



# Tiered Approach to School Counselor Advocacy

Advocacy at the school level requires maintaining an organized, documented – and sustainable – school counseling program and strategic action. A tiered framework can provide structure and consistency for your efforts throughout the school year.

By identifying evergreen Tier 1 tasks to inform and educate throughout the year, you can ensure administrators and other education partners are better informed.

Tiers 2 and 3 serve as strategic advocacy both for responding to harmful legislation, policies and processes, or supportive positive initiatives.

At Tier 3, the focus of advocacy shifts to navigating the aftermath of decisions made at the school or district level, as well as at state and national levels.

Effective advocacy has a cyclical, tiered approach. School counselors who understand and embrace a tiered approach can communicate the relevance of the school counseling program by showing how the work aligns with school and district priorities and verbalize the impact on students' life-readiness skills and achievement outcomes.



## **TIER 3: Implement and Support**

Tier 3 advocacy efforts are focused on navigating work after decisions are made, including ensuring compliance while monitoring impact on students and families. School counselors should be prepared to provide leadership when determining implementation of newly decided practices and processes within the school.



## **TIER 2: React and Respond**

Tier 2 advocacy efforts are responsive in nature and more specific to decision makers who determine new policies, laws or procedures that can affect students and the school counselor role or responsibilities, whether positively or negatively. Advocacy activities in this stage become necessary only when new issues are determined and decision-makers need to be informed of how a specific decision could impact students or the profession. Specific efforts may include mobilizing allies to share messaging and providing information, data and messaging to decision-makers through presentations, testimony, phone calls, emails and other modes of communication.



## **TIER 1: Prepare and Engage**

Tier 1 advocacy efforts build a strong foundation for establishing relationships, building a system for informing others of the school counselor role. School counselors engage all education partners throughout the school year. Activities include creating and sharing a school counseling calendar and ASCA Student Standards delivery plan and establishing a school counseling advisory council. Communication with all education partners is ongoing and a key component in Tier 1. Sharing and marketing activities and achievement gap goals are also considered Tier 1 advocacy. Emphasizing relevance and alignment through committee involvement and reporting student outcomes are vital to helping education partners be well-informed about the appropriate use of the school counselor and how students benefit from having access to the school counselor.

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## TIER 3: Implement and Support

- Work with principal/administrator to ensure compliance of new law/policy
- Ask for guidance from district/state to determine allowable scope of work under new law/policy
- Gather data and information from students and families to report impact to administration

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## TIER 2: React and Respond

- Prepare advocacy action when appropriate
- Provide data and information to decision-makers to communicate potential impact of proposed policy, process or procedure to students
- Use partners and allies to advocate for change and/or share messaging
- Organize school counselors and other affected groups to share messaging and evidence to support or oppose issue
- Seek advisement from district school counseling leaders (if applicable)
- Seek additional advisement if needed from state school counseling association or state department of education

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## TIER 1: Prepare and Engage

- Meet with principal or administrator in charge of the school counseling program at the start of each school year to discuss the school counseling program goals and plans (annual administrator conference)
- Establish rapport and forge relationships with students, families, teachers, administrators and other education partners at the school
- Include school counseling program activities and services with the school's weekly announcements
- Leverage technology to communicate information directly with students and families
- Be visible and engaged with students and staff
- Establish and maintain a presence at designated committee meetings (school improvement team, leadership team, etc.) to inform constituencies about the school counselor role and communicate how the school counseling program supports school priorities
- Engage and collaborate with parent/guardian auxiliaries
- Celebrate and include other school staff during National School Counseling Week
- Establish school counseling advisory council and coordinate a fall and spring semester meeting
- Present school counseling program plans and results with faculty, partners, school board, etc.