

# Appropriate Duties within a School Counselor's Role

South Dakota school counselors are trained to help students succeed in school and plan their career. Through a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors can use data-informed interventions and supports to help students succeed and support a healthy school culture. Non-counseling duties take away from a counselor's ability to meet student needs.

This document is intended as a best practice guide for school counselors, administrators, and teachers as they discuss the best division of duties within a school building. **Please note, the South Dakota Department of Education does not mandate appropriate duties for school counselors.**

## Suggested guiding questions:

1. Does this duty create an opportunity gap for students?
2. Does this duty require a master's degree in school counseling?
3. Is this a responsibility that all staff members take equal turns sharing?

## Why are Appropriate School Counselor Duties Important?

- School counseling services are available to all students. Non-counseling duties may create an opportunity gap limiting access to services.
- Providing long-term therapy is outside of the scope of school counselors' training and expertise.
- Non-counseling duties hinder providing direct and indirect student services.



APPROPRIATE DUTIES	INAPPROPRIATE DUTIES
<b>Academic Planning, Assisting New Students, and Testing</b>	
Advise, evaluate, and review academic planning	Build the master schedule
Orient, coordinate, and provide academic advising for new students	Coordinate paperwork and data entry for all new students
Interpret cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests	Act as testing coordinator with cognitive, aptitude, and achievement testing programs
<b>Counseling Students &amp; Addressing Behaviors (Tardiness, Absenteeism, and Discipline)</b>	
Provide short-term counseling to students who are tardy or absent	Sign excuses for and/or discipline students who are tardy or absent
Provide short-term counseling to students who have disciplinary problems	Perform disciplinary actions or assign discipline consequences
Provide short-term individual and small-group student counseling services	Provide long-term counseling or therapy in schools to address psychological disorders
Provide short-term counseling opportunities for all students, including students who are on an individual education plan (IEP)	Provide long-term counseling or therapy to students as written in their individual education plan (IEP)
<b>Student Records and GPA</b>	
Interpret student records	Maintain student records
Analyze grade-point averages in relationship to achievement	Compute grade-point averages
Protect student records and information per state and federal regulations	Keep clerical records
<b>Working with Teachers and Principals</b>	
Consult with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data	Substitute teach classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time
Consult with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management, and the role of noncognitive factors in student success	Supervise classrooms or common areas
Consult with the principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs, and problems	Assist with the principal's duties
<b>Student Support Plans and Boards</b>	
Advocate for students at individual education plan (IEP) and 504 plan meetings, as necessary	Coordinate schoolwide individual education plans (IEP), 504 plans, and Response to Intervention (RTI) plans
Attend student study teams and Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) meetings to support students and be part of the school's leadership team	Coordinate and manage student study teams, Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and school attendance review boards
<b>Data</b>	
Analyze disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data	Serve as a data entry clerk

Adapted from: American School Counselor Association. (n.d.). Appropriate and inappropriate activities for school counselors. Retrieved from <https://schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/School-Counselor-Roles-Ratios>.