

14 Tips for New School Counselors

MAKE A COLORFUL START TO A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR!

TIP 1

Find a mentor school counselor

The South Dakota School Counselor Association offers a mentoring program to members. Visit sdschoolcounselors.com for more information.

TIP 2

Visit with your administrator to discuss expectations

Get a feel for his/her vision for the school and understanding of your role. Discuss your responsibilities for the school year.

TIP 3

Complete an Annual Administrator Conference

This makes sure you are both 'on the same page' for your [school counseling program's goals](#).

TIP 4

Gather and collect data

Gather data to understand your school's strengths and areas for growth, such as achievement data. Collect supplemental data on perceived needs through needs assessments.

TIP 5

Prepare introductory materials

Create a brochure, presentation, and/or website to introduce yourself and the role of the school counselor to parents, teachers, students, and the community.

TIP 6

Present "Meet the Counselor" lessons

Present about your role as a school counselor to every class. Educate teachers on your role and meet with parents to explain what you do.

TIP 7

Become familiar with a comprehensive school counseling model

Utilize a comprehensive school counseling program in your school setting.

TIP 8

Avoid the therapy trap

Explain that school counselors provide short-term individual and small-group counseling, not long-term therapy.

TIP 9

Complete a yearly calendar of activities

Update this yearly to have a roadmap of your plans for the school year. View a calendar template on the [DOE School Counseling page](#).

TIP 10

Track your time

A use-of-time assessment will show how much time you spend on direct and indirect student services. The [Use-of-Time Calculator](#) is one type of assessment to track time.

TIP 11

Establish an advisory council

This group should meet at least twice a year and is valuable to assist in validating and advocating for your program.

TIP 12

Plan your professional development

Consider which conferences, workshops, webinars, etc. you plan to attend for the school year to keep up with pertinent topics.

TIP 13

Join professional associations

South Dakota professional associations: [South Dakota School Counselor Association \(SDSCA\)](#), [South Dakota Counseling Association \(SDCA\)](#).

TIP 14

Practice self care

The first year can be stressful! Don't forget to take care of yourself. 'Practice what you preach' utilizing self-care strategies.