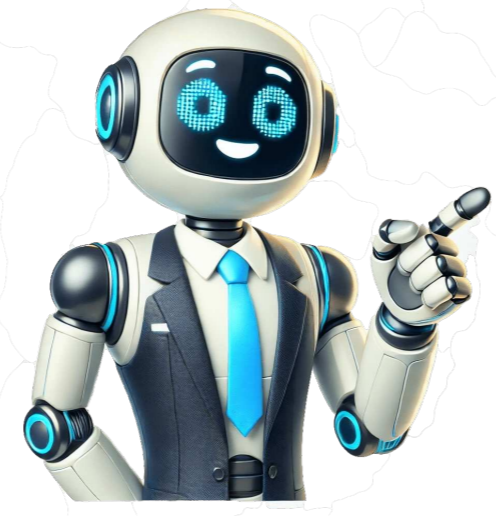


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Although ASCA recommends a 250-to-1 ratio of students to school counselors, the national average is actually 376-to-1 for the 20232024 school year (the most recent year for which data is available). See how the individual states stack up:Why does ASCA recommend a ratio of 250 students per school counselor?Since 1965, ASCA has recommended a student-to-school counselor ratio of 250:1. Although this ratio may be optimal, grade level and socioeconomic factors require close consideration. According to data from the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, the 20232024 national student-to-school-counselor ratio was 376:1. National ratios are higher in elementary/middle schools and lower in high schools, based on estimates using the NCES data. Because not all states report counts for elementary/middle vs. secondary school counselors, its not possible to calculate exact ratios by grade level. However, calculating by only the states that report elementary/middle school counselors and secondary school counselors separately (35 states), we are able to calculate ranges of 178:1 to 326:1 for high school counselors and 581:1 to 702:1 for elementary/middle school counselors (National Center for Education Statistics, Research dated to the 1950s indicates the school counseling role was much broader and much more clerical during that time. Analyzing the role of the school counselor, Hoyt (1955) determined that school counselors typically spent more than 55% of their time in counseling and group activities with students. The remaining 45% was spent working with teachers, conducting local research and performing clerical tasks. Based on his assessment, Hoyt concluded that school counselors should have no more than 400 pupils in their caseload. As the role of the school counselor became clarified further, ASCA adopted 250:1 as the optimal ratio, which reflects the goal that school counselors spend 80% of their time in direct and indirect student services.Several studies have noted that small ratios support increases in standardized test performance (Parzych et al., 2019), attendance (Carey et al., 2012), GPA (Goodman-Scott et al., 2018) and graduation rates (Lapan & Gysbers, 2013), as well as decreased disciplinary infractions(Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Lapan et al., 2012). Additional studies have shown that lower ratios also increase the likelihood of students having conversations with school counselors regarding college-going and postsecondary plans (Bryan et al., 2009; Danos, 2017; Engberg & Gilbert, 2014; Hurwitz & Howell, 2013; Woods & Domina, 2014; Lapan et al., 2019). Further, in an ASCA grant-funded meta-analysis of student-to-school-counselor ratio outcome studies, Kearney et al. (2021) found that a one standard deviation change in the ratio is likely to result in a 6% standard deviation in student outcomes, especially in terms of improving attendance, decreasing disciplinary infractions, and increasing high school graduation.How have the student-to-school-counselor ratios changed over time?While the national student-to-school counselor ratio has decreased, on average, by 1% per academic school year since the 19871988 school year, the national ratio remains well above the ASCA recommended ratio of 250:1 at 376:1 (2023-24 data). For the 2023-2024 school year, only Hawaii (249:1), New Hampshire (191:1) and Vermont (171:1) reported ratios within the recommendation. One quarter (25%) of respondents to the ASCA State of the Profession 2020 survey reported their caseload to be 250 or few students, while similar portions of respondents reported 251350 (26%) and 351450 (24%) students per school counselor. Many students lack sufficient access to school counselors and other support staff. In fact, students of color and students from low-income families are often shortchanged, receiving unequal access to school counselors or attending a school with too few school counselors. Currently, about 17% of high schools serving approximately 643,700 students (4% of all students) do not have a school counselor (US Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection). If you think back to your adolescence, you may recall a few interactions with school counselors. Or you might be the parent of a child who is working with one now. The role of school counselor is an important part of the educational environment. They are responsible for guiding and supporting students through challenging situations like adjusting to a new school or applying for college.You may be wondering, What does a school counselor do?The job title itself can be used to describe many kinds of professionals who work with children and young adults in various settings. But ultimately, any school counselor job description revolves around helping students develop the academic and social skills they need to succeed whether thats in school, on the playground or in college.Interested in learning more about what a school counselor does in their day-to-day duties through all grade levels? We spoke with seasoned school counselors to reveal more about their lives and the rewarding impacts they have on students.What Does a School Counselor Do?School counselors, sometimes called guidance counselors, perform a wide variety of tasks. According to Brandi Lewis, M.Ed, LPC, counselor and owner of Reach Counseling Solutions, the duties can be summed up as follows:School counselors serve the social and emotional needs of students so they can be prepared for academic rigor.With so much hinging on academic success, the role of a school counselor is extremely important. Beyond supporting the Lewis and emotional needs of students, they also help them explore interests and potential career options. Of course, these responsibilities vary depending on the ages of their students.School counselor duties can include anything from referring students to outside agencies for mental health concerns to doing lunch duty, explains middle school counselor Felicia G. Meadows, M.Ed. I do schedule changes, suicide prevention, meditations, individual counseling, referrals to outside services and classroom lessons just to name a few.Guidance counselors take on an array of responsibilities that help improve the lives of their students, both in and out of the classroom. The following are some common tasks you might find in a typical school counselor job description, as outlined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):Identifying issues affecting school performance, such as absenteeismAddressing social or behavioral problemsHelping students develop skills needed for academic successCounseling individuals and small groupsAssessing students abilities and interestsHelping students achieve academic or career goalsSchool guidance also works with teachers, administrators and parents to help students improve their classroom performance. They might suggest outside resources for additional support. Because these professionals are positioned to work closely with students, theyre also trained to detect and report possible cases of neglect or abuse.What Does a School Counselor Do at Each Grade Level?Now that youre familiar with some of the basic school counselor duties, lets dive into what these professionals do at the elementary, middle and high school levels.What Do Elementary School Counselors Do?A key part of an elementary school counselors job is to foster the foundational skills students need to excel in the classroom. Learning how to manage time and study effectively is critical to a childs academic success. An elementary school counselor may collaborate with teachers and administrators to ensure the curriculum addresses students needs.Elementary school counselors sometimes work with parents or guardians to discuss a childs classroom performance, developmental needs or behavioral issues. By supporting students at an incredibly formative period of their young lives, elementary school counselors help children develop good habits both in and out of school.What Do Middle School Counselors Do?Middle school is a challenging stage of development. Kids are going through a lot of changes, turning to peers for affirmation instead of parents, and they are often underequipped to deal with increasingly grown-up problems.Guidance counselors are there to provide critical support during this transition from childhood to young adulthood. They act as a safe space where students can access resources and connect with teachers, parents and administrators to make sure needs are being met.In addition to creating a caring learning environment that sets students up for success, middle school counselors also promote learning. They help students explore their interests and provide support for their academic and career plans. They work one-on-one with students experiencing personal problems. They might also work on a larger scale to educate students about drug abuse, bullying or other significant issues high schoolers face.Many people would be surprised to know that much of the time we are working with students who may have mental health or other personal concerns, Lewis reflects. We have to provide individual care for those students whether its referring them to a school-based mental health counselor or providing community resources. She adds that suicidal ideations are very real issues that she encounters while working with students at this age.On top of this, high school counselors also help prepare students for life after graduation. Lewis explains that,In high school, we often serve as one of the only contacts that students have related to college or career preparation.With graduation on the horizon, this remains an integral part of a high school counselors role. They provide aptitude assessments and individual planning to help identify a students interests and abilities.High school counselor job duties also include providing guidance on the college application process and other avenues, such as apprenticeships or training programs. They also help teenagers develop tactical skills critical to their future success, including applying for jobs, writing resumes and interviewing for positions.How Much Do School Counselors Make?Earning potential for this role will vary depending on location, type of school, education level and years of experience. That being said, the average school counselor salary in 2021 was \$60,510, according to the BLS. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$37,550, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$98,190.Fortunately, the market outlook for school counselor jobs is very promising. The BLS projects employment of school counselors will increase by 10% through 2030, with a projected 1.5% increase in the number of school counselors per student. This growth is driven by the need for school counselors to continue to focus on students academic, career, and social/emotional needs. Fair-share responsibilities should not preclude implementing, managing and accessing a school counseling program. School counselors participate as members of the educational team and use the skills of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration to promote systemic change. The framework of a school counseling program consists of the following four components: define, manage, deliver and assess. See The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs for more detailed information. DEFINE Three sets of school counseling standards define the school counseling profession. These standards help new and experienced school counselors develop, implement and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes. Student Standards ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success Professional Standards ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies MANAGE To be delivered effectively, the school counseling program must be efficiently and effectively managed. The ASCA National Model provides school counselors with the following program focus and planning tools to guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results. Program Focus Beliefs Vision Statement Mission Statement Program Planning School Data Summary Annual Student Outcome Goals Action Plans Classroom and Group Closing the Gap Lesson Plans Annual Administrative Conference Use of Time Calendars Advisory Council DELIVER School counselors deliver a school counseling program in collaboration with students, families, school staff, and community stakeholders. The ASCA National Model (2019) and the ASCA National Model Implementation Guide (2019d) have specific details and examples about each of the following areas: Direct Services with Students Direct services are face-to-face or virtual interactions between school counselors and students and include the following: Instruction Appraisal and Advice Counseling Indirect Services for Students Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors interactions with others including: Consultation Collaboration Referrals ASSESS To achieve the best results for students, school counselors regularly assess their program to: Determine its effectiveness Inform improvements to their school counseling program design and delivery Show how student growth and progress are different as a result of the school counseling program Annually, an experienced administrator completes the school counselor performance appraisal to evaluate the school counselors overall performance. Appraisal documents are often developed in alignment with state or district guidelines and may appear in a variety of frameworks selected by state and district leaders. Essential components of performance appraisal include evidence of: Design of a school counseling program Data-informed annual goals along with the measured impact of direct services delivery Data-informed classroom, small-group and closing-the-gap activities and interventions Calendars reflecting appropriate use of time aligned with ASCA National Model recommendation of 80% of time in direct and indirect services to students Collection and analysis of results data from classroom, small-group and closing-the-gap activities and interventions School counselors in both in-person and virtual/online environments develop and deliver school counseling programs that support and promote student achievement and standardize the assessment of program effectiveness. As outlined in the ASCA National Model, these programs include a systematic and planned program delivery involving all students and enhancing the learning process. The school counseling program is supported by appropriate resources and implemented by a credentialed school counselor. The ASCA National Model brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice, creating unity and focus toward improving student achievement and supporting student development. American School Counselor Association. (2019a). ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs (4th ed.). American School Counselor Association. (2019b). ASCA National Model: Executive summary. American School Counselor Association. (2019c). ASCA National Model implementation guide: Foundation, management and accountability. Carey, J. C., & Martin, I. (2015). A review of the major school counseling policy studies in the United States: 2000-2014. The Ronald H. Fredrickson Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation. Lapan, R. (2012). Comprehensive school counseling programs: In some schools for some students but not in all schools for all students. Professional School Counseling, 16(2), 848-8. Mullen, P.R., Chase, N., & Backer, A. (2019). Comparison of school characteristics among ramp and non-ramp schools. The Professional Counselor, 9(2), 156170. Savitz-Romer, M, Nicola, T. P., & Colletta, L. H. (2022). The promise of school counselors: Why they are essential for students and educators well-being. American Educator, 46(2), 1015. Weve detected that JavaScript is disabled in this browser. Please enable JavaScript or switch to a supported browser to continue using x.com. You can see a list of supported browsers in our Help Center. Help Center Lydia ParkFeb 23, 2024k min readThe independent education consultancy field is an ever-changing and adapting field, so keeping up-to-date on the latest trends is deeply important. As such,taking advantage of any resources available to you as a college counselor will be crucial for you to build credibility for your clients and create a network of trusted colleagues.One such resource that is particularly applicable for you is the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). ASCA provides many benefits for their members, which are school and college counselors. Joining an organization like ASCA might help you to branch out your business, network with professionals in the field, and remain up-to-date on the newest trends in the education consultancy space.The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a professional organization dedicated to supporting school counselors in their pivotal role of promoting the academic, career, and social-emotional development of students. With a membership of approximately 43,000 school counseling professionals, ASCA focuses on providing professional development, enhancing school counseling programs and researching effective school counseling practices. ASCA offers a comprehensive and dynamic membership program, designed to enhance skills, knowledge, and networking within the field. One of the cornerstone offerings is the ASCA Annual Conference, a premier event that gathers thousands of counseling professionals for workshops, keynote speeches, and sessions led by experts in college readiness, admissions, and counseling. This event not only provides cutting-edge insights into best practices and emerging trends but also offers a platform for college counselors to connect with peers, share experiences, and collaborate on innovative solutions to common challenges.The upcoming 2024 Annual Conference will take place in Kansas City, Missouri from July 13th to July 16th. 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