

Introduction

The Blanket Toss

The blanket toss depicted on the cover of this framework originally served an important function in Alaskan culture. It enabled the one being tossed in the air to scan the great expanse of ice for signs of life, sometimes for humans with whom to communicate, other times for life-sustaining food. The blanket toss has been transformed into a popular tradition at festivals that challenges those being tossed to reach ever higher levels without losing their balance. The success of the game is also a test of collaborative will and ability. Those holding the blanket must manifest the shared sense of purpose and coordinated effort to propel someone upward and always be prepared to catch them gently when they fall.

The blanket toss symbolizes the vision and work of the Alaska School Counselor Association. Alaska school counselors are dedicated to student growth and success. We are committed to providing a blanket of support and safety for every child.

Purpose of Framework

Welcome to the Alaska School Counseling Framework (ASCF). This document contains suggestions and tools for Alaska school counselors in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program in their schools and districts. The Framework was developed by a group of Alaska school counselors and is presented by the Alaska School Counselor Association. The framework articulates a vision of excellence for Alaska school counseling programs and identifies strategic priorities for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs based on the ASCA National Model (American School Counselor Association, 2005). A companion volume to the framework contains implementation tools to assist districts in implementing their counseling programs.

The ASCF has its origins in *The Comprehensive Counseling Program for Alaska Public Schools* (1989). This document is the fourth revision of the original, and the name has been changed to reflect innovations in school counseling. However, it still builds upon the experiences and successes of the Alaskan counselors who developed school counseling programs from the original document. A special effort has been made to address the unique problems that itinerant and rural counselors experience in their attempts to implement a counseling program in remote areas.

The ASCF supports school and student success by promoting academic, career, and personal/ social development for every student. Effective collaboration with students, parents, faculty, administrators, community, business, and post-secondary education partners creates successful school counseling programs. School counselors, using their leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, and data-driven decision-making skills can help every student receive a quality and equitable education.

A school counseling program based on the ASCF helps young people understand the link between academics and future plans, develop skills in career exploration, acquire and maintain positive personal/social relationships, and ultimately become responsible and productive citizens (Framework for K-12 Career Development in Rhode Island Public Schools, 2005)

Coalescing Events

The revision of the ASCF was made necessary by a number of events that have reshaped the future of public education and the K-12 school counseling profession.

The ASCA National Model

The ASCA National Model (2005) provides a national framework for defining comprehensive school counseling programs and implementing school counseling programs. In addition, it provides standards (student outcomes) for their academic, career and personal/social development.

Professional school counselors design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that promote student achievement. These programs are comprehensive in scope, preventative in design and developmental in nature. A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the school's academic mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, driven by student data and based on standards in academic, career and personal/social development, promote and enhance the learning process for all students. (ASCA, 2005)

The ASCA model provides a national vision for comprehensive school counseling programs. Two primary results that the school counseling profession hopes to achieve are:

- All students will achieve the standards delineated in the ASCA National Model.
- Comprehensive school counseling programs will be implemented in school districts throughout the country.

No Child Left Behind

The reauthorization in 2001 of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, better known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), is a watershed event that permeates every facet of education. It requires schools to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. NCLB calls for stronger measures of accountability and expanded options for parents to seek a high-quality education for their children. NCLB includes five primary goals to be realized by 2013-2014. The first three goals focus on the improvement of curriculum, learning, and qualified personnel. Goals 4 and 5 address affective development, school climate and culture, and graduation from high school for every child.

- Goal 1—By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

- Goal 2—All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
- Goal 3—By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
- Goal 4—All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
- Goal 5—All students will graduate from high school. (Source: Rhode Island Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs, 2005, p. 5)

Implementing a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program is foundational to reaching each of the five NCLB goals. Counselors impact the instructional program by motivating students to achieve academic success through raising student aspirations and collaborating with teachers. School counselors, partnering with all school personnel, strive for schools that are safe, drug-free learning communities. Counselors also focus their efforts on creating a climate of respect among students, faculty, and community.

Research suggests that high-quality counseling services can have long-term effects on a child's well-being and can prevent a student from turning to violence and drug or alcohol abuse. High-quality school counseling services can improve a student's academic achievement. Studies on the effects of school counseling have shown positive effects on students' grades, reducing classroom disruptions, and enhancing teachers' abilities to manage classroom behavior effectively. High-quality school counseling services also can help address students' mental health needs. (US Department of Education, 2002, p. 117)

Carl D. Perkins Act

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006, known as Perkins IV (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/sectech/leg/perkins/index.html>), was passed by Congress in July 2006 and signed into law by the President in August 2006.

Perkins IV defines career guidance and academic counseling as “guidance and counseling that –

(A) provides access for students (and parents, as appropriate) to information regarding career awareness and planning with respect to an individual's occupational and academic future; and

(B) provides information with respect to career options, financial aid, and postsecondary options, including baccalaureate degree programs.”

Under Perkins IV, counseling programs are required to reflect the Act's focus on high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations and non-traditional fields. Perkins IV also emphasizes serving special populations and again calls attention to “exposure to high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations and non-traditional fields, including occupations and fields requiring a baccalaureate degree.” The inclusion of the focus on BA degrees is a new addition that was added to encourage counseling programs to share the full spectrum of career pathway options, including both two and four year postsecondary options.

School districts may use Perkins funds to support career counseling and guidance activities for students who participate in career and technical education (CTE) programs, provided the districts meet all the program requirements of Perkins IV as defined by the United States Department of Education and the Alaska State Career & Technical Education State Plan for Perkins IV. For more information on these requirements, please contact the CTE staff at the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Organization of Framework

A brief description of each section in the ASCF is provided in the table below. In addition, a companion volume (“Implementation Tools”) is provided to help districts improve their counseling programs. The contents of the companion volume follow the table.

ASCF Sections	Description
Introduction	Describes the purpose of the framework, coalescing events that impact the future of school counseling and how the framework is organized.
The ASCA National Model	Discusses the importance of the ASCA model in establishing a vision for comprehensive school counseling, making the school counseling profession standards-based, developing new skills and the role of and benefits for primary constituencies in the school community.
The Alaska School Counseling Framework and School Reformation	Discusses the Alaska comprehensive school counseling program, its strategic priorities and implementation strategies.
Appendix A	Discusses realities and issues of itinerant and rural counseling in Alaska,
Appendix B	Contains student standards and competencies delineated in the ASCA National Model.
Appendix C	Contains a high level description of the National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG)..
Appendix D	Contains the Alaska Employability Standards
Appendix E	Contains the Alaska Cultural Standards for Students.
Appendix F	Contains Performance Standards for School Counselors, developed by the Alaska School Counselor Association.
Appendix G	Contains ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors.
Appendix H	Contains a list of references used in the framework and other useful resources.

Organization of Implementation Tools Companion Volume

Tools Provided	Description
Instructions for Using Implementation Tools	Provides directions for using the tool in the companion volume.
What Does It Mean to Be Standards-Based	Discusses what it means for school counseling programs to be standards-based. ASCA standards, National Career Development Guidelines and Alaska Employability Standards are crosswalked in this exercise.
Sample Counseling Curriculum Activities	Provides sample counseling activities for the academic, career and personal/social development domains.
Responsive Services Policies and Protocols	Provides policies and protocols for critical processes that impact the delivery of school counseling programs.
Itinerant and Rural Counseling in Alaska	Provides information and tips on itinerant and rural counseling in Alaska.
Electronic Resources	Provides a list of resources that can be accessed via the Internet. The resources are organized thematically.