

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised School Counseling Model of Practice and Standards

1. Where can I find the revised school counseling model of practice and standards?

Revisions can be found on the Tennessee State Board of Education website [here](#). Additionally, school counseling information can be found on the department website ([here](#)). This webpage will be updated regularly.

2. When do the revised model and standards go into practice?

The revised model and standards will go into effect for the 2017-18 school year. We understand that it may take some time to achieve full implementation; therefore, the department will be proposing a delayed implementation timeline to the State Board of Education. However, our expectation is that all schools will have an implementation plan in place for the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.

3. Is my district required to have a school counselor/school counseling program?

Yes. Per T.C.A. § 49-6-303, "Each LEA shall employ or contract with school counselors for pre-kindergarten through grade twelve (pre-K-12)," and "The school counseling program shall be established and operated under guidelines adopted by the state board of education."

4. Are districts required to meet the basic education program (BEP) funding ratios for school counselors to students of 1:500 for grades K-6 and 1:350 for grades 7-12?

No. The recommended ratios in the [BEP](#) are a funding formula, not a spending formula. District administrators must determine how to best use these dollars for instructional programs and personnel to meet the needs of their students. While the law mentioned above does mandate a school counseling program, it does not mandate a certain school counselor to student ratio. [Research](#) indicates smaller ratios do increase student outcomes and the national recommendation of the [American School Counseling Association](#) (ASCA) is 1:250 for grades pre-K-12.

5. When should a district plan to remove any misaligned responsibilities from school counselors?

While the revised model will go into practice in the 2017-18 school year, we anticipate that it may take time for districts to fully realign the responsibilities of school counselors. Given this, the department will be recommending a delayed implementation timeline at the upcoming State Board meeting to clarify that the responsibilities of school counselors do not have to be reassigned by the 2017-18 school year. Additionally, the department will be working with school leaders to identify and communicate effective strategies to reassign those responsibilities that prevent school counselors from providing the services outlined in both state board policy and state statute. These strategies will be released through an *Implementation Guide* of templates and guidance and a *Resource Guide* of examples and case studies, both of which will be available in spring 2017.

6. What is the Program Management Agreement? When should it be completed?

The Program Management Agreement (or annual agreement) is a tool designed to help facilitate the planning of the comprehensive school counseling program between the administrator and school counselor(s). It should be completed no later than the beginning of each school year. The department will provide examples and specific training with the release of the *Implementation Guide* in January 2017 and through training for counselors and administrators through spring and summer 2017. In advance of these events, we encourage you to view [examples provided by ASCA](#).

7. How do I provide training for my counselors to begin implementing the revised model?

The department will provide training for counselors through regional school counselor collaboratives, summer training opportunities, professional conferences, webinars, and online modules through the spring and summer of 2017. Additional strategies for district-led training will be provided throughout the 2017-18 school year. To learn about your region's next school counselor collaborative, please contact your local CORE office. Registration information for spring and summer trainings will be shared during the 2017 spring semester.

8. Does the revised model and standards change the evaluation for school counselors?

No. Current evaluation procedures state that school counselors should be evaluated using the [TEAM School Services Personnel Rubric](#). However, because the revised model and standards create new expectations for school counselors, the department will be reviewing the evaluation policies for school counselors and making recommendations for revision. These recommendations will ensure that school counselors are evaluated on the totality of their counseling programs and receive high quality feedback so they can improve their practice.

The department will provide guidance on how to evaluate school counselors in accordance to the revised model and standards and the current SSP Rubric. If you are interested in participating in the review and revision process, please email School.Counseling@tn.gov.

9. Who can I contact if I have additional questions about the revised school counseling model and standards?

The coordinator of school counseling services, Leigh Bagwell, can be reached via email at School.Counseling@tn.gov.