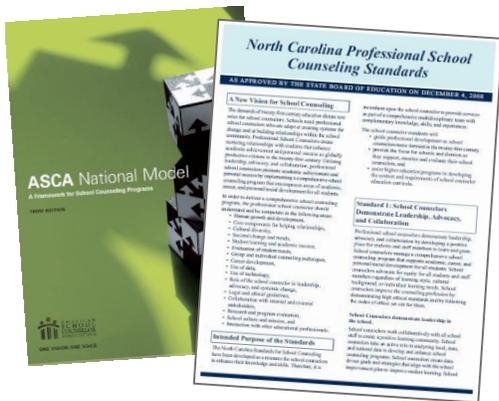




The Every Student Succeeds Act and NC School Counseling

It can sometimes be a little difficult to identify where school counselors and other specialized instructional support personnel fit into federal program funding and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This document is intended to assist districts with that identification in order to support effective use of school counselors in promoting student success. With funding changes from ESSA, this is an optimal time to review your spending plans for federal funds to see if there are ways you can better support students with effective provision, utilization and professional development of school counselors. Note that this document is a supplement to other guidance regarding federal funds, thus, is bound by all federal regulations therein.

ESSA DEFINES SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL (SISP) AS “(i) SCHOOL COUNSELORS, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS; AND (ii) OTHER QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL, SUCH AS SCHOOL NURSES, SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS, AND SCHOOL LIBRARIANS, INVOLVED IN PROVIDING ASSESSMENT, DIAGNOSIS, COUNSELING, EDUCATIONAL, THERAPEUTIC, AND OTHER NECESSARY SERVICES (INCLUDING RELATED SERVICES AS THAT TERM IS DEFINED IN SECTION 602 OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (20 U.S.C. 1401) AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS.”



Many of the themes within ESSA are also themes within the professional practice and standards of school counselors. The *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* provides research- and evidence-based practices for effective school counseling programs that promote academic, career and social/emotional development and success for students. North Carolina School Counseling Professional Standards are aligned with the ASCA National Model.*

The following are just a few examples of ESSA themes reflective of school counseling –

Title I, Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies –

“The purpose of Title I is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.” Title I schoolwide plans must address strategies used to address needs especially of at-risk students, which may include counseling, school-based mental health programs, and specialized instructional support services. As stated in the introduction to the ASCA National Model, “The objective of school counseling is to help students overcome barriers to learning.” School counselors use school data to identify learning gaps and barriers and develop action plans to address those gaps and barriers, advocating for equitable education for all students. Targeted assistance schools may use funds for professional development for school personnel, including school counselors who work with eligible students.

Title II, Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders –

LEAs can use professional development funds to strengthen skills of school counselors in working with students at risk of mental illness or affected by trauma, and on issues related to school conditions for student learning, such as safety, peer interaction, drug and alcohol abuse, and chronic absenteeism.

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*You can find more information on the ASCA National Model on the [American School Counselor Association’s web site](https://www.schoolcounselor.org/) at <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>. The North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards can be found on the NCDPI [School Counseling Wiki](http://schoolcounseling.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/) at <http://schoolcounseling.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/> and [NCEES Support Staff Wiki page](http://nceeds.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Support+Staff) at <http://nceeds.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Support+Staff>. The professional standards are also in the school counselor evaluation instrument housed in Home Base.

Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAE)

The purpose of SSAE grants is to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, local educational agencies, schools, and local communities to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; improve school conditions for student learning; and improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Although school counselors can certainly benefit from improved use of technology, sections 4107 and 4108 of SSAE are more reflective of the services provided by school counselors.

Sec. 4107 – Activities to Support Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities – Regarding “college and career guidance and counseling programs” and “efforts to raise student academic achievement through accelerated learning programs,” school counselors begin support college and career guidance in elementary school with career and college awareness and exploration activities that evolve into more specific guidance towards goals, course selection and enrollment, and post-secondary planning as students progress through middle and high school. Throughout K-12, school counselors also help students with skills for optimal academic achievement in helping them to attain their personal goals.

Sec. 4108 – Activities to Support Safe and Healthy Students – Regarding to “develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs and activities that foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement,” many of the services school counselors provide through a comprehensive school counseling program are inclusive of prevention and early intervention to address social/emotional needs that result in barriers to learning and have the potential to compromise a safe, healthy, supportive learning environment. Evidence supports a direct correlation between physical and mental health and learning that is essential to academic success, school completion, and the development of healthy, resilient and productive citizens. School counselors implement school-wide activities that promote healthy learning environments and, being school-based mental health services providers, can also identify mental health symptoms and provide short-term solution-focused counseling services. School counselors also recognize when there is a need to refer students for long-term counseling services for more intensive mental health needs.

Title IV block grant funds may also be used for high-quality training for school counselors and other school personnel on such topics as career and college readiness counseling and guidance skills and strategies, suicide prevention, effective and trauma-informed practices in classroom management, crisis management and conflict resolution techniques, human trafficking, school-based violence prevention strategies, drug abuse prevention, and bullying and harassment prevention. Professional development on many of these topics are often made available at conferences and through professional association web sites.

IN ORDER TO POSITIVELY IMPACT ACADEMIC OUTCOMES, ATTENDANCE AND GRADUATION RATES, AND OTHER STUDENT OUTCOMES, SCHOOL COUNSELORS NEED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS AND SUFFICIENT TIME WITH STUDENTS.

Title IX—Education for the Homeless and Other Laws

Title IX specifically inquires about how youths experiencing homelessness will receive assistance from counselors to advise and prepare them to improve their readiness for college.

HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR DISTRICT'S ALLOCATION TO ENHANCE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES FOR YOUR STUDENTS?

For more information about school counseling, contact Cynthia Floyd, NCDPI School Counseling Consultant, at Cynthia.Floyd@dpi.nc.gov or visit schoolcounseling.ncdpi.wikispaces.net



Public Schools of North Carolina
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