all school staff members. It is essential that school staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to become involved in program activities and strategies. It is important that everyone, including parents and guardians, have a clear understanding of how a comprehensive school counseling program fits within a total school program.

## **Benefits of Implementing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program**

The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model provides a program that encourages and promotes academic, career, and personal/social development for students in preparation for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Comprehensive school counseling programs positively affect students, parents, teachers, school counselors, pupil services personnel, administrators, school boards, and the community. All stakeholders share the

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benefits of this organizational structure. Some of the benefits derived from a comprehensive school counseling program as identified by the *ASCA National Model* and Wisconsin school counselors are:

#### Students

- Promotes a rigorous academic curriculum for all students
- Prepares students for the challenges of the twenty-first century through academic, career, and enhanced personal/social development
- Relates educational programs to future success
- Facilitates career exploration and development
- Develops decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Provides strategies for closing the achievement gap
- Assists in developing effective interpersonal relationship skills
- Provides advocacy for students
- Assures equitable access to educational opportunities
- Provides motivation and direction through development of an individual learning plan

#### Parents or Guardians

- Provides support for parents in advocating for their child's academic, career, and personal/social development
- Develops a system for their child's long-range planning and learning
- Increases opportunities for parent/school interaction
- Enables parents to access school and community resources
- Provides training and informational workshops

#### Teachers

- Provides an interdisciplinary team effort to address educational needs
- Provides assistance to teachers in classroom management, teaching effectiveness, and affective education
- Provides consultation to teachers in their role within the comprehensive school counseling program
- Promotes teaming to increase student achievement
- Increases collaboration between teachers and counselor

#### School Counselors

- Provides direct services to all students
- Ensures involvement in the academic mission of the school district
- Enhances the role of school counselor as a student advocate

- Provides a clearly defined role and function
- Provides a tool for program management and accountability
- Provides quality system support within the district

### **Pupil Service Staff**

- Defines the school counseling program
- Maximizes collaborative teaming to ensure student success
- Increases collaboration for utilizing school and community resources

### **Administrators**

- Integrates school counseling with the academic mission of the school district
- Provides program structure with specific content
- Provides a program promoting student success
- Assists administration to use school counselors effectively to enhance learning and development of all students
- Provides a means of evaluating school counseling programs
- Monitors data for school improvement

### **School Boards**

- Provides rationale for implementing a comprehensive school counseling program in the school system
- Assures that a quality counseling program is available to all students
- Supports appropriate credentialing and staffing
- Provides a basis for determining funding allocations for counseling programs
- Furnishes program information to the community
- Gives ongoing information about student competencies attained through school counseling program efforts
- Supports standards-based programming

### **Community**

- Provides increased opportunity for collaboration among counselors and business, industry, and the community as a whole
- Enhances the role of the counselor as a resource person
- Increases opportunities for business, industry, and the community to participate actively in the total school program
- Provides a potential work force with decision-making skills, pre-employment skills, and increased worker maturity

Aligning comprehensive school counseling programs with the visions and goals of twenty-first century education requires professional leadership at the highest levels. Without leadership and vision, school counseling is often forgotten and, therefore, lacks continuity and consistency in its activities and services. Being involved in transitioning to a comprehensive school counseling program may seem overwhelming, but the rewards are substantial. More pride in being a school counselor is evident. More support is generated for school counseling because school counseling no longer is seen as an ancillary support service. Most importantly, students, parents, the school, and community are served more effectively.