

# The College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy **School Counselor Strategic Planning Tool**

Every student should graduate from high school with the educational preparation and social capital necessary for success in college and the workforce.

School counselors are well positioned as the school professionals best able to guide all students toward college and career readiness. To be effective leaders in establishing a college-going culture, counselors must be strong advocates for their students and their profession and possess the skills to drive positive change in the school.

Strategic planning is an essential tool for school counselors to use to drive positive change in schools. Strategic planning helps school counselors use data to set clear goals and develop strategies with measurable outcomes for student achievement and success. Using this process helps school counselors to align college and career counseling with school improvement plans. It makes the case that college counseling is an effective way to meet the goals set by principals and district leaders. This allows counselors to become school leaders and advocates for all students. A clear plan enables them to build college and career readiness programs at each level of K–12 education.

## **NOSCA's strategic planning process helps school counselors:**



## **NOSCA's strategic planning process:**

- Makes the most of the school counselor's time and resources
- Links goals, interventions and outcomes
- Provides evidence to advocate for systemic change
- Eliminates "random initiatives"
- Provides results measured in student outcomes

**"My counselor's strategic planning helped us transform the school community into one where everyone in the building was focused on getting all our students ready for college."**

— Sharon Sevier  
Director of Guidance and Counseling  
Rockwood School District  
Eureka, Mo.

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**STEP 1: Collect, analyze and interpret data to identify gaps in student outcomes.**

Examine data elements that describe student outcomes, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, family income and other relevant measures, in order to identify student, school and community needs. Analyze data to identify inequities.

**STEP 2: Develop and prioritize measurable, data-driven goals aligned with school, district, state and national goals.** Goals should be specific, quantifiable, time-sensitive statements of what is going to be achieved and when it will be achieved.

**STEP 3: Develop strategies and interventions to meet goals.** Develop solutions and interventions that can be successfully implemented within the context of the school and community and will gain support from stakeholders.

**STEP 4: Develop and implement the plans for each goal, including benchmarks to monitor progress.** Develop multilevel action plans for each goal. Identify action items, the specific individuals responsible for implementation and key milestones, and timelines that correspond to each goal.

**STEP 5: Collect and report outcome data to all stakeholders, and adjust strategies and interventions as needed based on results.** Collect results data to determine whether the goals were reached and if strategies or implementations need to be adjusted. Present results to administrators and other stakeholders.

**STEP 6: Institutionalize policies, practices and procedures to sustain gains in equity.** Identify the strategies and interventions that result in positive student outcomes and equity gains to make them standard operating procedure within the context of the school.

**The College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA)**

The College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) promotes the value of school counselors as leaders in advancing school reform and student achievement. It seeks to endorse and institutionalize school counseling practice that advocates for equitable educational access and rigorous academic preparation necessary for college readiness for all students. For more information, please visit [www.collegeboard.com/nosca](http://www.collegeboard.com/nosca).