

# **North Allegheny School District**

## **School Counseling Department Program Review Report**

**February 2025**

### **North Allegheny Board of School Directors**

ELIZABETH M.J. WARNER- President

PAIGE HARDY- Vice President

LIBBY BLACKBURN

LESLIE BRITTON DOZIER

DR. ROBERT GIBBS

RICHARD MCCLURE

DR. ANISHA SHAH

DR. VIDYA SZYMKOWIAK

MICHAEL WENIGER

DR. BRENDAN HYLAND

Superintendent

North Allegheny School District

# **School Counseling Department Program Review**

## **Report Prepared by:**

AMY DELUCA, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

STEVEN M. SMITH  
Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction

BRYAN D. KIGGINS  
School Counseling Department Chairperson



# **School Counseling Review Team**

Bryan D. Kiggins, Department Chairperson  
Amy DeLuca, Ed.D., Director of Student Services  
Steven M. Smith, Coordinator of Curriculum & Instruction

## **School Counseling Program Review Team**

Rhonda Bielawski, NASH  
Lynne Earley, IMS  
Mary Insana, NASH  
Maddie Lewis, NAI  
Rianna Liebenguth, NAI  
Jen Rosato, NASH  
Shannon Salpeck, MMS  
Jenna Stand, PES  
Katie Wisniewski, MCK  
Erica Zinnser, FES

# **School Counseling Department Program Review Report February 2025**

## **Table of Contents**

School Counseling Department Philosophy Statement	5
Major Recommendations	6
Action Plan and Implementation Phase	21
Works Cited	24

# **School Counseling Department**

## **Philosophy Statement**

School Counseling is an integral part of the North Allegheny educational experience. The North Allegheny School Counseling Department is dedicated to fostering the academic, career, and social/emotional development of all students. We believe every student has the potential to succeed and deserves a safe, supportive environment where they can explore their interests and develop their talents. Our counselors advocate for individualized support that respects each student's unique background and needs. Through collaboration with administrators, teachers, parents, and the community, we aim to create a comprehensive program that empowers students to navigate challenges, build resilience, and achieve their personal and academic goals. We are committed to promoting continuous learning, building a growth mindset, and empowering every student we serve.

# Major Recommendations

The purpose of the North Allegheny School District Curriculum Review Process is to continually guide the analysis, revision, and reflection of the North Allegheny School District curriculum. A comprehensive and systematic process was utilized to evaluate the existing School Counseling Curriculum and programming. The results of that research has led to the following recommendations, developed to continue North Allegheny's highly successful school counseling curriculum and programming.

The following seven recommendations will drive the School Counseling Department's goals over the next four to six years. Each major recommendation is followed by specific goals and the findings to support those goals.

## **Recommendation I: School Counseling Philosophy**

### **A. Adopt the updated School Counseling Department Philosophy:**

School Counseling is an integral part of the North Allegheny educational experience. The North Allegheny School Counseling Department is dedicated to fostering the academic, career, and social/emotional development of all students. We believe every student has the potential to succeed and deserves a safe, supportive environment where they can explore their interests and develop their talents. Our counselors advocate for individualized support that respects each student's unique background and needs. Through collaboration with administrators, teachers, parents, and the community, we aim to create a comprehensive program that empowers students to navigate challenges, build resilience, and achieve their personal and academic goals. We are committed to promoting continuous learning, building a growth mindset, and empowering every student we serve.

### **B. School Counseling Philosophy will prioritize all students and families while focusing on the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) three domains: Academic, Social/Emotional, and Career.**

## **Rationale supporting Recommendation I:**

1. After reviewing the current philosophy and after much discussion, the team decided that a new and more concise philosophy statement was needed to better

reflect the vision and goals of the NASD School Counseling Department. This allows the department to easily communicate the philosophy to stakeholders and create physical and digital materials to emphasize the important role that school counselors play in our schools (NASD Curriculum Review Team 2024).

2. The philosophy reflects the District's strategic mission of "Preparing all students for success in a changing world" (North Allegheny School District 2022).
3. The philosophy emphasizes ASCA's national model by focusing on Academic, Social/Emotional, and Career domains (ASCA 2024).

## **Recommendation II: Enhancing Partnerships with Stakeholders**

- A. Structure School Counseling Advisory Council meetings for greatest impact by continuing biannual meetings and extending invitations to new stakeholders.
  - a. Extend invitations to stakeholders that can provide valuable insight and resources to support the development of students' academic, social/emotional, and career readiness skills.
    - i. College representatives, advisors, and counselors from higher education institutions
    - ii. Mental health counselors from community support centers
  - b. Engage stakeholders through the School Counseling Advisory Council to strengthen, nurture, and prepare the whole child for success in an ever-changing world.
- B. Continue evaluating building level transitions to enhance counselor-to-counselor communication to discuss new and existing student needs while considering building level differences.
- C. Continue to strengthen collaboration with local districts and increase involvement and participation in professional organizations (Allegheny County Counselors Association, Pennsylvania School Counselors Association, American School Counseling Association, Pennsylvania Association of College Admission Counselors) to stay current with trends facing students locally, regionally, and nationally.
- D. Focus on professional development specific to grade levels, current trends, and student needs.

- E. Expand “Counselor Coffees” to include all building levels to enhance lines of communication with all stakeholders.
- F. Provide career exploration opportunities for secondary-level students within the professional, technical, and/or trade field.
  - a. Job shadowing
  - b. Mock interviews
  - c. Career fair
  - d. Internship
  - e. Apprenticeship
  - f. Resume writing
- G. Implement a post-graduate survey (five years after graduation)
  - a. Develop an action plan and survey to gather relevant information to guide curriculum and services to improve student preparedness in a dynamic world after North Allegheny.

#### **Rationale supporting Recommendation II:**

1. In alignment with the District Strategic Plan, the recommendation supports the following performance indicators:
  - a. **Academic Excellence** 1.4 “increase the percentage of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that students feel prepared for their next school year or life beyond North Allegheny”.
  - b. **Continuous Learning** 2.1 “provide meaningful and relevant professional development for all employees”.
  - c. **Continuous Learning** 2.5 “actively participate in local, regional, and/or national organizations that embody innovative educational practices”.
2. “School counselors are in the unique position to affect change within their buildings, school districts and communities. The direct involvement of school counselors with students and their families, not only for school activities but for neighborhood events, builds trust and enforces stronger bonds for a continuous home–school connection” (Cleveland and Lee 2017).
3. “Students are the primary focus of school counselors. Everything you do should be with them in mind. You work directly with students through classroom lessons, small groups, and individual counseling sessions. Your goal is to address their social-emotional and academic needs and to increase their career awareness by



introducing them to the world of work” (Savvy School Counselor 2023).

4. “Establishing relationships with local community organizations, mental health professionals, social services, and other resources can extend your support network and provide additional resources for students who face challenging times. You definitely need these stakeholders in your corner” (Savvy School Counselor 2023).
5. “Parents and guardians are important partners in the well-being and education of your students. It is important to always keep the lines of communication open and to include these stakeholders whenever necessary in matters that concern their child(ren)” (Savvy School Counselor 2023).
6. “Being a team player is essential to supporting our students, especially when this profession can make you feel like you're on your own island!” (Bright Futures Counseling 2024).
7. “Relationships are the foundation of any school system transformation because students, teachers, families, and communities need to feel seen and heard for transformation to occur.” (Ball, Gyros, Scott, Aceves, and Holquist 2024).
8. Fox Chapel Area School District is utilizing bi-monthly email blasts sharing resources such as Care Solace and their Zen Den to students and families (Appendix C) (Fox Chapel Area School District 2024).
9. “For a school counselor, it can sometimes be frustrating when people don’t understand your role and what you can offer students. By engaging in professional advocacy and promotion, you can control the conversation and share the amazing things you are doing to support student success” (ASCA 2022).
10. “School systems are increasingly diverse communities, with a broadening diversity of students and staff alike. School counselors play a critical role in creating a welcoming school climate within the school community. As a catalyst for change within the school system, school counselors can create an effective community partnership culture for schools and families that is collaborative and welcoming for all. A discussion of school counselors’ role in creating a welcoming school climate towards LDS within the school and school community could pave the way for a more positive organizational culture. Using a systemic approach,

which aims to generate greater understanding and awareness, school counselors have the power to play a critical role in the transformation of the school system, especially for students from diverse backgrounds” (Yildiz 2021).

11. “School counselors are advocates, leaders, collaborators and consultants who create systemic change by providing equitable educational access and success” (ASCA 2024).
12. Stakeholders attending the NA School Counseling Advisory Council shared their desire for students to have more access to outside resources such as mental health providers, business partnerships, and school supports. They would like more communication regarding these supports and how to access them and the School Counselor (School Counseling Advisory Council from Wednesday, November 20, 2024).

### **Recommendation III: Supporting Student Emotional Well-Being**

- A. Develop and maintain a universal resource list for students and families in all grade levels.
  - a. Develop a committee with representatives from all grade levels to research and compile resources. This may include representatives from all areas of Student Services.
  - b. Maintain updates on resources list.
  - c. Ensure list access for all stakeholders.
- B. Research available options for connecting stakeholders with mental health supports.
  - a. Counselor Coffees K-12
  - b. Programs/Resources to minimize barriers for engaging in mental health supports
- C. Continue allocating time and resources to CADI for specific professional development focusing on current mental health trends, universal screener findings, and current research in best practices.
- D. Investigate the potential or feasibility for a physical space promoting emotional wellness and stress/anxiety reduction in each building.
- E. Research and possibly adopt a new risk assessment tool to be utilized by all

school counselors, K-12.

- a. Train school counselors and/or other Student Services professional staff to administer adopted risk assessment.

### **Rationale supporting Recommendation III: Supporting Student Emotional Well-Being**

1. In alignment with the District Strategic Plan, the recommendation supports the following performance indicators:
  - a. **Continuous Learning:** 2.1 “provide meaningful and relevant professional development for all employee groups within the organization.”
  - b. **Continuous Learning:** 2.4 “provide ongoing training to ensure staff are confident in responding to emergencies.”
  - c. **Safety and Wellness:** 5.2 “increase the percentage of students who feel they have a trusted adult at school.”
2. Through discussion with the district’s K-12 School Counseling Department, there is a high need from our community to provide a resource list with mental health professionals who treat various diagnoses/disorders (School Counseling Department, CADI).
3. All interviewed districts have their own version of a resource guide shared with families (Appendix C) (School Counseling Interviews 2024).
4. A [resource guide](#) is provided to all students and families in the North Hills School District. Families have shared positive feedback on the resource guide, and the district has seen an increase in support for their students (North Hills Area School District website 2024).
5. Fox Chapel utilizes [Care Solace](#) as a referral source for families who are looking for an outside mental health service. Families are assigned a point person (case manager) who will gather resources and share with students and parents. The program keeps data and records of how many times families were contacted and outcomes (Appendix C) (Fox Chapel Area School District, School Counselor 2024).
6. Each building in the Fox Chapel School District has at least one designated space for students used to promote emotional wellness and stress reduction

called the “Zen Den” (Appendix C) (Fox Chapel Area School District, School Counselor 2024).

7. Data on increase of 504/IEP for mental health concerns (NASD Special Education Department Records)
8. Approximately 600 risk interviews were conducted between 2018 and 2024. Over 200 of those were identified as being moderate to high risk level. Risk interviews were conducted in all grade levels (School Counselor Department Chair Records 2024).
9. The Columbia - Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) is utilized by hundreds of districts across the country. In addition, Glade Run Services, North Allegheny’s school based mental health provider, uses the C-SSRS to assess students at risk ([Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale](#)) (Columbia Psychology 2021).
10. “The C-SSRS is suitable for assessment of suicidal ideation and behavior in clinical and research settings” (Posner 2014).
11. Research on suicide prevention and interventions requires a standard method for assessing both suicidal ideation and behavior to identify those at risk and to track treatment response. The Columbia–Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) was designed to quantify the severity of suicidal ideation and behavior (Psychology Online 2011).

#### **Recommendation IV: ASCA RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program) Certification**

"RAMP Certified" refers to the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP), a designation awarded by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) to schools that demonstrate a comprehensive, data-driven, and results-oriented school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model.

RAMP certification provides schools with recognition and validation for their commitment to high-quality school counseling. RAMP certification signifies that a school's counseling program is comprehensive, well-structured, and demonstrably effective in supporting student success.

- A. We will identify 1-3 schools annually to apply for RAMP certification.

- a. Examine data on student achievement, attendance, discipline, and other relevant outcomes to determine which schools have demonstrated successful implementation of school counseling programs.
  - b. Review the extent to which schools have implemented the ASCA National Model components, such as data collection, program planning, and student support services.
  - c. Determine the student-to-counselor ratios in different schools and identify schools with adequate staffing for effective program implementation. All RAMP recommendations will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Student Services and school board.
  - d. Assess the level of administrative support for school counseling programs and identify schools where administrators are committed to supporting the program's goals. All RAMP recommendations will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Student Services and school board.
  - e. Determine the availability of resources to support school counseling programs, such as funding, training, and professional development opportunities.
  - f. Gather feedback from school counselors and other stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, and parents, to understand their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of school counseling programs.
  - g. Consider the professional development opportunities available for school counselors, such as training on the ASCA National Model and RAMP application process.
- B. Apply for RAMP certification, beginning with one building:
- a. Utilize the RAMP application timeline to plan for the application process and ensure the necessary data and information are collected in a timely manner.
  - b. Explore working with an ASCA coach or an ASCA-certified trainer (\$2,700.00 per school).
  - c. Apply through the RAMP application portal.
  - d. Collect and submit required data: gather evidence demonstrating our program's alignment with the ASCA National Model, including student data, program activities, and evaluation results.
    - i. Student data can be collected by requiring students to sign in via an iPad in each School Counseling Office to gather necessary student data
  - e. Pay the application fee (\$250-\$500 fee).

#### **Rationale supporting Recommendation IV:**

1. In alignment with the District Strategic Plan, the recommendation supports the following performance indicators:
  - a. **Academic Excellence:** 1.4 “increase the percentage of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that students feel prepared for their next school year or life beyond North Allegheny.”
  - b. **Empowering Students:** 2.5(2) “provide targeted training to 9-12 staff to become accepted and actively participate in local, regional, and/or nationally recognized professional organizations that embody innovative educational practices.”
2. School counselors can play a critical role in ensuring that students get opportunities to have safe, enriching experiences in and out of school, and in helping prepare students for postsecondary success — all in ways that meet their individual needs. But it’s difficult to do that meaningfully if school counselors are responsible for supporting unmanageable numbers of students (ASCA School Counselors Matter 2019).
3. Stakeholder feedback through the School Counseling Department Advisory Council stated that NA School Counselors are spending too much time in activities not related to school counseling (School Counseling Advisory Council discussion-11/20/24).
4. Stakeholder feedback through the School Counseling Department Advisory Council stated school counselor to student ratios are too high, which causes difficulty with accessibility and visibility (School Counseling Advisory Council discussion-11/20/24) (Comparison of School Characteristics Among RAMP and NON-Ramp Schools, The Professional Counselor Volume 9, Issue 2, 2019).
5. Ongoing ASCA National Model implementation is key to making the RAMP application submission a seamless process (ASCA RAMP Timeline 2024).
6. School Counselors must educate administration and building staff on appropriate supports and services done through the School Counseling Office. Professional development with these stakeholders will help eliminate non-counseling tasks from a School Counselor’s daily tasks (CADI and Curriculum Review Team discussions) (Comparison of School Characteristics Among RAMP and NON-Ramp Schools, The Professional Counselor Volume 9, Issue 2, 2019).

7. It is important “to offer a systemic model to unite school counselors, counseling leaders, and beneficiaries of the profession to promote professional advocacy efforts that comprehensively extend the influence of the school counseling profession to justly reach all students, and positively affect social change for schools, families, and communities” (Counselor Advocacy).
8. ASCA clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of a School Counselor. Utilizing their time in non-counseling tasks does not allow School Counselors to maximize their positive impact on students and the community (ASCA, Appropriate Activities of School Counselors 2024).
9. Lower student-to-school-counselor ratios combined with full implementation of the ASCA National Model can lead to more-informed college decision-making for graduating high school students (ASCA ANM Effectiveness Research 2024).
10. “Schools with comprehensive data-informed school counseling programs display higher academic outcomes compared to schools without such programs” (ASCA ANM Effectiveness Research 2024. Comparison of School Characteristics Among RAMP and NON-Ramp Schools, The Professional Counselor Volume 9, Issue 2, 2019).

### **Recommendation V: School Counseling Career Readiness Framework and Skills**

- A. Research and implement an evidence-based curriculum that develops students' interpersonal skills to increase employability and prepare students for an ever-changing world.
  - a. Explore available career readiness curriculums to support interpersonal skill building in grades K-12.
  - b. Align PDE Career Education and Work Standards with skills taught across departments and grade levels.
  - c. Collaborate with other district departments to teach and gather evidence regarding career ready skills.
  - d. Engage the Learning Management System (LMS) to provide space for lessons.
- B. Establish ways to implement professional development to stay current with the Career Readiness Framework through continued education.

### **Rationale supporting Recommendation V:**

1. In alignment with the District Strategic Plan, the recommendation supports the following performance indicators:
  - a. **Academic Excellence:** 1.4 “increase the percentage of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that students feel prepared for their next school year or life beyond North Allegheny.”
  - b. **Academic Excellence:** 1.5 “increase the number of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving are integrated through learning activities in the classroom.”
2. Based on information from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, “The PA Career Ready Skills illustrate the requisite skills that promote success in school, the workplace, and life. Such skills include goal setting, self-managing behavior, building positive relationships, communicating clearly, and resolving conflicts effectively. As noted earlier, research indicates that programs and policies designed to promote employability skill development among children and youth result in students' improved academic achievement, resiliency, and improved behavior and mental health. The long-term cost benefit for the application of employability skills is documented in the literature[12]” (Official Website of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania).
3. Stakeholder feedback through the School Counseling Department Advisory Council indicates a need for a Social Emotional Learning - SEL (Career Readiness Skills) curriculum to address PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Tier 1 needs of students. Tier 1 support in PBIS includes universal, school-wide strategies designed to encourage positive behavior and prevent issues for all students (School Counseling Advisory Council discussion-11/20/24).
4. The PA Career Readiness Continuum is a school progress measure related to school and student success. The continuum states “Pennsylvania 21st Century graduates must possess the knowledge, abilities, and habits to enter and complete postsecondary education and move to a successful career. To achieve this outcome, students must acquire robust employability skills: ability to communicate, solve problems, think critically, persevere, set goals, and work in teams. These skills are essential to equipping students to pursue their career opportunities with confidence and contribute positively to their communities” (PA Career Readiness Continuum 2024).



5. As reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, “Soft skills, also frequently referred to as 21st century skills, differ slightly from organization to organization. Most entities agree that academic and technical skills are not enough for successful employment. According to a 2013 survey commissioned by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 87 percent of teachers believe a larger focus on social emotional development would improve workforce readiness” (PDE Initiatives: PA Career Ready Skills 2024).
6. People develop soft skills through socialization, learning the values, attitudes, and actions through interactions with others: “In all occupations and industries, interpersonal skills—such as teamwork, decision-making and communication—are critical for employment success. Yet, many youth do not have exposure to training focused on such ‘soft’ skills prior to entering the workforce” (US Department of Labor - Soft Skills to Pay the Bills).
7. Research suggests, “Such principal skills are described by a varying array of terminologies, such as social and emotional learning (SEL), employability skills, and foundations for young adult success. Nevertheless, in a 2017 National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook survey, more than 7 in 10 employers report that they seek employees who demonstrate strong teamwork, problem solving, and communication skills” (PDE Initiatives: PA Career Ready Skills 2024).

#### **Recommendation VI: Review Testing Coordination**

- A. Review the current structure/system for district -wide testing coordination.
- B. Explore a systematic process for District-wide testing coordination.
- C. Develop an action plan by September of 2025.
- D. Develop an appropriate compensation and job description for an AP/SAT/ACT testing coordinator.

#### **Rationale supporting Recommendation VI:**

1. In alignment with the District Strategic Plan, the recommendation supports the following performance indicators:
  - a. **Academic Excellence:** 1.2 “increase the overall percentage of AP exam scores, resulting in a 3, 4, or 5.”

- b. **Academic Excellence:** 1.4 “increase the percentage of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that students feel prepared for their next school year or life beyond North Allegheny.”
- 2. Research shows 1.2 million students in the class of 2023 took more than 4.1 million AP Exams in public high schools nationwide, as educators enable a wider/ more diverse population of students to experience the benefits of AP courses. NA is included in this continued growth of testers and exam administration.
  - a. Research shows over the last 10 years, the number of public high school graduates nationally who have taken an AP Exam increased from 31.5% of the class of 2013 to 34.7% of the class of 2023.
  - b. North Allegheny administered AP exams have increased by 29% from 2020 (1,464 exams) to 2024 (1,889 exams). Currently for the 2025 exams, NA has 2,182 exams being ordered (15.5 percent increase from last year) (North Allegheny AP CB Exam Data 2024).
- 3. In 2023-2024, North Allegheny had 27 students/67 exams with accommodations. In 2024-2025, we currently have 24 students/84 exams with accommodations and an increase of 25% (Appendix E) (North Allegheny AP Exam Data 2024).
- 4. Two new AP exams were added at NA in the 2024-2025 school year, which has currently increased registrations by 135 exams.
- 5. The College Board extended the AP late exam window in 2024-2025 from 3 days to a whole week following the regular testing window and will still offer exception testing options into the fourth week of May. AP testing coordinator is not available to students 75-80% of May. To prevent students from losing access to their school counselor for essential academic, career, and social/emotional support, school counselors should not be tasked with the time-consuming role of test coordination (College Board 2024).
- 6. In 2020, research showed that the number one non-counseling task being completed by school counselors was “working with testing materials and test results” (Actual Practices vs. Existing Models 2024).
- 7. Research with surrounding districts shows different school staff members hold

roles with testing and different compensation. NA administers the largest number in AP exams in the surrounding area (Appendix D). (Counselor Interviews 2024)

### **Recommendation VII: Career Readiness Index**

The Academic Standards for Career Education and Work reflect the increasing complexity and sophistication that students experience as they progress through school. Career Education and Work Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at four grade levels (3, 5, 8 and 11).

The School Counseling Department, in collaboration with other departments, will help 98% of students in grades 5, 8, and 11 meet these standards.

- A. Grade 3: Counselors will teach a future planning lesson and help students complete a survey in the fall and spring through Naviance.
- B. Grade 5: Counselors will teach a future planning lesson and help students complete a survey in the fall and spring through Naviance.
- C. Grade 8: In 7th grade, counselors will help students complete a career cluster finder, research a career in their highest cluster and then interview a person in a career they are interested in exploring. Students will also complete “The Good Life” packet to help them start to plan their future goals. Students will complete a career plan in all 8th grade English classes.
- D. Grade 11: 11th grade English teachers will present the College & Career graded project.
  - a. Students will research one college or technical school and a corresponding career earned from that institution.
  - b. Students will complete a written element to include one of the following: college essay, personal statement, resume, cover letter, etc.
  - c. Students will attend the NASH Post-Secondary Fair hosted by the NASH School Counselors followed by completing a survey about their experience at the fair.

### **Rationale supporting Recommendation VII:**

- 1. In alignment with the District Strategic Plan, the recommendation supports the following performance indicators:
  - a. **Academic Excellence:** 1.4 “increase the percentage of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that students feel prepared for their next school year or life beyond North Allegheny.”

- b. **Academic Excellence:** 1.5 “increase the number of students and parents who strongly agree/agree that collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving are integrated through learning activities in the classroom.”
- 2. The Academic Standards for Career Education and Work reflect the increasing complexity and sophistication that students experience as they progress through school. Career Education and Work Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at four grade levels (3, 5, 8 and 11) in four areas:
  - a. 13.1 Career Awareness and Preparation
  - b. 13.2 Career Acquisition (Getting a Job)
  - c. 13.3 Career Retention and Advancement
  - d. 13.4 Entrepreneurship (Academic Standards for Career Education and Work 2024)
- 3. Through a comprehensive approach, Career Education and Work Standards complement all disciplines and other academic standards. If Pennsylvania’s students are to succeed in the workplace, there are certain skills that they need to obtain prior to graduation from high school. These skills have been identified in the Career Education and Work Standards, but it is up to individual school districts to decide how they are to be taught. Districts can implement integration strategies within existing disciplines or can implement stand-alone courses to specifically address these standards (Academic Standards for Career Education and Work 2024).
- 4. The Academic Standards for Career Education and Work reflect the increasing complexity and sophistication that students experience as they progress through school. Career Education and Work Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at four grade levels (3, 5, 8 and 11). The School Counseling Department, in collaboration with other departments, will help 98% of students in grades 5, 8, and 11 meet these standards.

2023-2024 Percentages:

➤	5th Grade:	97.2%
➤	8th Grade:	86.7%
➤	11th Grade:	59.9%

# Action Plan and Implementation Phase

The implementation and revision phase of this program review includes:

## 2024-2025 School Year Implementation

- Recommendation I: Update department and District webpages to reflect adopted philosophy.
- Recommendation II: Extend an invitation to more businesses to participate in the School Counseling Advisory Council.
- Recommendation II: Counselor Coffee before the end of the year for each grade level.
- Recommendation III: Establish a committee with other Student Services Team members to create a District-wide Resource Dashboard.
- Recommendation IV: Identify one school to apply for RAMP Certification and begin the process of being certified.
- Recommendation V and VII: Develop a sub-committee to research and review potential career readiness and interpersonal skill curriculum.
- Recommendation V and VII: A school counseling department representative will participate in other department curriculum reviews each year to align PDE Career Education and Work Standards within all curricular areas.
- Recommendation VI: Work with administration regarding counselor testing responsibilities for AP, SAT, ACT, PSSA, and Keystones and develop a temporary and/or long term plan of administering District testing.
- Recommendation VII: Develop an action plan to meet the PDE's required 98% completion rate at each grade-level for Career Readiness. School counselors will continue to collaborate with other curricular departments to ensure the goal is met for future school years.

## 2025-2026 School Year Implementation

- Recommendation II and VII: Develop a structured career exploration process for students that includes job shadowing, mock interviews, career speakers, Beattie opportunities, internships/apprenticeships, and career fairs to help them explore career options, build skills, and gain experience.
- Recommendation II: Implement a minimum of two Counselor Coffees per year per level.
- Recommendation III: Publish a District-wide Resource Dashboard for the Student Services Team and stakeholders.

- Recommendation IV: If previous buildings did not qualify for RAMP Certification, identify and remediate weaknesses. Select 1-3 other buildings to apply for RAMP Certification.
- Recommendation V: Continue to research and review potential career readiness and interpersonal skill curriculums. Propose selected curriculum by the end of the school year.
- Recommendation V and VII: A school counseling department representative will participate in other department curriculum reviews each year to align PDE Career Education and Work Standards within all curricular areas.
- Recommendation VI: Coordinate testing administration across the District in order to better align school counselor's role in accordance with ASCA.

#### 2026-2027 School Year Implementation

- Recommendation II: Implement the career readiness exploration process for all students, including job shadowing, mock interviews, career speakers, Beattie opportunities, internships/apprenticeships, and career fairs.
- Recommendation III: Create a committee to manage and update Resource Dashboard each year.
- Recommendation IV: If previous buildings did not qualify for RAMP Certification, identify and remediate weaknesses. Select 1-3 other buildings to apply for RAMP Certification.
- Recommendation V: Professional development and implementation of chosen career and interpersonal skill curriculum.
  - Develop a plan for cross-curricular implementation
  - Utilize a "train the trainer" model to provide consistency across grade levels and settings
- Recommendation V and VII: A school counseling department representative will participate in other department curriculum reviews each year to align PDE Career Education and Work Standards within all curricular areas.

#### 2027-2028 School Year and Beyond

- Recommendation II: Evaluate progress of the career readiness exploration process and make adjustments as needed.
- Recommendation IV: Complete RAMP Certification for all schools in the District and verify that the ASCA set guidelines are being met.
- Recommendation V: Fidelity check will be completed to review the effectiveness of the career readiness curriculum and consider changes that need to be made to stay consistent with the PDE Career Education and Work Standards.

- Recommendation V and VII: A school counseling department representative will participate in other department curriculum reviews each year to align PDE Career Education and Work Standards within all curricular areas.

## Works Cited

- "Access to School Counselors." *Family Engagement*, special issue of ASCA School Counselor, May-June 2024. American School Counselor Association, [www.ascaschoolcounselor-digital.org/ascaschoolcounselor/library/item/may\\_june\\_2024\\_family\\_engagement/4191823/](http://www.ascaschoolcounselor-digital.org/ascaschoolcounselor/library/item/may_june_2024_family_engagement/4191823/). Accessed 24 Jan. 2025.
- Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors*. American School Counselor Association. American School Counselor Association, [www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/8fe536c2-7a32-4102-8ce7-42e9b0683b3b/appropriate-activities-of-school-counselors.pdf](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/8fe536c2-7a32-4102-8ce7-42e9b0683b3b/appropriate-activities-of-school-counselors.pdf). Accessed 10 Jan. 2025.
- Ball, Ja'Chelle, et al. "Establishing Trusting Relationships to Transform School Systems." *Child Trends*, 12 Jan. 2025, [www.childtrends.org/publications/trusting-relationships-transform-school-systems](http://www.childtrends.org/publications/trusting-relationships-transform-school-systems). Accessed 17 Jan. 2025.
- Bright Futures Counseling. "How School Counselors Can Collaborate with Stakeholders." *Bright Futures Counseling*, <https://brightfutures-counseling.com/blogs/blog/how-school-counselors-can-collaborate-with-stakeholders> Accessed 10 Jan. 2025.
- Cleveland, Angela, and Diana Lee. "Top 5 Ways to Engage with Your Community." *Counselor News*, New Jersey School Counselor Association, Sept. 2017, [www.schoolcounselor.org/Newsletters/October-2017/Top-5-Ways-to-Engage-with-Your-Community/](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/Newsletters/October-2017/Top-5-Ways-to-Engage-with-Your-Community/). Accessed 17 Jan. 2025.



Mullen, Chae, and Backer. "Comparison of School Characteristics Among RAMP and NON-Ramp Schools," *The Professional Counselor* Volume 9, Issue 2, 2019.<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1221572.pdf>. Accessed 10 Jan 2025.

"PA Career Ready Skills Toolkit." *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Career Ready PA*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, [www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/student/career-ready-pa/pennsylvania-career-ready-skills/pa-career-ready-skills-toolkit.html#3](http://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/student/career-ready-pa/pennsylvania-career-ready-skills/pa-career-ready-skills-toolkit.html#3). Accessed 10 Jan. 2025.

"Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills." *Career Ready PA*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, July 2018, [www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/student/career-ready-pa/pennsylvania-career-ready-skills.html](http://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/student/career-ready-pa/pennsylvania-career-ready-skills.html). Accessed 10 Jan. 2025.

Posner, Kelly et al. "The Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale: Initial Validity and Internal Consistency Findings from Three Multisite Studies with Adolescents and Adults." *The American Journal of Psychiatry* vol. 168,12 (2011): 1266-77. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22193671/> Accessed 10 January 2025.

Savvy School Counselor. "Maintaining Stakeholder Connections." *Savvy School Counselor*, <https://savvyschoolcounselor.com/maintaining-stakeholder-connections/#:~:text=Parent> Accessed 10 January 2025.

"The School Counselor and High-Stakes Testing." *American School Counselor Association*, 2024,

[www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-High-Stakes-Testing](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-High-Stakes-Testing). Accessed 24 Jan. 2025.

"Soft Skills to Pay the Bills." *Office of Disability Employment Policy*, U.S. Department of Labor,  
[www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/individuals/youth/transition/soft-skills](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/individuals/youth/transition/soft-skills). Accessed 10 Jan. 2025.

"Student Advanced Placement Participation and Performance Increase Over Last Ten Years." *College Board Newsroom*, College Board, 29 Feb. 2024,  
[newsroom.collegeboard.org/student-advanced-placement-participation-and-performance-increase-over-last-ten-years](https://newsroom.collegeboard.org/student-advanced-placement-participation-and-performance-increase-over-last-ten-years). Accessed 10 Jan. 2025.

Yildiz, Nadire Gulcin. "Collaborative Leadership in the School Community: School Counselors and Principals Join Forces for Linguistically Diverse Students." *International Journal on Lifelong Education and Leadership*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2021, pp. 27-36. *DergiPark Akademik*, [dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ijlel/issue/67441/909564](http://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ijlel/issue/67441/909564). Accessed 17 Jan. 2025.