



**CONNECTICUT SEED**

**Student and Educator Support Specialists  
Guidance Document**

**Comprehensive School Counselors**

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This document provides guidance to administrators and Student and Educator Support Specialists (SESS) on the application of the Connecticut SEED educator evaluation system to Professional **Comprehensive School Counselors**. Student and Educator Support Specialists are those individuals who by the nature of their job description do not have traditional classrooms, but serve a “caseload” of students, staff or families. In addition, they often are not directly responsible for content instruction nor do state standardized assessments directly measure their impact on students. The following document provides guidance on the evaluation of **Comprehensive School Counselors** in public school settings.

**OVERVIEW:**

- The most commonly used names in districts are:
  - Comprehensive School Counselors
  - School Counselors
  
- Roles of Comprehensive School Counselors:

The Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program provides an updated focus on key student competencies based on the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national standards. The nine standards shift the focus from a traditional service-provider model to a program model that defines what students “will know and be able to do” as a result of participating in the comprehensive program. School Counselors use their skills in the areas of leadership, advocacy and collaboration to support school districts in their mission to prepare each student to meet high academic standards and to complete school fully prepared to choose from an array of substantial post-secondary options. The model focuses on student development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, self-direction and leadership; as well as teaching essential professional skills such as teamwork, time management, interpersonal skills and cultural awareness.

The Comprehensive School Counseling program has been developed to guide school districts as they endeavor to link school counseling program goals and content with their school improvement efforts. It can also assist school districts to evaluate their current programs and implement changes based on data and best practice. As this model is implemented across the state, School Counselors will substantially increase their ability to foster academic, personal/social and career development for Connecticut’s students.

- Professional School Counselors’ Caseload(s): The recommended national School Counselor/ Student ratio requirement is: 1:250.

School Counselors provide direct and indirect services to the school community. Direct services are face-to-face with students and families delivered through school counseling core curriculum, individual student planning and responsive services. School Counselors review school data to inform decisions about strategies to use within each element based on students’ needs. In addition School Counselors use data to identify students with achievement, attendance and/or behavioral needs impeding student success. School Counselors also use data to determine how the school counseling activities will be delivered (ASCA, 2012).

School Counselors provide indirect student services as a means to support student achievement and to promote equity and access for all students. School Counselors may interact with the school community to promote student achievement and systematic change. Indirect services include referrals, consultation and collaboration (ASCA, 2012).

- Supervision and Observation of Professional School Counselors  
Professional School Counselors should be supervised and evaluated by a professional who has certification in both administration and school counseling. (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/counseling.pdf>). School Counselors require clinical, developmental and administrative supervision. Together, this three-pronged approach allows Counselors to hone counseling skills, build and improve school counseling programs and to assure they are being held accountable for their practice. School counselors are evaluated based on national competencies that serve as best practices in the field. It is recommended that rubrics be adjusted to reflect these competencies (<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/files/SCCompetencies.pdf>).

Professional School Counselors, unlike other certified staff, are bound by confidentiality due to the nature of the work. School Counselors practice under the American School Counseling Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors (<http://schoolcounselor.org/files/EthicalStandards2010.pdf>). Therefore, there are some situations that are considered inappropriate venues for observation such as individual counseling sessions, small groups and phone calls or meetings with parents, agencies, or mental health providers where confidential student issues are being discussed. It may also become necessary to terminate an observation session in the event highly confidential information is brought to the surface. Case presentations in a clinical supervision setting would be appropriate as long as identifying information was not included.

Venues that are appropriate for observations may include the following: individual planning sessions, parent and/or student programs, Developmental Guidance Lessons, Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings, data team meetings, Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) meetings or other venues where the School Counselor is collaborating with colleagues in the building to improve student achievement.

In the context of the Connecticut SEED educator evaluation system, educators will work in conjunction with their evaluators to identify objectives for student learning and corresponding measures of student performance to evaluate progress made towards those learning objectives. Educators will draft Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) that specify:

1. a learning objective focus statement;
2. baseline or trend data relative to that objective;

3. the population of students that will be assessed on the objective (e.g. caseload, grade level, course, etc...);
4. the standards and learning content that are represented by the objective;
5. the length of time across which intervention will occur in order to support students in obtaining the objective;
6. assessments that will be used to evaluate student performance;
7. quantitative indicators of academic growth and development (IAGDs) based on student performance on assessments; and
8. instructional strategies that will be employed to support students in realizing the learning objective.

The following pages provide sample SLO focus statements and corresponding IAGDs that may be appropriate for **School Counselors** given their unique role within school settings.

## **Sample 1**

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
  - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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**Subject Area:** Academic Goals - School Success

**Population of Students:** 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students (40/200)

**Student Learning Objective (SLO) Focus Statement:**

Students will implement strategies to achieve post-secondary college goals.

**Baseline Data:**

Based on the 2012-2013 data, 40 out of 200 (20%) students did submit a college application.

Data collection was based on quantitative data:

1. Use of Naviance – school-wide data
2. Number of college applications submitted
3. Comparison of data of the subgroups
  - i. students did not apply to post-secondary institution
  - ii. identify first generation students
  - iii. identify students who intended to, but did not apply
4. Pre and post surveys for students

**Rationale:**

After identifying, disaggregating and using multiple sources of data, our high school needs to promote a college-going culture for all students. College-going rates differ disproportionately by student's family income level, racial/ethnic group and students with disabilities and the problem of unequal access to higher education is a concern within our school community. This unequal access to higher education has immediate and long-term implications for our community's infrastructure and economy.

Identified subgroups:

1. First generation students;
2. Traditionally underserved students; and
3. Any student that has not applied to a post-secondary institution.

Based on the data collected for the above-mentioned subgroups, 40 students (20%) were identified and had not applied to college.

**Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD):**

1. 95% of students in identified sub-groups will submit a completed college application by December 2013.

**Standards and Learning Content:**

Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Guide:

A2.11-12.1: Implement strategies to achieve postsecondary goals

Learners will prepare themselves academically to choose from a range of choices following graduation. Concepts include, but are not limited to, self-understanding and development, educational planning and choices and consequences.

## Sample 2

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
  - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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**Subject Area:** Personal Goals - Survival and Safety Skills

**Population of Students:** 1st grade students (100)

**Student Learning Objective (SLO) Focus Statement:**

Students will demonstrate healthy ways of dealing with conflict.

**Baseline Data:**

In the 2012-13, there were 50 incidents of verbal and physical altercation involving 1<sup>st</sup> graders on the playground. The evidence was collected from the following sources:

1. ED166 discipline report
2. School Wide Information System (SWIS) data
3. Teacher discipline referrals
4. Parent Safe School Climate Survey

**Rationale:**

Both qualitative and quantitative data was used to analyze the playground verbal and physical altercations involving 1st graders this past year. Students who attend our school with a positive, respectful climate are able to focus on learning and realize their academic, interpersonal and athletic potential (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). When students perceive they have a stake in their school community, negative behaviors tend to decrease and participation in school community programs and projects, including academic activities, tends to increase. The Parent Safe School Climate Survey identified 62% of parents felt their child was not safe with other peers during recess. Additionally, the school reviewed data on policy, procedures and practices to prioritize needs for the School Improvement Plan.

**Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD):**

1. Decrease 1st grade incidents of conflict by 10% from June 2013 to June 2014 as measured by teacher documentation and office referrals.

**Standards and Learning Content:**

Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Guide:

P/S9.K-2.7: Demonstrate healthy ways of dealing with conflicts

Learners will demonstrate the proper application of safety and survival skills to their personal and physical well-being. Concepts include, but are not limited to, the influence of peer pressure, communication and conflict resolution skills and anger management.

**Sample 3**

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
  - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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**Subject Area:** Career Goals: Investigate Careers

**Population of Students:** All 7<sup>th</sup> grade students

**Student Learning Objective (SLO) Focus Statement:**

All students will develop an academic and career plan that reflects their interests, abilities and goals and that includes appropriately rigorous, relevant coursework and experiences.

**Baseline Data:**

In 2012-2013, approximately 100 students indicated on the Naviance Interest Inventory that they had little or no knowledge/skills about the teaching profession and would like to explore a teaching career as indicated by an overall score of 1/5.

**Rationale:**

To ensure all students develop an academic and career plan reflecting their interests, abilities and goals and including rigorous, relevant coursework and experiences appropriate for the student. The focus of academic and career planning is threefold: to help students acquire the skills to achieve academic success, to make connections between school and life experiences and to acquire knowledge and skills to be college and career ready upon high school graduation (ASCA, 2012). As part of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade developmental guidance curriculum, 350 students took an interest inventory to explore and indicate areas for potential careers. After analyzing the data, 100 students self-identified an interest in pursuing a career in teaching or education. Students who have indicated they wish to become a teacher on the interest inventory will become familiar with teacher preparation programs and job expectations.

**Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD):**

1. Increase students' (100) knowledge and skills by 2 levels on the Naviance scale from 1 to 3 (total of 5 levels) as measured by a Naviance post-test by June 2014.

**Standards and Learning Content:**

Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Guide:

C4.7-8.7: Describe the relationship between career interests, high school course selection and post-secondary education options.

Learners will demonstrate the skills to make career choices in relation to knowledge of self and knowledge of the world of work. Concepts include, but are not limited to, career readiness, locating and evaluating career resources, and understanding the global workplace.

\*Or other relevant career field as indicated by baseline data

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CUSTOMIZING THE OBSERVATION RUBRIC:**

The annual performance evaluation of Professional School Counselors should accurately reflect the unique professional training and practices of school counselors working within a comprehensive school counseling program. It is recommended that observation of School Counselors be conducted using the modified *Common Core of Teaching Rubric for Effective Teaching for Student Educator and Support Specialists*. In addition, documents such as: School Counselor Performance Standards from the ASCA National Model and the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (ASCA, 2009) should be used for guidance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENT, PARENT AND PEER FEEDBACK:**

It is recommended that the school/district utilize information gathered from the CT School Climate Survey, National School Climate Survey or a customized survey that focuses on the initiatives unique to School Counselors.

**RESOURCES:**

- American School Counselors Association. (2004). *ASCA national standards for students – one vision, one voice*. Retrieved from [http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/ASCA\\_National\\_Standards\\_for\\_Students.pdf](http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/ASCA_National_Standards_for_Students.pdf)
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- Connecticut State Department of Education. (2008). *Comprehensive school counseling a guide to comprehensive school counseling program development*. Retrieved from <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/counseling.pdf>
- Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED). (ND). Retrieved from <http://www.connecticutseed.org>
- NOSCA: National Office for School Counselor Advocacy. (2013). *The eight components of college and career readiness counseling*. Retrieved from <http://nosca.collegeboard.org/eight-components>

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