

**Professional School Counseling Evaluation Rubric: Advocating for the  
Profession Through Awareness and Accountability**

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### **Abstract**

Professional school counselors have been advocating for their role as counselors in the schools for decades (Galassi & Akos, 2007; Gysbers, 2002; Slaten & Baskin, 2013). Although researchers have addressed this concern through advocacy in service and writing, school counselors continue to perform a significant amount of non-counseling activities. In this paper, we address one potential solution to this ongoing problem: the evaluation of school counselors. Currently, most school counselors are evaluated by school building administrators based on teaching standards. The author will introduce a protocol for administrators to utilize that is based on school counseling activities.

*Keywords:* school counselor, evaluation, training

## **Professional School Counseling Evaluation Rubric: Advocating for the Profession Through Awareness and Accountability**

For the past 30 years, the school counseling profession has been attempting to establish itself as unique and autonomous from other school professionals as well as differentiate itself from other counseling professionals (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2003; Gysbers, 2002; Pope, 2002; Slaten & Baskin, 2013). Many scholars and school counseling professionals have developed and integrated school counseling practice models to more accurately define the profession (ASCA, 2012; The Education Trust, 2009; Galassi & Akos, 2007; Gysbers, 2002). Further, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) continues to support efforts to train school counselors who advocate for themselves through data-driven program evaluation efforts. In light of this effort, there still remains a considerable amount of work to be done in order for school counseling professionals to be able to do the work they have been trained to do: direct counseling services provided to K-12 youth. There continues to be confusion among other school professionals' (e.g., teachers and administrators) in terms of understanding the school counselor's role in the K-12 setting.

One of the most visible ways in which role confusion is evident concerns the job evaluation process in K-12 schools. School administrators typically evaluate professionals in their schools based on a rubric, and more often than not, this rubric is the same for both teachers and counselors. Thus, school counselors are often evaluated based upon teaching criteria. Although ASCA has taken a position that evaluations of school counselors should be designed specifically for school counselors (2009), there are few evaluations easily accessible to school counselors and

administrators, leaving school administrators to define how school counselors are evaluated. This evaluation process causes many significant concerns. First, school counseling professionals are being evaluated for job duties for which they have not been specifically trained (Pyne, 2011; Slaten, Scalise, Gutting, & Baskin, 2013). Second, this means school administrators also have evaluative meetings with school counselors where the primary discussion is related to their job-related progress, which, when evaluated on a teacher-related standard means their ability to work in the classroom. Therefore, professional school counselors may be misevaluated by administrators who do not know how to appropriately evaluate counselors. Consequently, school counselors may not be able to fully use their counseling skills and training in their work environment and who might, then, experience dissatisfaction in their jobs (Pyne, 2011).

In a study conducted by Pyne (2011), school counselor job satisfaction was assessed in relation to the amount of school counseling-related activities they were able to perform. The researchers utilized a random sample of 117 professional school counselors across 110 different school districts. They assessed the relationship between job satisfaction and work tasks as a professional school counselor. The results of the study suggested that there was indeed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and the amount of counseling-related activities a school counseling professional was able to perform. Pyne (2011) also found that it is important to professional school counselors that they have the opportunity to conduct counseling-related activities in the school building. An additional finding was the impact that administrators had on the school counselor's satisfaction in their work. The researchers

found administrative support to be the strongest predictor of school counselor job satisfaction.

Additional research reinforces the importance of a positive relationship between school building administrators and professional school counselors (Curry & Bickmore, 2012). In a qualitative study that examined the needs of novice school counselors and what influenced their ability to feel as though they mattered at their school, Curry and Bickmore (2012) concluded that one of the most salient findings was that formal and informal interactions with principals and other administrative staff were very important to beginning school counselors. Further, the authors noted that these interactions can manifest themselves in the way administrators offer evaluative feedback, provide support for the work of the school counselor, and identify expectations for them as members of the school staff.

The conclusion of the aforementioned line of research implies that administrators must find ways to connect with school counselors and appreciate the role that they offer in a school building in order to increase their productivity and satisfaction. One way in which this could take place is by evaluating these professionals based on the work that they are trained to do, rather than on their teaching ability. The purpose of the current paper is to describe the process of development and dissemination of one plausible tool for evaluating professional school counselors. This evaluation tool is a template for future school counseling evaluation based on the job description of a school counselor as described by ASCA (2012). The purposes of this evaluation tool are as follows: 1) to assist principals in their efforts to increase school counselor effectiveness; 2) to provide clear expectations for school counselors; 3) to provide a way to advocate for prioritizing

actions that increase student academic development, post-secondary opportunities, and personal/social development; and 4) to support a fair and transparent school counselor evaluation process (Metzger & Wachter Morris, 2012).

### **Development of the Evaluation Rubric**

With funding support through the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), a multidisciplinary workgroup was tasked with the development of an evaluation tool and rubric designed specifically for school counselors. This workgroup consisted of volunteers from the state school counselor association and other groups identified by the governing board of the state school counselor association as having insight into and influence on school counselor evaluations. The final workgroup consisted of practicing school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, school counselor educators, building and corporation (i.e., district) level administrators, community youth organization leaders, and the school counseling liaison to IDOE. Throughout the process of discussion and planning, models and resources for development were identified, and it was decided to divide the evaluation tool into four sections (e.g., academic achievement, student assistance services, career development, and professional leadership), paralleling the ASCA national model (2005; 2012). Additional resources used to help design the initial school counselor evaluation included the following: ASCA counselor standards, Indiana Student Assist Services, California Carmel Unified School District Evaluation, Missouri School Counselor Evaluation, New Hampshire School Counselor Evaluation, North Carolina School Counselor Evaluation, Centinela Valley Union High School District, Indiana Program Standards for School Counselors, and the Indiana Student Standards (Metzger & Wachter Morris, 2012).

At this stage, the workgroup subdivided into four subcommittees, each responsible for creating items for one of the sections of the evaluation. Four members of the workgroup volunteered to facilitate that work and serve as representatives of the subcommittees. Committees submitted lists of potential items to the full group. The career development committee submitted four items, student assistance services committee submitted five items, and the academic achievement and professional leadership committees each submitted six items.

Once initial items were determined, the workgroup solicited schools to pilot the evaluation rubric, now titled the *Professional School Counselor Evaluation Rubric* (PSCER) and provide feedback for revision. Twenty dyads comprised of both a school counselor and their administrator teams representing all regions of the state volunteered to participate. From these initial 20 dyads, 18 completed the entire evaluation and provided feedback on items and ease of use to the workgroup.

Participant feedback was returned to the workgroup for examination and to spur discussion of further modification that might need to be made to the assessment. Comments from the school counselor/administrator dyads were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the assessment, but some critiques of wording and structure were made. This prompted minor language adjustments in several of the prompts and development of a frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet to accompany the assessment. The revised evaluation comprised of 20 items: six each for the academic achievement and professional leadership sections, and four each for the student assistance services and the career development sections. The entire school counselor

evaluation may be found in Appendix A. The accompanying FAQ sheet follows in Appendix B.

### **Guidelines for Implementation**

Discussions regarding implementation procedures for the PSCER were informed by literature examining school counselor and principal relationships (e.g., Finkelstein, 2009) and literature recommending reducing time spent in non-counseling duties (e.g., Slaten et al., 2013). Implementation of the PSCER is ideally a 5-step partnership. First, before the evaluation period is even begun, school counselors and their administrators look at the evaluation together in order to clarify expectations or target areas for the upcoming school year (or evaluation period). This allows for clear communication about priorities and clarification of the duties and foci expected of the school counselor. Further, it can serve as a time for the school counselor to highlight and advocate for increased time spent in direct service to students, rather than on non-counseling oriented tasks which have potential to draw resources away from activities that benefit students or building the school counseling program (ASCA, 2012).

Next, the school counselor should use information gained from this conversation to help plan and guide school counseling program activities for the upcoming year. This does not mean tailoring all activities to only focus on those deemed most important by the evaluator, but rather to look at ways to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the needs of all students. In addition, school counselors should be focused on looking for growth areas identified by a variety of other sources, including: needs assessment data, the school improvement plan, the administration, and the school counselor's perspectives.



Third, it is recommended that the school counselor reviews the evaluation periodically throughout the year to monitor perceived process, record information about data that could be used to provide evidence of effectiveness, and identify areas where more activity (or data documenting activity) may be needed. The authors recommend using natural breaks in the academic calendar (e.g., the end of a grading period, semester or trimester breaks) as a reminder to self-reflect on progress made and identify areas where more intervention is needed.

Fourth, at the midpoint of the evaluation period, it is recommended that the school counselor arrange a time with the evaluator to have a conversation about progress. This conversation could be used to identify areas that may have emerged as points for strategic intervention that had not been discussed during the initial meeting. This allows the school counselor an opportunity to clarify school needs, report on forward progress, and respond to areas that might have emerged as high-priority areas during the first half of the school year.

Finally, at the conclusion of the evaluation period, both the school counselor and evaluator should complete the evaluation separately. This allows for the school counselor to self-reflect, identify data to support effectiveness, and also identify areas targeted for professional growth and development. Once the evaluator has completed the PSCER, it is recommended that the evaluator and school counselor meet to have a clear discussion of the results. This allows the dyad to identify areas where the school counselor and evaluator disagree on ratings. These disagreements may highlight areas where increased communication of evidence of activities or data between school counselor and administrator could be helpful. Conversely, it may also indicate areas

where the school counselor is seen as highly effective, but may not feel the impact that the school counseling program is having at the building level. This conversation can also help provide guidance about areas where the school counseling program is excelling and where more targeted resources or focus may be needed for the upcoming year.

### **Systemic Support for Implementation**

In addition to the application of the above process, successful implementation of the PSCER on a systemic level requires four core principles be present: training and support; accountability; credible distribution; and decision-making (adapted from Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). Training and support is critical for administrators, particularly those that may be initially unfamiliar with the role and training of a professional school counselor. The PSCER reflects current literature about the roles and responsibilities of school counselors, which may differ from the role of “guidance counselors” or even the expectations that an administrator has for school counselors regarding a focus on test coordination, special education responsibilities, or administrative work, to name a few. In order to provide fair assessments of school counselors, some additional training or information about the role of the school counselor as part of a comprehensive school counseling program is important. This evaluation tool, as mentioned earlier, can be part of an initial step in advocating for job responsibilities reflective of the current national model (ASCA, 2012), but additional training and conversation may be necessary to help evaluators be fully informed about school counselor roles and responsibilities.

Second, the PSCER is based on the assumption that school counselors should be evaluated on the duties and responsibilities of a professional school counselor, rather than those of a teacher or administrator. Thus, in order for a school counselor to be held accountable for the items on the PSCER, school counselor evaluation should be seen as different from teacher or administrator evaluation. If an administrator had previously not supported a differentiated school counselor role, this may mean that redefining internal expectations of the school counseling program needs to be a priority for building and district-level administrators. If they purport to use the PSCER, they must be accountable to promote school counselor effectiveness.

Next, the rubric needs to be credibly distributed, meaning that it should be monitored for invalid results. Use of the rubric based on evidence provided by the school counselor and evaluator should provide ratings that are clear and accurate. If ratings appear to be inflated, they need to be examined and possibly deemed invalid. As mentioned previously, when school counselors and evaluators both complete the PSCER, a more complete and accurate evaluation is generated.

Finally, it is important to integrate this tool with other systems and policies that drive decision-making processes regarding school counselor employment decisions. Not only can it be used to inform and assist with decisions regarding tenure, promotion, retention, and compensation. Further, it can also be used as a way to target areas for professional development. In the case of potential disciplinary action or termination of a school counselor who is consistently ineffective, consistent use of this rubric can be a part of due process.

## **Discussion**

### **Implications for School Counselors**

First and foremost, the primary implication of this rubric is to allow school counselors to advocate for and receive evaluation processes that are transparent and based upon a job description that is grounded in the ASCA national model (2005; 2012). This would, ideally, also provide an opportunity to facilitate ongoing communication with the administrative team and/or the primary administrative evaluator of school counselors. This could allow school counselors to advocate for increased time spent in direct service to students and development of comprehensive school counseling programs and less time engaged in non-counseling related duties through clarification of work responsibilities and clear demonstration of the benefits of time spent in direct service to students.

A second implication is that the PSCER serves as a vehicle for school counselors to advocate for the school counseling profession. The PSCER, for example, could be disseminated to administration, teachers, and staff throughout a school district to help individuals who may not be familiar with the duties of a school counselor understand how to better work with school counseling professionals. It could also be distributed to parents at the beginning and midpoint of a school year in order to help them understand the role and responsibilities of the school counselor and how the school counselor benefits their children.

Another benefit is that use of the PSCER, particularly since it is fundamentally based upon the ASCA national model (2003; 2012), helps school counselors develop a comfort and facility with the language of and the roles described within the model. By

developing a common language and focus, school counselors in different schools within the district might be able to better communicate and aid in transition periods for students changing buildings, recruit and hire school counselors who are committed to running a comprehensive school counseling programs, and build a data-driven, effective school counseling program that serves the needs of all students in the building.

### **Implications for Counselor Education**

Although the PSCER is fundamentally a tool to be used for practicing school counselors, it also has implications for school counselor education. For example, it can help school counselors-in-training learn from the beginning of their programs how their role in the school can be quantified and evaluated, so that they are familiar with the process by the time they enter the field. Particularly if introduced in a professional orientation course and then employed as a self-evaluation piece during field experiences, school counselors-in-training can identify areas of strength, target areas for additional coursework or professional development, and begin to establish ways to provide data to support their program and the benefits that a comprehensive school counseling program has for students.

In addition, for school counselor educators, use of this rubric can support implementation of a school counseling program that is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) by meeting several of the 2009 *Standards* (e.g., SC A3; SC B2; SC I4; SC J2; SC J-3, SC O3; SC P1). School counselor educators could also use the PSCER to document areas where school counselors-in-training are benefitting local K-12 students. The results or activities

could be further disseminated and support a tenure and/or promotion document based on scholarship of learning or scholarship of engagement (see Boyer, 1990).

### **Implications for Administrators**

Many building administrators may be trying to accurately evaluate the work of their school counselors without rubrics or tools specifically designed for that purpose. The PSCER is an instrument that can help administrators who want to better understand and evaluate the work of the school counselors in their building. This can further help them target areas for strategic intervention as part of a school improvement plan, identify areas of strength and challenge to support hiring or retention of school counselors to a school board during times of lean budgets, and provide clear feedback to school counselors who may not be adequately serving students.

**Implications for Future Research.** Although the PSCER is an important initial step in moving towards consistent evaluation of school counselors based on the roles and responsibilities outlined by the ASCA national model, more research is necessary in order to determine outcomes and benefits of using the rubric. For example, a mixed-methods study of administrator/school counselor dyads could help illuminate any changes that occurred after implementing the PSCER from the perspectives of both administrators and school counselors. Furthermore, this evaluation tool could help determine more completely whether or not school counseling professionals are actually conducting counseling-related activities. This is a significant concern for the counseling community at large (Slaten & Baskin, 2014; Slaten et al., 2013), and perhaps the PSCER will increase the awareness of counseling-related activities in schools.

## **Conclusion**

Professional school counselors have been working to establish themselves as professional educators and mental health providers distinct from other educators and counseling professionals (ASCA, 2003; Gysbers, 2002; Pope, 2002; Slaten & Baskin, 2013). One way to provide clarity of roles and responsibilities within the school is through the use of an evaluation tool, which uses a rubric based on the ASCA national model, rather than with a teaching evaluation or an “off-the-cuff” conversation with building administrators. This article and its appendices provide the PSCER as an example of a school counselor evaluation developed by a multidisciplinary team. Through the use of the PSCER or another evaluation tool designed specifically for school counselors, the school counseling profession can continue to move forward in establishment of a clear identity and documentation of impact on students.

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## Appendix A

**DOMAIN 1: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT** – School counselors utilize data, knowledge of current trends, and standards to impact and support academic achievement and to engage all students in critical thinking.

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
1.1	The school counselor utilizes data to monitor student achievement and works collaboratively with stakeholders to enhance student success.	The school counselor effectively utilizes data to monitor student achievement and works collaboratively with stakeholders to enhance student success.	The school counselor monitors student achievement and sometimes utilizes the data to enhance student success through collaboration.	The school counselor monitors student achievement but does not utilize the data to enhance student success.	The school counselor does not monitor academic achievement.
1.2	The school counselor demonstrates knowledge of current trends in student development and academic achievement.	The school counselor regularly engages in professional development (e.g., attends relevant conferences, webinars, courses, in-services, reads professional journals, etc.) and incorporates new knowledge in her/his daily work.	The school counselor regularly engages in professional development.	The school counselor sporadically engages in professional development.	The school counselor does not engage in professional development.
1.3	The school counselor supports all students in making decisions, setting goals and taking appropriate action to achieve goals.	The school counselor encourages all students in using a decision-making/problem solving model and in developing effective coping skills for dealing with problems. The counselor assists <i>all</i> students in identifying short-term and long-term goals and in developing appropriate action plans.	The school counselor generally encourages students in using a decision-making/problem solving model and in developing effective coping skills for dealing with problems. The counselor assists some students in identifying short-term and long-term goals and in developing appropriate action plans.	The school counselor rarely encourages students in using a decision-making/problem solving model and in developing effective coping skills for dealing with problems. The counselor rarely assists students in identifying short-term and long-term goals or in developing appropriate action plans.	The school counselor does not encourage students in using a decision-making/problem solving model and in developing effective coping skills for dealing with problems. The counselor does not assist students in identifying short-term and long-term goals or in developing appropriate action plans.

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
1.4	The school counselor engages all students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities.	The school counselor consistently provides opportunities and support for all students to engage in problem solving and in investigating and analyzing concepts and questions.	The school counselor regularly provides opportunities and support for students to engage in problem solving and in investigating and analyzing concepts and questions.	The school counselor rarely provides opportunities and support for students to engage in problem solving and in investigating and analyzing concepts and questions.	The school counselor does not provide opportunities and support for students to engage in problem solving and in investigating and analyzing concepts and questions.
1.5	The school counselor utilizes and sequences guidance activities and materials to impact all students' academic achievement.	Guidance activities and materials are appropriate for students, designed to make content and concepts relevant, and engage all students in appropriate decision making. Activities are logically sequenced within individual lessons.	Guidance activities and materials are generally appropriate for students, designed to make content and concepts relevant, and engage most students in appropriate decision making. The majority of activities are logically sequenced within individual lessons.	Guidance activities and materials are partially appropriate for students and engage some students in appropriate decision making. Some activities are logically sequenced within individual lessons.	Guidance activities and materials are not appropriate for students and do not engage students in appropriate decision making. Activities are not logically sequenced within individual lessons.
1.6	The school counselor supports all students in developmentally appropriate academic preparation essential for a wide variety of post-secondary options.	The school counselor consistently guides <i>all</i> students in establishing challenging academic goals and understanding assessment results. The counselor assists all students in applying knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting and identification of postsecondary options consistent with students' interests and abilities.	The school counselor generally guides students in establishing challenging academic goals and understanding assessment results. The counselor assists some students in applying knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting and identification of postsecondary options consistent with students' interests and abilities.	The school counselor rarely guides students in establishing challenging academic goals and understanding assessment results. The counselor rarely assists students in applying knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting and identification of postsecondary options consistent with students' interests and abilities.	The school counselor does not support students in academic preparation essential for a wide variety of post-secondary options.

**DOMAIN 2: STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES** – School counselors assist students in developing attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills necessary for lifelong learning through effective programming and collaboration.

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
2.1	The school counselor assists all students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.	The school counselor consistently encourages students to acquire the attitudes, knowledge or interpersonal skills so that they can understand and respect self and others and effectively models appropriate behaviors.	The school counselor often encourages students to acquire the attitudes, knowledge or interpersonal skills so that they can understand and respect self and others and models appropriate behaviors.	The school counselor rarely encourages students to acquire the attitudes, knowledge or interpersonal skills so that they can understand and respect self and others and rarely models appropriate behaviors.	The school counselor does not encourage students to acquire the attitudes, knowledge or interpersonal skills so that they can understand and respect self and others and does not model appropriate behaviors.
2.2	The school counselor facilitates all students' understanding of safety and survival skills and implements prevention programming to support students' healthy physical, social, emotional, and academic development including stakeholder collaboration.	The school counselor consistently explains the students' right to a safe and secure school environment; helps students to differentiate situations that require peer support; provides adult assistance and professional help; assists students to identify resources; and implements prevention programming for students or stakeholders.	The school counselor often explains the students' right to a safe and secure school environment; helps students to differentiate situations that require peer support; provides adult assistance and professional help; assists students to identify school and community resources; and implements any prevention programming for students.	The school counselor rarely explains the students' right to a safe and secure school environment, helps students to differentiate situations that require peer support, adult assistance and professional help, assists students to identify school and community resources, or implements any prevention programming for students.	The school counselor does not explain the students' right to a safe and secure school environment, help students to differentiate situations that require peer support, adult assistance and professional help, help students to identify school and community resources, or implement any prevention programming for students.
2.3	The school counselor provides individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation, crisis intervention, and referrals.	The school counselor consistently addresses the diverse needs of students by providing individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation, crisis intervention, and referrals as appropriate.	The school counselor often addresses the diverse needs of students by providing individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation, crisis intervention, and referrals as appropriate.	The school counselor rarely addresses the diverse needs of students by providing individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation, crisis intervention, and referrals as appropriate.	The school counselor does not provide individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation, crisis intervention, or referrals.

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
2.4	The school counselor provides services to all students, fostering a clear understanding of diversity, ethnicity, and culture.	The school counselor consistently provides services to all students, fostering a clear understanding and appreciation of diversity, ethnicity, and culture.	The school counselor takes a multicultural or diverse perspective into consideration when providing services to students.	The school counselor sometimes provides services to students from a multicultural or diverse perspective and fosters a clear understanding of diversity, ethnicity, and culture.	The school counselor never takes a multicultural or diverse perspective into consideration when providing services to students.

**DOMAIN 3: CAREER DEVELOPMENT** – School counselors facilitate a comprehensive career program that develops an understanding of the relationship between school and work and supports student in the application of strategies.

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
3.1	The school counselor facilitates a comprehensive career program that is age-appropriate and aligned with local, state, and national standards.	The school counselor facilitates age-appropriate career development, aligned with local, state, and national standards, utilizing outside resources (i.e., family, community, work force), to expand career knowledge and experiences.	The school counselor facilitates age-appropriate career development, aligned with local, state, and national standards. Outside resources are occasionally used.	The school counselor rarely facilitates age-appropriate career development, aligned with local, state, and national standards.	The school counselor does not facilitate age-appropriate career development.
3.2	The school counselor facilitates all students' understanding of the relationship between academics, personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.	The school counselor helps all students understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success, explains how work can help students achieve personal success and satisfaction, and demonstrates knowledge of students' background, skills, and interests. Data include age-appropriate assessments, increasing awareness of interests, abilities, aptitude, and values. The counselor uses this knowledge to meet students' needs and assist in career development, promoting lifelong learning and employability skills.	The school counselor helps all students understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success and explains how work can help students achieve personal success and satisfaction. The counselor promotes lifelong learning and employability skills. Some data is utilized.	The school counselor rarely helps students understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success and rarely explain how work can help students achieve personal success and satisfaction. The counselor rarely promotes lifelong learning and employability skills. Data is rarely utilized.	The school counselor does not help students understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success and does not explain how work can help students achieve personal success and satisfaction. The counselor does not promote lifelong learning and employability skills. Data is not used.

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
3.3	The school counselor supports all students in the application of strategies to achieve future success and satisfaction.	The counselor consistently helps students apply decision-making skills to career awareness, career planning, course selection, and career transitions. Students are encouraged to use multiple research and informational resources to obtain career information.	The counselor helps students apply decision-making skills to career awareness, career planning, course selection, and career transitions. Students are encouraged to use multiple research and informational resources to obtain career information.	The counselor rarely helps students apply decision-making skills to career awareness, career planning, course selection or career transitions. Students are rarely encouraged to use research and informational resources to obtain career information.	The counselor does not help students apply decision-making skills to career awareness, career planning, course selection, or career transitions. Students are not encouraged to use research and informational resources to obtain career information.
3.4	The school counselor collaboratively analyzes data, utilizes research-based interventions and develops programming to assist students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for lifelong learning and career readiness.	The school counselor consistently collaborates to analyze data, utilize research-based interventions and develop programming to assist students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for lifelong learning and career readiness.	The school counselor often collaborates to analyze data, utilize research-based interventions and develop programming to assist students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for lifelong learning and career readiness.	The school counselor rarely collaborates to analyze data, utilize research-based interventions and develop programming to assist students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for lifelong learning and career readiness.	The school counselor does not analyze data, utilize research-based interventions or develop programming to assist students in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for lifelong learning and career readiness.

**DOMAIN 4: LEADERSHIP LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE** – School counselors adhere to ethical standards, grow professionally, advocate for student success, provide system support, and deliver a school counseling program

Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
4.1	The school counselor establishes professional goals and pursues opportunities to grow professionally.	The counselor's professional goals are evidenced in improved personal, professional, and program development. (S)he is an active member of one or more professional organizations or networks.	Professional goals are developed, and the school counselor often pursues applicable opportunities to acquire knowledge and enhance skills and participates in the professional community.	Professional goals are sometimes established. The school counselor infrequently or indiscriminately pursues opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills and rarely participates in the professional community.	Professional goals are not established. The school counselor does not pursue opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills and rarely participates in the professional community.
4.2	The school counselor takes a leadership role as an advocate within the counseling department, the school setting, and the community.	The school counselor provides consistent and effective leadership in the school counseling program, the school, and the community in a way that directly benefits students, families, educational personnel, and/or community stakeholders.	The school counselor provides consistent and effective leadership in the school counseling program and the school.	The school counselor inconsistently provides leadership, but may not follow through appropriately or may not demonstrate an effective leadership style.	The school counselor provides no leadership—either formal or informal—in the counseling department, the school setting, or the community.
4.3	The school counselor collaborates with teachers, parents, and the community to advocate for the success of all students and increase awareness of students' needs.	The school counselor demonstrates effective communication skills and collaboration with teachers, families, and community stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds. The school counselor demonstrates a direct impact of these collaborative activities on students.	The school counselor demonstrates effective communication skills and collaboration with teachers, families, and community stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds.	The school counselor is inconsistent in communication and community engagement, OR is effective with only a very small population to the detriment of others.	The school counselor is an ineffective communicator and is disengaged with teachers, the parents and community stakeholders.



Indicator	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)	Score
4.4	The school counselor adheres to ethical standards of the counseling profession, respects student confidentiality, and follows the laws, policies, and procedures, which govern school programs.	The school counselor always demonstrates professional conduct and integrity; seeks appropriate intervention services for student consultation, and/or (clinical) supervision; abides by ethical and legal codes and seeks consultation and supervision as needed.	The school counselor typically demonstrates professional conduct and integrity; seeks appropriate intervention services for student consultation, and/or (clinical) supervision; abides by ethical and legal codes and seeks consultation and supervision as needed.	The school counselor typically holds to the ethical code of the American School Counselor Association but may fall short of the highest ethical standards. The counselor's consistency in law, policy and procedure is questionable.	The school counselor has breached confidentiality. The counselor demonstrates disregard for laws, policies, and procedures in a manner that could have led to harm to students, families, or the educational mission of the school.
4.5	The school counselor plans, organizes and delivers an effective comprehensive school counseling program (within the resources of the school and corporation).	The school counseling program is comprehensive in addressing the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. The school counselor demonstrates student outcome data that are directly attributable to the school counseling program.	The school counseling program consistently builds the academic, career, and personal/social development of most students in the school, supporting at least some of this with student outcome data.	The school counseling program serves some students and lacks data to support effectiveness. The school counselor is not demonstrating initiative to improve the school counseling program.	The school counseling program is ineffective and the school counselor has demonstrated no attempts to make improvement to the delivery systems, increase the students served, or evaluate areas of particular strength or weakness.
4.6	The school counselor provides systems support by effectively managing the school counseling program, as well as supporting other educational programs and student services. Note: This may include other school duties assigned by the administration, provided these assignments do not interfere with the counseling program and services to students.	The school counselor serves as a collegial leader and positive role model to provide management activities that support the counseling program, advocate for all students, and promote ethical standards with students, school personnel, parents, and community agencies.	The school counselor provides management activities that support the program's guidance, counseling, and advocacy initiatives in a way that advocates for all students; assists teachers with the integration of guidance activities into the curriculum; and shares ethically appropriate information about students with school personnel, parents, and community agencies.	The school counselor provides some, but not adequate, program management to the school counseling program. The school counselor is inconsistent in supporting other educational or student services programs.	The school counselor does not support the school counseling program with any program management activities. The school counselor is not involved—or is minimally involved—in providing support to other educational or student services programming through partnerships.

**SUMMARY AND RATING** – May be based on observations, school counselor reflections, classroom visits, and data.

Overall Rating

Indicator	Maximum Score	Score	KEY	
Academic Achievement	24		61-80	Highly Effective
Student Assistance Services	16		41-60	Effective
Career Development	16		21-40	Improvement Necessary
Professional Leadership	24		0-20	Ineffective
Strengths				
Specific Growth Areas				
Additional documentation may be attached.				
Employee Signature: _____		Date: _____		
Administrator Signature: _____		Date: _____		

\*The ratings have been discussed between the evaluator and the school counselor. Signing this document attest that the school counselor has read the document, not that he/she is in agreement with the document.

## **Appendix B**

### Professional School Counselor Evaluation Rubric Frequently Asked Questions:

#### **1. Do I have to use this tool?**

No, but this is an option which focuses on school counseling-specific indicators, that was developed by a team comprised of administrators, school counselors, school counselor educators, and youth-focused community organizations. This tool can be tailored to the specifics of your school or corporation, but covers the entirety of the American School Counselor Association National Model and the Indiana School Counseling Standards.

#### **2. What do I need to do to prepare for this evaluation?**

Ideally, this tool can be a source for collaborative goal-setting between school counselors and administrators prior to the evaluation process. At the beginning of the year, it can be used for goal-setting and dialogue about the needs and challenges of the school counseling program. Also, through this conversation, ideas can be generated in advance about evidence that can be collected to document school counseling activities (e.g., GPA changes, discipline/behavior referrals, pre/post-tests or assessments, number of students directly served through individual and group counseling, number of referrals, scholarship dollars received by students, anecdotal evidence from students, teachers, parents, administration, ISTEP+ scores, etc.) used throughout the year. Then, at the conclusion of the year, school counselors can use this process to self-reflect on their effectiveness, areas of specific strength, and areas for growth for the upcoming year.

#### **3. What are some types of professional development?**

Professional development may include (but is not limited to) reading professional journals, attending professional conferences, workshops, and/or webinars, networking with others, listserv participation, and supervising graduate student field experiences.

The primary significance of professional development is the activity is relevance to your growth as a school counseling professional.

#### **4. What if some indicators are not applicable to every counselor in the building?**

The school counselor does not have to deliver all services in order to be highly effective. The school counselor may be coordinating, collaborating, or otherwise providing program management, but not personally implementing each indicator--in fact, school counselors often collaborate with multiple individuals in the school. Although all indicators are vital parts of a comprehensive school counseling program, some school counseling services may be delivered by one or two members of a school counseling team or other designated school personnel. By collaborating with these individuals, you will meet the indicator. Each of these indicators should be present in some way in each building.

#### **5. What does “all students” mean?**

According to the American School Counselor Association, school counselors are responsible for implementing programming that serves every student in their building. For the purposes of this evaluation tool, “all students” is defined as those students assigned to you. Therefore, if there are multiple school counselors within one building, students in the building and tasks related to management of the school counseling program may be divided amongst multiple counselors. Each school counselor should be evaluated based upon their particular caseload of students and their implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program.

#### **6. Why is there only one evaluation tool for PK–12, rather than evaluations tailored to specific levels?**

The state of Indiana currently provides one evaluation tool for teachers, administrators, and school counselors. Each indicator is based on national and state standards that are relevant to every school level. The evidence provided to support each indicator, however, may be quite different from level to level. The provision of one evaluation tool

also helps provide consistency for school counselors who might be serving multiple levels.

### **7. What if the wording is unclear to me?**

The wording used in this document is drawn from the latest literature and standards of the school counseling profession. Please discuss individual interpretations with your building administrator and school counseling colleagues.

### **8. How can a school counselor or administrator address a lack of resources for the counseling program that is hindering a highly effective or effective rating?**

Initially, this should be part of an early and ongoing conversation between the school counselor and her/his administrator. For example, if the school counselor to student ratio is significantly higher than the 250:1 recommended ratio, or there are significant time or financial limitations, that could be part of a problem-solving and priority-setting conversation at the beginning of the school year. For the evaluation process itself, it is acceptable to attach additional information explaining how the program can benefit from recommended changes or additional resources and identifying ways of procuring those resources.

### **9. Where is attendance, meeting deadlines, or punctuality addressed?**

This is indirectly addressed in the indicators throughout the evaluation tool. It can also be addressed under growth areas or strengths. Failure to meet attendance, deadlines, or punctuality standards may be addressed throughout the year, rather than as part of the formal evaluation process.

### **Biographical Statements**

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