

School Counseling Programs

What's Effective According to the Research

March 2019



A Review of Research on the Effectiveness of School Counseling Programs and Interventions

School counseling as a profession lacks sufficient, relevant research into the effectiveness of its interventions based on multiple reviews of school counseling programs by researchers across the country. A 2018 study by Zyromski, Dimmitt, Mariani, & Griffith states that there is “a continued dearth of intervention research in the field of school counseling.”

Brief summaries of three recent research studies further illustrates this point.

Study 1.

In 2017, Villares and Dimmitt completed and published a research study that updated an earlier Delphi analysis identifying research priorities for school counseling.¹ The table below summarizes the highest ranking school counseling research priorities for the field.

Highest Ranked Research Priorities

SC program-level factors— impact on student outcomes	What are the impacts of using the ASCA National Model or not using the ASCA National Model?	1
SC delivery of services	What are the best practices related to the use of evidence-based interventions and practices?	2
SC partnerships, collaboration, community, and family involvement	What are the best practices for SC interventions that improve social justice, equity, advocacy, and closing student achievement gaps?	2
SC program-level factors— impact on student outcomes	What are the impacts of using evidence-based practices?	2
Accountability	What are the best practices related to program evaluation?	3

Study 2.

A more recent meta-analysis, presented at the 2019 Evidence-Based School Counseling Conference, investigated the impact of school counselor-led interventions on K-12 student academic, social-emotional and career outcomes and the ASCA model.²

Overall, researchers identified 50 studies combining all variables for **school counselor-led interventions** which showed a **positive effect on students** (Hedges’ *g* ES = .216-[small]). In examining the effectiveness of school counseling programs that follow the **ASCA National Model** at increasing K-12 students’ academic achievement, career and social-emotional development, and college readiness (as compared to students who do not participate in an

¹ Updating the School Counseling Research Agenda: A Delphi Study, Villares, Dimmitt, Counselor Education & Supervision (2017)

² Meta-Analysis of School Counseling Outcome Research, Villares, Elizabeth, Dimmitt, Carey (unpublished)

ASCA National model program), researchers were able to identify **only two studies that met the inclusion criteria**.

Study 3.

A third study from 2012 sheds light on two key obstacles to increasing the quality and quantity of school counseling program research. One obstacle is that many school counselors feel counseling research does not influence or impact the day to day realities they face with students. Research is not considered relevant or practical. The other challenge is school counselors' lack of perceived skills to gather and use data.³

This quote from the research study summarizes these findings: "School counseling leaders have called for school counselors to be involved in practitioner research—research conducted by school counselors for school counselors—throughout the history of the profession...School counseling practitioners have said that they do not see the value of research because **it does not address issues that are relevant to practice**, nor do they have the training or time to conduct their own research or even read the research of others. And school counselors reported on a recent survey that while they understand the importance of using data, they **lack the skills** to design inquiries that require data collection and apply data to decision making at their sites."

Evidence-Based Practices in School Counseling

What does effective, evidence-based practice look like in the school counseling profession?

Evidence-based practice, or EBP, reflects a three step process of:

- using data to determine needs
- identifying research-supported interventions or practices that can be implemented to address the previously determined needs
- evaluating whether the implemented interventions were effective⁴

Key Tenet 1

The initial component of EBP in school counseling is using data to drive decision-making. Research indicates that the **use of data in school counseling programs results in better student outcomes** and increased stakeholder support. Scholars have reviewed approaches to making data-driven decisions regarding school counseling practices and have explored the dispositions and beliefs of school counselors who use data to make decisions in their programs. Translating and conveying this information to practicing school counselors is a continual process.

³ A Call for School Counseling Practitioner Research, Carol J. Kaffenberger, Ph.D., A Call for School Counseling Practitioner Research, Vol 16, 1, Professional School Counseling, 2012

⁴ Evidence-Based School Counseling: Models for Integrated Practice and School Counselor Education Zyromski, B., Dimmitt, C., Mariani, M., & Griffith, C. (2018)

Key Tenet 2

The second component of EBP is finding, creating and implementing evidence-based school counseling interventions. In school counseling, evidence-based interventions can be used as counseling approaches, classroom curricula, and school-wide programs. This has been a more recent emphasis of the profession, with multiple calls for additional school counseling intervention research that can inform practice. As a result of the lack of research, school counselors either create unique interventions that may or may not be effective, or use evidence-based interventions from related fields such as education, educational psychology, psychology, mental health counseling, or social work.

The **most well-researched intervention pertaining to school counseling is a program called Student Success Skills**. Researchers have analyzed the SSS curriculum in multiple well-designed outcome studies and found that it positively impacts social skills, students' feelings of connectedness, executive functioning and self-regulation, and academic achievement.

Key Tenet 3

The third component of EBP is an evaluation of student outcomes. This emphasis has been a part of the profession from the 1920s to the present day, with authors in recent decades focusing on school counselors' capacity for evaluating the impact of their work to illustrate accountability. Previous research has shown that school counselors have a high level of interest in program evaluation but report varying levels of related skills.

School counselors involved in a **mentoring program** reported higher program evaluation skills and confidence than a general sample of school counselors working in a large school district. School counselors who had participated in **professional development training in evaluation** within the previous 12 months reported higher interest, skill level, and confidence in their ability to evaluate outcomes.

School counselors can benefit from learning and applying the cycle of EBP into their school counseling programs. For example, school counselors can form **EBP-focused data teams**, which focus on (a) gathering school-wide academic, postsecondary, and social/emotional data to highlight student needs; (b) identifying appropriate and rigorous intervention options based on specific and measurable goals; and (c) evaluating the short- and long-term impact of interventions on student outcomes. Practitioners can regularly share the work of the data team with stakeholders; impact data (e.g., achievement data, attendance, behavior referrals) in particular can be effective in advocacy efforts and in emphasizing the role of school counselors in facilitating student success.

School counselors who use **evidence-based interventions** can be much more confident that the time and energy spent implementing a curriculum or a group is worthwhile. Although sometimes creating unique materials is necessary due to contextual factors or resource constraints, well-developed interventions with evidence of efficacy increasingly already exist. School counselors can then evaluate the impact of their school counseling interventions.

What's Effective According to the Research Comprehensive Counseling Models

The two research studies summarized below provide a snapshot of the most current research around the effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling models.

Study 1.

Carey and Dimmitt (2012) completed a meta-analysis of six statewide research studies on the effectiveness of comprehensive counseling models using a variety of designs, instrumentation, and measures.⁵ The research studies from Utah, Nebraska, Missouri, Connecticut, Wisconsin and Rhode Island shed light on important questions related to effective practice in the field of school counseling. They provide valuable evidence of the relationship between positive student educational outcomes and school counseling program organization, student-to-school-counselor ratios, counselor time use, and specific school counseling activities.

Table 1 summarizes the implications of these six statewide studies for practice at the counselor, school, district, state, and national policy levels. This table also includes implications for school counselor education.

For school counselor practice on a day-to-day level, these studies have unambiguous findings about how counselors should spend their energy and time to, 1) make **sure that a coordinated program is in place, and to 2) provide important direct services to students and their families** through career education, college and career counseling services, academic supports, parent communication, and the use of data to plan and improve services.

At the school and district level, these studies found that it matters **which services school counselors are providing for students**, and also **how many counselors are providing those services**.

All six studies showed clear and consistent evidence that **a coordinated, comprehensive guidance program such as the ASCA National Model** is correlated with several crucial positive student outcomes. These studies also consistently found significant correlations between **student-to-school-counselor ratios and student outcomes**.

Overall, the research provides a clear imperative for all students to receive **state-of-the-art, 21st-century college and career counseling services from qualified, professional school counselors**.

⁵ School Counseling and Student Outcomes: Summary of Six Statewide Studies, Carey, J., & Dimmitt, C. (2012)

TABLE 1**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Level of Practice	Practice Suggestions Based on Research Findings	Future Research Questions
School Counselor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use data (NE, RI, UT) 2. Prioritize college and career-readiness counseling (CT, RI, WI) 3. Prioritize career and technical education (NE) 4. Prioritize promoting academic success (RI) 5. Prioritize parent involvement (RI) 6. Spend time on responsive services, guidance curriculum, and individual planning (WI, but not NE and UT) more than program evaluation (WI) and system support (NE, UT, WI) 	Which specific practices in each of these areas are most effective?
Program/School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a differentiated school counseling program delivery system if one is not in place (NE, UT) 2. Implement the ASCA National Model if not already in place (UT, WI) 3. When implementing ASCA National Model components, start with the Management System and add in Foundation and Evaluation components later (WI) 	<p>If a school does not have a differentiated delivery system and is not using the ASCA National Model, which should be prioritized for implementation?</p>
District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a comprehensive guidance program such as the ASCA National Model, if not already in place (RI, UT, WI) 2. Decrease student-to-school-counselor ratios to improve student attendance (MO, NE, UT), improve student discipline rates (CT, MO, UT), and improve student graduation rates (MO) and technical proficiency (NE) 3. Provide district-level professional development for school counselors in relevant areas 4. Create school and district policies that ensure equitable school counseling program access for all students (CT, RI) 	<p>Are there optimal ratios for ASCA National Model implementation?</p> <p>Are there optimal time use profiles for maximal impact on students?</p> <p>How can schools and districts best ensure equitable access to comprehensive school counseling services?</p>
State	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandate ASCA National Model use (NE, UT, WI) 2. Mandate student-to-school-counselor ratios to improve student outcomes (CT, MO, NE, UT) 3. Provide state-level professional development for school counselors in the areas of college counseling, career counseling and education, academic support, guidance curriculum, data use, and parent involvement where needed (CT, MO, NE, RI, UT, WI) 4. Create state policies that ensure equitable school counseling program access for all students (CT, RI) 	<p>What are the effective state policies and approaches to facilitate ASCA National Model implementation in states with centralized decision making? In states with local control?</p> <p>How much compliance is there with state mandates for school counseling practice and staffing?</p> <p>How can states best ensure equitable access to comprehensive school counseling programs?</p>
School Counselor Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate school counseling students about how to implement differentiated delivery systems and the ASCA National Model (NE, UT, WI) 2. Educate school counseling students about college counseling (CT, RI, WI) 3. Educate school counseling students about career and technical education and counseling (CT, NE) 4. Educate school counseling students about how to use data (NE, RI, UT) 5. Educate school counseling students about how to provide guidance curriculum, responsive services, and individual planning (WI) 	<p>To what extent do school counselor education programs teach the competencies that have the greatest impact or that have little impact on student outcomes?</p>

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

TABLE 1, CONT.

Level of Practice	Practice Suggestions Based on Research Findings	Future Research Questions
National Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to refine the ASCA National Model based on research findings (NE, UT, WI) 2. Continue to push for decreases in ratios (CT, MO, NE, UT) 3. Continue to mandate the use of data to make program decisions, measure outcomes, ensure equitable access, and determine accountability (NE, RI, UT) 4. Ensure that all students receive state-of-the-art 21st century college and career counseling services from qualified professional school counselors (CT, RI, WI) 	<p>Which national policies implemented by the Federal Department of Education lead to the implementation of effective school counseling practices?</p> <p>Does advocacy by professional associations (ASCA, ACA) result in better Federal policy?</p>

Study 2.

A study conducted by Wilkerson, Pérusse and Hughes in 2013, compared the school-wide Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) results in Indiana schools earning the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation (n = 75) with a sample of control schools stratified by level and locale (n = 226).⁶ Indiana K-12 schools earning the RAMP designation in 2007, 2008, and 2009 comprise the experimental group.

The findings indicate that school-wide proficiency rates in English/Language Arts and Mathematics are significantly higher in RAMP designated elementary schools compared to elementary school controls. Four-year longitudinal results indicate a significant positive difference between RAMP-designated elementary schools and comparison schools in Mathematics proficiency.

Though the findings are limited, they provide significant evidence of the **impact of comprehensive, data-driven, accountable school counseling programs at the elementary level** and suggest further research is needed at the middle and secondary levels.

TABLE 1 2009 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ALL RAMP AND CONTROL SCHOOLS

Groups	N (Sample)	2009 School-wide Proficiency Rates – ELA		2009 School-wide Proficiency Rates – MATH	
		M (%)	SD*	M (%)	SD*
RAMP/Controls by level					
Elementary RAMP schools (2007-2009)	24	78.2%	8.1	80.0%	8.0
Elementary controls	72	72.1%	12.3	73.6%	12.4
Middle RAMP schools (2007-2009)	17	71.4%	15.7	73.3%	16.0
Middle controls	53	70.2%	8.1	71.8%	10.4
Secondary RAMP schools (2007-2009)	34	71.6%	8.1	70.1%	10.9
Secondary controls	101	68.4%	11.0	65.5%	13.9

Note. School-wide ELA and MATH proficiency rates for RAMP (2007-2009) and control schools by level (elementary, middle, secondary).
*SD scores have been translated to %

⁶ Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and Student Achievement Outcomes: A Comparative Analysis of RAMP versus Non-RAMP Schools, Wilkerson, K., Pérusse, R., & Hughes, A. (2013)

TABLE 3

LONGITUDINAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR 2007 RAMP VS. CONTROL SCHOOLS

ELA

Groups		2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		% Proficient (Overall)	
RAMP/Controls by level	N	M (%)	SD ¹	M (%)	SE						
Elementary RAMP schools (2007)	17	76.9%	9.7	78.5%	9.5	78.4%	9.4	78.8%	8.9	78.1%	.024
Elementary controls	51	73.4%	13.2	71.0%	15.1	73.8%	12.9	71.9%	13.8	72.5%	.014
Middle RAMP schools (2007)	8	67.2%	17.2	73.5%	14.8	71.9%	10.3	72.4%	15.2	71.3%	.035
Middle controls	24	68.3%	7.0	69.7%	8.4	69.7%	7.7	70.5%	6.8	69.5%	.020
Secondary RAMP schools (2007)	18	70.8%	9.1	70.0%	9.5	71.8%	8.9	70.8%	8.1	70.8%	.023
Secondary controls	55	68.0%	11.7	68.0%	10.7	68.3%	12.5	68.4%	11.2	68.1%	.013
TIME (Overall)		70.8%		71.8%		72.3%		72.1%			

MATH

Groups		2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		% Proficient (Overall)	
RAMP/Controls by level	N	M (%)	SD ¹	M (%)	SE						
Elementary RAMP schools (2007)	17	81.1%	7.5	82.3%	7.0	81.5%	10.4	80.6%	7.7	81.4%	.025
Elementary controls	51	76.5%	11.9	72.7%	16.1	75.8%	12.5	72.9%	13.3	74.5%	.015
Middle RAMP schools (2007)	8	74.7%	14.1	75.7%	14.8	75.3%	9.2	71.5%	18.1	74.3%	.037
Middle controls	24	69.9%	7.6	69.8%	8.4	69.8%	8.9	68.5%	8.5	69.5%	.021
Secondary RAMP schools (2007)	18	69.5%	12.1	69.7%	11.6	70.5%	10.3	70.0%	10.5	69.9%	.024
Secondary controls	55	64.6%	14.3	65.9%	12.5	66.8%	14.3	66.0%	13.8	65.8%	.014
TIME (Overall)		72.7%		72.7%		73.3%		71.6%			

Note. Descriptive statistics for experimental RAMP schools (2007) by level (elementary, middle, secondary) compared to random control schools on school-wide proficiency rates (ELA and MATH) over time (2005-2006 through 2008-2009).
¹SD scores have been translated to %

What's Effective According to the Research

Student to Counselor Ratios

Two recent studies examining the impact of student to counselor ratios on student success have shown mixed results with few significant, positive correlations.

Study 1.

Beginning last year and with funding from ASCA, researchers Akos, Domina, and Bastian, sought to understand more about the relationship between school counselor ratios and student outcomes. Data was provided by the Department of Public Instruction in North Carolina which partnered with the Educational Policy Initiative at Carolina at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to conduct the analyses.⁷

Results of the study show that the quantity and quality of school counseling resources in elementary and middle schools in North Carolina does impact student outcomes. The relationship of **school counselor ratio** to student outcomes showed **positive, but mixed results**.

What researchers found is that an increased quantity of school counselor resources (especially a lower student to school counselor ratio) has a statistically significant relationship for certain outcomes and for specific school levels and student populations. Similarly, the relationship between student outcomes and the quality of school counseling resources reflected by the **RAMP designation also demonstrated small and specific positive associations**.

Significant relationships include the following:

- **End of Grade Achievement Test Scores:** A statistically significant positive relationship was found between end of grade achievement test scores in mathematics and school counselor ratios. Specifically, these relationships are positive for White students in elementary and middle school, Black students in middle school, and students who are not categorized in a lower socio-economic status (not on free or reduced lunch). While the findings are statistically significant, they are miniscule and associated with less than 1% of the variance in student test scores.
- **Course Grades:** Only students who were not identified in a lower socio-economic status in middle school demonstrated a positive significant relationship between school counselor resources and course grades, whereas data demonstrate a significant but negative relationship between school counselor resources to course grades in the transition to middle school. It appears that counselor resources generally do not buffer the traditional grade decline during transitions across school levels.
- **School Absences:** Overall, there is a negative relationship between school counselor resources and student absences (fewer student absences with increased school counselor resources). Similar to the engagement data with course grades, school

⁷ 2017 ASCA Grants Project: The School Counselor Ratio and Student Success, Patrick Akos, Thurston Domina, Kevin Bastian, (2018), <https://scale-research.org/article/4869>

counselor resources do not appear potent enough to buffer the typical decline in school engagement, especially those due to being absent, in the transition to middle school.

Study 2.

A newer, ongoing study in Connecticut and New York, by Parzych, Donohue, and Gaesser relies on a correlational study.⁸ The work replicates an analysis completed by investigators in Indiana, which posits that student to school counselor ratios of no more than 250:1 are optimal for meaningful student outcomes.

Investigators are examining the impact of ratios on attendance, achievement, suspension rates, graduation rates, and college entrance rates. The study goes further by adding a qualitative component to the quantitative analysis, in order to capture students' perceived needs based on resources available in their communities (city, suburban, rural/town). Socio-economic status is also included.

Preliminary findings from Connecticut quantitative analysis indicate there is **not as clearly correlated a relationship between student outcomes and ratios**. Investigators are still completing data collection and analysis with New York public schools.

What's Effective According to the Research A Summary of Effective and Discredited Interventions

Identifying what evidence-based practices are NOT effective may be as important as finding activities that are.

Of interest are school counseling interventions that have mixed results, including school-based suicide prevention programs and school-based bullying prevention programs, and the discredited intervention of grade retention for remediating academic difficulties, all of which school counselors are called upon to support and/or deliver.

Table 2, on the following page, summarizes the results of a 2017 study of effective and discredited counseling interventions. The study summarizes "...**treatments that have been reliably debunked** in the literature, that overlap with similar surveys in clinical and counseling psychology, and that have relevance to a school psychologist...(and) evidence-based techniques that represents those **empirically supported treatments with a high level of scientific rigor**."⁹

⁸ 2017 ASCA Grants Project: A Study to Measure the Impact of School Counselor Ratios on Student Outcomes Jennifer Parzych, Peg Donohue, Amy Gaesser (2018). <https://scale-research.org/article/4873>

⁹ Broadening Our Understanding of Evidence-Based Practice: Effective and Discredited Interventions, Zaboski, B., Schrack, A., Joyce-Beaulieu, D., & MacInnes, J. (2017)

Table 2 Recommended vs. perceived research: descriptive statistics

Intervention and use	Recommended					Research support				
	<i>M^a</i>	<i>Med^b</i>	α^d	SD	NF ^c	<i>M^e</i>	<i>Med^b</i>	α^d	SD	NF ^c
Discredited			0.702					0.811		
Group therapy for adolescents with conduct disorder	2.52	2		0.954	9	2.88	3		1.062	15.8
Attachment therapy (holding/rebirthing) for attachment disorders	1.63	1		1.074	37.2	2.31	2		1.099	34.2
Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) for crisis debriefing	3.62	4		1.243	39.7	3.55	4		1.022	42.1
Weighted vests for developmental disabilities or autism spectrum disorders	3.1	3		1.079	10.3	3.18	3		0.952	10.7
Expressive experiential therapies (gestalt) for the treatment of adolescent disorders	2.1	2		1.044	34.6	2.8	3		0.954	45.3
Play therapy for ADHD	2.37	2		1.241	16.3	4.29	4		0.61	23.1
Grade retention for remediating academic difficulties	1.78	2		0.941	3.8	2.18	2		1.09	2.6
Mixed results			0.715					0.636		
School-based suicide prevention programs	3.93	4		1.011	8.6	3.73	4		0.779	10.3
School-based anti-bullying programs	4.2	4		0.959	7.4	3.93	4		0.884	9.0
Solution-focused therapy for child and adolescent disorders	3.84	4		1.03	12.5	3.68	4		0.747	12.0
Psychodynamic therapy for eating disorders	2.19	2		1.344	33	2.79	3		1.041	38.2
Jungian sand tray therapy for adolescent disorders	1.91	2		1.019	44.9	2.47	2		0.929	54.7
Evidence-based			0.531					0.747		
group CBT for adolescent depression	3.65	4		1.052	8.6	3.9	4		0.891	7.7
Cognitive-behavioral therapy for childhood anxiety	4.06	4		0.896	8.8	4.28	4		0.673	2.6
Parent management training for oppositional behavior	3.88	4		1.154	1.3	3.89	4		0.812	13.3
Behavioral classroom management for the treatment of children with ADHD	4.6	5		0.628	8.8	4.39	4		0.61	1.3
Obesity prevention messages targeted at all families starting at the time of the child's birth (for the prevention of childhood or adolescent obesity)	2.69	3		1.209	20.5	3.23	3		0.813	37.3

^aNot likely to recommend was coded 1; extremely likely to recommend coded as 5. Scores of six (corresponding to the not familiar option) were coded as zeroes for the analyses.

^bMedian

^cPercentage of respondents unfamiliar with an item

^dCronbach's Alpha

^eNo research support coded as 1; extremely strong research support coded as 5

Evidence-Based Practices

Collected on the following pages are multiple tables that summarize effective school counseling strategies based on the research. Broad-based prevention and implementation programs are highlighted first, followed by sets of evidence-based practices (EBPs) based on elementary, middle and high school delineations of:

- Program Design
- Implementation Support
- Effectiveness Evidence.

Additional information is added regarding College Readiness. We hope you will find these resources to be helpful when designing, implementing or reviewing school counselor programs.

Evidence-Based Prevention Programs

Program Name	Academic Achievement	Conduct/ Problem Behaviors	Favorable Attitudes Toward Problem Behavior	Improving Commitment to School	Improving Mental Health	Improving School Attendance	Interaction with Friends Involved in Substance Use	Perceived Risk of Substance Use	Rewards for Prosocial Involvement at School	Self-Control	Social Skills	Substance Use	Ages 0-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-17	Ages 18-25
Achievement Mentoring	X	X				X						X		X	X	
AI's Pals		X			X					X	X		X	X		
Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids (ATLAS)								X				X			X	X
Building Skills Grade 5		X			X					X	X					
Conscious Discipline	X										X		X	X		
Coping Power		X	X	X			X		X		X		X	X		
Curriculum Based Support Group		X	X					X					X	X	X	
Footprints for Life										X	X			X		
Good Behavior Game	X	X		X	X							X		X		
Hip-Hop 2 Prevent Substance Abuse and HIV			X					X						X	X	
Incredible Years - Child Treatment (and Teacher Classroom Management)	X	X		X					X		X		X	X		
LifeSkills Training		X	X		X			X				X		X	X	

Positive Action	X	X		X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	
Project Alert			X				X	X				X		X	X	
Project SUCCESS							X		X			X		X	X	X
Project Towards No Drug Abuse		X								X		X			X	
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)	X	X		X	X						X		X	X		
Reconnecting Youth	X				X	X						X			X	X
Ripple Effects	X				X	X					X			X	X	
Second Step Elementary School Program		X			X					X	X			X		
Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention Middle School Program		X									X			X		
SPORT Prevention Plus Wellness			X	X			X					X			X	
Too Good for Violence K-5		X								X	X		X	X	X	
Unique You			X		X			X		X	X			X		
Youth Message Development			X					X				X		X	X	

Implementation Frameworks

Program Name	Target Age Range	Number of Sessions	Length of Sessions	Frequency of Sessions
Achievement Mentoring	12 – 14 years old	All year, for two years	40 minutes	Weekly
Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices	3 – 8 years old	46 lessons	10-15 minutes	Twice weekly
Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids (ATLAS)	15 – 18 years old, males	10 sessions + 3 exercise-training sessions	45 minutes +	Throughout the season (on light days)
Building Skills Grade 5	10 – 11 years old	12 sessions	60 minutes	Weekly
Conscious Discipline	5 – 11 years old (primarily)	N/A (behavior expectations are incorporated into school day activities)	Incorporated into daily activity	Every day
Coping Power	5 – 11 years old (universal adaptation)	24 sessions	50 minutes	Weekly
Curriculum Based Support Group	4 – 17 years old	10 sessions (12 sessions if an indicated population)	60 minutes	Weekly or Twice weekly
Footprints for Life	7 – 9 years old	6 sessions	40 minutes	Weekly
Good Behavior Game	5 – 11 years old	N/A (behavior expectations are incorporated into school day activities)	10 minutes at beginning; Increased length as program goes on	Starts at three times/week; increases to daily
Hip-Hop 2 Prevent Substance Abuse and HIV	12 – 16 years old	10 modules	120 minutes	First four modules delivered no less than weekly + Remaining modules in a 3-day retreat
Incredible Years (Child, Parent, and Teacher Classroom Management)	3 – 8 years old	18 – 19 sessions	120 minutes	Weekly
LifeSkills Training Elementary	8 – 12 years old	8 sessions per grade	30-45 minutes	Weekly (or 2-3 times/week)
LifeSkills Training Middle School	11 – 14 years old	15 sessions Core + 10 boosters + 5 boosters	30-45 minutes	Weekly (or 2-3 times/week)
Positive Action Elementary	5 – 11 years old	140 lessons	15 – 20 minutes	2-4 times/week
Positive Action Middle School	12 – 13 years old	82 lessons	15 – 20 minutes	2-4 times/week
Project Alert	12 – 13 years old	11 lessons first year + 3 lessons second year	45 – 50 minutes	Weekly

Project SUCCESS	12 – 18 years old	8 sessions + schoolwide activities + parent program + individual & group counseling	40-minute sessions, schoolwide activities occur throughout the month	Twice a week (can do weekly or 8 consecutive days)
Project Towards No Drug Abuse	15 – 18 years old	12 sessions	40 minutes	Over three week period (i.e., 4 times/week)
Promoting Alternative Thinking Programs (PATHS)	5 – 12 years old (different package for different grades)	44 lessons (Pre-K & K) 52 lessons Grade 1 50 lessons Grade 2 42 lessons Grade 3 40 lessons Grade 4 36 lessons Grade 5/6	20 – 30 minutes	2-3 times/week
Reconnecting Youth	14 – 19 years old	75 lessons	50-55 minutes (needs to follow course schedule, so time modification is allowed)	For-credit semester-long course
Ripple Effects Elementary	7 – 10 years old	150 topics	45 minutes	Twice weekly, throughout the year
Ripple Effects Middle School	11 – 15 years old	400 topics		
Second Step Elementary School Program	5 – 11 years old	23 lessons Kindergarten 22 lessons in each Grades 1-5	20 – 40 minutes	Weekly
Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention Middle School Program	11 – 14 years old	15 lessons Grade 6 13 lessons in each Grade 7-8	50 minutes per lesson (at once, or divided in half)	Weekly or Twice Weekly (depending on time length)
SPORT Prevention Plus Wellness	15 – 18 years old	Health behavior screen + one-on-one consultation	30 – 45 minutes	One time
Too Good for Violence K-5	5 – 11 years old	7 lessons Kindergarten, Grade 1-3 10 sessions Grade 4-5	30 minutes Kindergarten 45-50 minutes Grade 1 30-60 minutes Grade 2/3 50 minutes Grade 4-5	Weekly
Unique YOU	8 – 11 years old	8 sessions	45 – 60 minutes	Weekly
Youth Message Development	13 – 15 years old	4 lessons	20 – 25 minutes	Preferred weekly (can do more intensive)

Resources:

- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, <https://www.blueprintsprograms.org/>
- Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center (formerly National Registry of Evidence based Programs and Practices (NREPP))
- SAMSHA Resource Center <https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>
- CASEL Social Emotional Learning Resources

Program Design and Implementation Support - Elementary¹⁰

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Grade-by-Grade Sequence	Average Number of Sessions Per Year	Classroom Approaches to Teaching SEL			Opportunities to Practice Social and Emotional Skills	Contexts that Promote and Reinforce SEL				Assessment Tools for Monitoring Implementation and Student Behavior		
				Explicit Skills Instruction	Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas	Teacher Instructional Practices		Classroom-wide	School-wide	Family	Community	Monitoring Implementation		Measuring Student Behavior
												Self-report	Observation	
4Rs	PreK-8	✓	35 period-long class sessions	✓	✓ English/ language arts		●	●	●	●	○	✓		✓
Caring School Community	K-6	✓	Year-long, with 30-35 class meetings		Academic integration strategies provided	✓	●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓	✓
Competent Kids, Caring Communities	K-5	✓	35 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓	✓
Getting Along Together	K-5	✓	43 lessons, 32 class council	✓	Academic integration strategies provided	✓	●	●	●	●	○		✓	✓
I Can Problem Solve	PreK-5		59-83 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	○	●	○	✓	✓	✓
The Incredible Years Series	PreK-2	✓	64 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided for English/ language arts		●	●	○	●	○	✓		
Leader in Me	K-6	✓	40 lessons	✓		✓	●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓	✓
Michigan Model for Health	K-12	✓	8-14 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	●	○	○			✓
MindUP	PreK-8		15 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	○	○	○	✓		✓

¹⁰ 2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs – Preschool and Elementary School Edition
 2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs – Middle and High School Edition <https://casel.org/>

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Grade-by-Grade Sequence	Average Number of Sessions Per Year	Classroom Approaches to Teaching SEL			Opportunities to Practice Social and Emotional Skills	Contexts that Promote and Reinforce SEL				Assessment Tools for Monitoring Implementation and Student Behavior		
				Explicit Skills Instruction	Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas	Teacher Instructional Practices		Classroom-wide	School-wide	Family	Community	Monitoring Implementation		Measuring Student Behavior
												Self-report	Observation	
Open Circle	K-5	✓	34 lessons plus supplementary lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided for English/ language arts		●	●	●	●	○	✓		✓
PATHS	PreK-6	✓	40-52 lessons plus	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	●	●	○	✓	✓	✓
Positive Action	PreK-12	✓	140 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided for English/ language arts		●	●	●	●	●	✓		✓
Raising Healthy Children	K-6	✓	n/a	✓	Academic integration strategies provided	✓	●	●	●	●	○	✓	✓	✓
Ready to Learn	PreK-1	✓	5 Lessons	✓		✓	●	●	◐	○	○	✓		✓
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	PreK-8	✓	16 lessons	✓	Academic integration strategies provided for English/ language arts	✓	●	●	●	●	○	✓		✓
Responsive Classroom	K-6	✓	n/a		Academic integration strategies provided	✓	●	●	●	●	○	✓		✓

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Grade-by-Grade Sequence	Average Number of Sessions Per Year	Classroom Approaches to Teaching SEL			Opportunities to Practice Social and Emotional Skills	Contexts that Promote and Reinforce SEL				Assessment Tools for Monitoring Implementation and Student Behavior		
				Explicit Skills Instruction	Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas	Teacher Instructional Practices		Classroom-wide	School-wide	Family	Community	Monitoring Implementation		Measuring Student Behavior
												Self-report	Observation	
RULER Approach	K-8	✓	Anchor Tools: 16 lessons +daily implementation Feeling Words: 75 lessons		✓ English/ language arts	✓	●	●	●	●	○	✓	✓	✓
Sanford Harmony	PreK-6	✓	21 lessons	✓			●	●	◐	◐	○		✓	✓
Second Step	PreK-8	✓	22-28 weekly topics across 5 days/week	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	◐	◐	○	✓	✓	✓
Social Decision Making/ Problem Solving Program	K-8	✓	30 topics	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		●	●	◐	◐	○	✓		✓
SSIS Classwide Intervention System	PreK-8	✓	30 lessons	✓		✓	●	●	◐	◐	○	✓	✓	✓
Steps to Respect	3-6	✓	11 lessons + 2 literature units (7-10 lessons in each)	✓	✓	✓	●	●	●	◐	○	✓		
Student Success Skills	4-5	✓	5 lessons, 3 booster sessions	✓		✓	●	●	○	●	○	✓		✓
Too Good for Violence	K-8	✓	7 30-60 minute lessons plus infusion activities	✓	Academic integration strategies provided		◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	✓	✓	✓
Tribes Learning Communities	K-12	✓	n/a		Academic integration strategies provided	✓	●	●	●	●	○	✓		✓

Evidence of Effectiveness - Elementary

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Characteristics of Sample				Study Design		Evaluation Outcomes			
		Grades Evaluated	Geographic Location	Student Race/ Ethnicity	% Reduced Lunch	Quasi-Experimental	Randomized Controlled Trial	Improved Academic Performance	Increased Positive Social Behavior	Reduced Conduct Problems	Reduced Emotional Distress
4Rs	PreK-8	3-4	Urban	African-American, Hispanic	62		✓(1)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caring School Community	K-6	K-6	Rural, Suburban, Urban	African-American, Hispanic	0-95	✓(2)	✓(3)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Competent Kids, Caring Communities	K-5	4-5	Urban	Diverse	52-63	✓(1)		✓			
Getting Along Together	K-5	K & 3	Not reported	Hispanic	92		✓(1)			✓	
I Can Problem Solve	PreK-5	PreK-1	Rural, Urban	African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic	91	✓(1)	✓(2)		✓	✓	
The Incredible Years Series	PreK-2	PreK-1	Not reported	Diverse	59		✓(2)		✓	✓	
Leader in Me	K-6	K-5	Rural, Suburban, Urban	Diverse	65	✓(1)				✓	
Michigan Model for Health	K-12	4-5	Rural, Suburban, Urban	African-American, Caucasian	11-98		✓(1)		✓	✓	
MindUP	PreK-8	4-7	Urban	Diverse	Not reported	✓(1)			✓	✓	✓
Open Circle	K-5	4	Suburban, Urban	Diverse	Not reported	✓(1)			✓	✓	
PATHS	PreK-6	K-5	Rural, Suburban, Urban	African-American, Caucasian	39-80	✓(1)	✓(4)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Positive Action	PreK-12	K-5	Urban	African-American, Asian-Pacific Islander, Hispanic	25-75	✓(2)	✓(2)	✓		✓	
Raising Healthy Children	K-6	1-6	Suburban	Caucasian	28-33		✓(1)	✓	✓	✓	

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Characteristics of Sample				Study Design		Evaluation Outcomes			
		Grades Evaluated	Geographic Location	Student Race/Ethnicity	% Reduced Lunch	Quasi-Experimental	Randomized Controlled Trial	Improved Academic Performance	Increased Positive Social Behavior	Reduced Conduct Problems	Reduced Emotional Distress
Ready to Learn	PreK-1	K	Suburban	Caucasian	Not reported		✓(1)	✓		✓	
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	PreK-8	1-6	Urban	African-American, Hispanic	86		✓(2)			✓	✓
Responsive Classroom	K-6	3-5	Urban	Diverse	35	✓(1)		✓			
RULER Approach	K-8	5-6	Suburban	Caucasian, Diverse	6-7	✓(1)		✓	✓		
Sanford Harmony	PreK-6	5 th	Urban, Suburban	Caucasian, Multiracial	Not reported	✓(1)		✓		✓	✓
Second Step	PreK-8	1-6	Urban, Suburban	Diverse	20-75	✓(2)	✓(2)		✓	✓	✓
Social Decision Making/Problem Solving Program	K-8	4-5	Suburban	Not reported	Not reported	✓(2)		✓	✓	✓	✓
SSIS Classwide Intervention System	PreK-8	1-2	Urban, Rural	Caucasian, Black	Not reported		✓(2)		✓		✓
Steps to Respect	3-6	3-6	Rural, Suburban, Urban	Diverse	40		✓(2)		✓	✓	
Student Success Skills	4-5	4-5	Not reported	Hispanic	Not reported	✓(1)		✓			
Too Good for Violence	K-12	3	Not reported	Caucasian, Hispanic	54		✓(1)		✓		
Tribes Learning Communities	K-8	3	Not reported	African-American, Caucasian	30-33	✓(1)		✓			

Program Design – Middle School

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Grades Evaluated	Approaches to Promote SEL				Number of SEL Lessons	Settings			
			Teaching Practices	In Academic Curriculum	Organizational	Free-Standing SEL Lessons		Classroom	School	Family	Community
Expeditionary Learning	6 th -12 th	6 th - 8 th	√	√ Language Arts	√		N/A	●	●	●	●
Facing History and Ourselves	6 th -12 th	7 th - 10 th	√	√ Social Studies			N/A	●	●	◐	◐
Lions Quest, Skills for Adolescence	6 th - 8 th	6 th , 7 th				√	108	◐	◐	●	●
Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways	6 th - 8 th	6 th				√	48	◐	○	○	○
<i>Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention for Middle School</i>	6 th - 8 th	6 th				√	40	◐	◐	◐	○
Student Success Skills	6 th – 12 th	7 th , 9 th , 10 th	√			√	8	●	◐	◐	○

Implementation Support – Middle School

Program Name	Recommended Training Model	Format			Technical Assistance & Impl. Supports				Train the Trainer
		Onsite in-person	Onsite Virtual	Off-site	Admin. Support	Coaching	PLC	Fidelity Measures	
Expeditionary Learning	Schoolwide focus: 2-3 summer weeks plus total of 30-40 days onsite and same offsite.	√		√	√	√	√	√	
Facing History and Ourselves	2-5 days	√	√	√		√	√	√	
Lions Quest, Skills for Adolescence	days	√		√	√	√	√		√
Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways	3 days	√		√		√			√
<i>Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention for Middle School</i>	4 modules -- 30-60 min /each.		√		√		√	√	
Student Success Skills	1 day	√		√		√		√	√

Evidence of Effectiveness – Middle School

Program Name & Citation	Study Design	Study Demographics					Outcomes Demonstrating Effects						Follow-Up Effects	
		Grades Evaluated	Geographic Location	Race/Ethnicity	Study Sample Size	% Reduced Lunch	Improved Academic Performance	Improved Positive Soc. Behavior	Reduced Problem Behaviors	Reduced Emotional Distress	Improved SEL Skills & Attitudes	Improved Teaching Practices		
Expeditionary Learning														
Nichols-Barrer & Haimson (2013)	QE	6 th -8 th	Urban	Black, Hispanic	3016	71%	√							None
Facing History and Ourselves														
Domitrovich, C.E., Syvertsen, A., Cleveland, M., Moore, J.E., Jacobson, L., Harris, A., Glenn, J., & Greenberg, M.T. (2014)	RCT	7 th , 8 th	Urban Pennsylvania	Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial	496	Not Reported		√	√			√		None
Lions Quest, Skills for Adolescence														
Eisen, M., Zellman, G. L., & Murray, D. M. (2003)	RCT	7th	Urban, Suburban	Black, Hispanic	5610	Not Reported			√			√		Reduced Problem Behaviors, Improved SEL Skills & Attitudes (91 Weeks)
Malmin, G. (2007)	QE	6th, 7th	Urban, Rural	Not reported	716	Not Reported						√		None
Responding In Peaceful and Positive Ways														
Farrell, A. D., Meyer, A. L., & White, K. S. (2001)	RCT	6th	Richmond, Virginia	Black	474	Not Reported			√					None
Farrell, A. D., Valois, R. F., & Meyer, A. L. (2002)	QE	6th	Rural Florida	Hispanic, White	161	Not Reported			√					None
Farrell, A. D., Valois, R. F., Meyer, A. L., & Tidwell, R. P. (2003)	QE	6th, 7th	Rural Florida	Black, Hispanic, White	1340	65.4%			√			√		Reduced Emotional Distress (4 months)
Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention for Middle School														
Espelage, D. L., Low, S., Polanin, J. R., & Brown, E. C. (2013)	RCT	6th	Illinois, Kansas	Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, White	3616	74.1%			√					None
Student Success Skills														
Lemberger, M. E., Selig, J. P., Bowers, H., & Rogers, J. E. (2015)	RCT	7th	Rural	Hispanic, White	193	81%	√					√		None

Program Design – High School

Program Name	Grade Range Covered	Grades Evaluated	Approaches to Promote SEL				Number of SEL Lessons	Settings			
			Teaching Practices	In Academic Curriculum	Organizational	Free-Standing SEL Lessons		Classroom	School	Family	Community
Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline®	6 th -12 th	9 th	√				N/A				
Facing History and Ourselves	6 th -12 th	7 th - 10 th	√	√ Social Studies			N/A				
Project Based Learning by Buck Institute for Education	6 th -12 th	12 th	√				N/A				
Reading Apprenticeship	6 th -12 th	9 th , 11 th	√	√ Reading, Social Studies, Science			N/A				
Student Success Skills	6 th – 12 th	7 th , 9 th , 10 th	√			√	8				

Implementation Support – High School

Program Name	Recommended Training Model	Format			Technical Assistance & Impl. Supports				Train the Trainer
		Onsite in-person	Onsite Virtual	Off-site	Admin. Support	Coaching	PLC	Fidelity Measures	
Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline®	1 summer day plus six 90-min workshops over academic year.	√			√	√	√	√	√
Facing History and Ourselves	2-5 days	√	√	√		√	√	√	
Project Based Learning by Buck Institute for Education	Core package: 3 days plus 2 f/u coaching days.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Reading Apprenticeship	7-10 days over 12-14 months.	√		√	√	√	√	√	
Student Success Skills	1 day	√		√		√		√	√

College Readiness¹¹

<p>1 Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade.</p>  <p>MINIMAL EVIDENCE</p>	<p>2 Utilize assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for college, and assist them in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified.</p>  <p>MINIMAL EVIDENCE</p>	<p>3 Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations.</p>  <p>MINIMAL EVIDENCE</p>	<p>4 Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry.</p>  <p>MODERATE EVIDENCE</p>	<p>5 Increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid.</p>  <p>MODERATE EVIDENCE</p>
---	--	--	---	---

Recommendation 4 (Moderate Evidence): Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry.

1. Ensure students prepare for, and take, the **appropriate college entrance or admissions exam early**.
2. Assist students in their **college search**.
3. Coordinate **college visits**.
4. Assist students in **completing college applications**.

Recommendation 5 (Moderate Evidence): Increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid.

1. Organize **workshops for parents and students** to inform them prior to 12th grade about college affordability, scholarship and aid sources, and financial aid processes.
2. Help students and parents **complete financial aid forms** prior to eligibility deadlines.

¹¹ Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do/Practice Guide, What Works Clearinghouse, 2009, <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>