Research shows the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, as outlined by “The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” has a positive impact on student achievement. The development and implementation of these programs requires leadership from well-trained, highly competent high school counselors and includes a collaborative effort with school administrators, classroom teachers, school staff and community stakeholders.

High school students need guidance in making concrete and compounded decisions. They must navigate academic, peer and parental pressures as they face high-stakes testing, the challenges of college admissions, the scholarship and financial aid application process and entrance into a competitive job market.

MEETING THE NEED
High school counselors are educators uniquely trained in child and adolescent development, learning strategies, self-management and social skills who understand and promote success for today’s diverse students. They implement a comprehensive school counseling program to support students through this important developmental period. The program provides education, prevention and intervention activities, which are integrated into all aspects of students’ lives. The program teaches knowledge, attitudes and skills students need to acquire in academic, career and social/emotional development, which serve as the foundation for future success.

High school counselors do not work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. They provide a proactive program that engages students and includes leadership, advocacy and collaboration with school staff, administration and community/family members in the delivery of programs and activities to help students achieve success. High school counselors also collaborate with teachers and parents on early iden-
The work of high school counselors aligns with the school’s mission to support all students’ academic achievement as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century. This alignment is accomplished through the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive school counseling program. The tools guiding this work are the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success, which address students’ academic, career and social/emotional development, and the ASCA National Model, with its data-driven, results-based focus. Research demonstrating the effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs continues to grow, and there is evidence of the positive impact these programs have on academic and social/emotional development.

**HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM**

High school counselors define and focus the comprehensive school counseling program based on the school’s academic, attendance and behavioral data. Identifying student needs through this data and consulting with administrators guides program development. High school counselors provide equitable and appropriate services by addressing students’ academic, career and social/emotional developmental needs in addition to balancing delivery methods, recognizing students learn in multiple ways. The end result of this work is reflected in improvement in academic, attendance and behavioral outcomes related to academic development, college and career readiness and social/emotional development.

The ASCA National Model provides a flexible framework high school counselors use to develop a comprehensive program designed to meet their students’ unique needs. The delivery of these services includes:

**Direct student services including:**
- school counseling core curriculum
- instruction – direct instruction, team teaching, developing learning activities
- group activities – planned activities outside the classroom promoting academic, career or social/emotional development
- individual student planning
- appraisal – assist students in evaluating interests, abilities, skills and achievement
- advisement – assist students in goal setting based on academic, career and social/emotional data
- responsive services
- counseling – in individual or small group settings school counselors provide planned, short-term and goal-focused counseling. School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term counseling in schools; however, school counselors are prepared to recognize and respond to student mental health needs and to assist students and families seeking resources.

**Indirect student services including:**
- consultation – share strategies supporting student achievement with parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations
- collaboration – work with other educators, parents and the community to support student achievement
- referrals – support for students and families to school or community resources for additional assistance and information.

**RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL COUNSELING**

Numerous studies demonstrate the value of school counseling for students in the domains of academic development, college and career readiness and social/emotional development. Results of research about the effectiveness of school counseling can be found at schoolcounselor.org/effectiveness.

**THE ASCA NATIONAL MODEL: A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING**

For more information about comprehensive school counseling programs based on the ASCA National Model, go to schoolcounselor.org/ascanationalmodel.

(Revised, 2017)