



# Strategic Plan

WISCONSIN SCHOOL COUNSELOR  
ASSOCIATION

→ 2021



# OUR VISION

School Counselors are essential to the lifelong learning and success of all students.

Our vision is for Wisconsin to be the model for excellence in equitable school counseling practice, exemplified by the advocacy, leadership, and expertise of the members of the WSCA.

## One Ultimate Goal, Three Strategic Themes





**Counselor excellence.** We are dedicated to ensuring that all Wisconsin students have access to a highly qualified school counselor. But our vision extends beyond qualifications: “Our vision is for Wisconsin to be the model for excellence in equitable school counseling practice, exemplified by the advocacy, leadership, and expertise of the members of the WSCA.”

**Three Strategic Themes**, our key areas of focus, clearly emerged from our analysis of how we can best ensure counselors achieve their full potential:

1. **Excellence in Equitable School Counseling Practice**
2. **Advocacy, Leadership, & Stakeholder Engagement**
3. **Organizational Effectiveness**

But it is not enough for us to achieve in all the areas outlined by the Strategic Themes. We must do so in a way that puts equity at the forefront of everything school counselors do. An equity lens must guide our decision-making and be an essential factor in evaluating our success. Our professional identity as Wisconsin school counselors is key to our organization's future success, and it must be woven into everything we do.

## **Building a Common Understanding**

To ensure a common understanding of what the three Strategic Themes mean, each theme has a solid descriptive statement that clearly states its purpose and a few aspirational commitments that provide the outcomes we are aiming to achieve in five years.

## **How Will We Know we are Successful?**

While a lot of effort was put into identifying our three Strategic Themes for the next five years, it was just as important to find ways to monitor our progress in relation to each theme. For this purpose, we have developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure we stay on track over the five years and can identify where to make adjustments if required.

Most of these KPIs are elements we are already tracking, as they are the main factors driving our organization, but associating them to a specific Strategic Theme will confirm if we are moving in the right direction and help us take immediate corrective actions if and when required.





# EXCELLENCE IN EQUITABLE SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICE



# ADVOCACY, LEADERSHIP, & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## Commitments

- School counselors (active and pre-service) have the knowledge necessary for effective school counseling practices to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs.
- School Counselors know current ethical and professional practices and their application.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about trends in school counseling and education.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about leadership and advocacy principles.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about equitable and culturally responsive practices.

## Key Performance Indicators

### Equity/Inclusion

- Diversity of counselor representation across the WSCA organization
- Membership demographics
- Equity Indicators for WSCA sponsored and hosted events
- Locations of WSCA sponsored events

### Membership

- Membership Engagement Metric
- Percentage of school counselor WSCA membership vs. school counselor population
- Membership Retention Rate
- Graduate Student Membership
- Member Input & Feedback

### Events & Resources

- Satisfaction rate of counselors and stakeholders participating in WSCA events
- Counselor engagement in WSCA sponsored events, resources, & coaching/consultation
- Resources focused on highly effective counseling
- ASCA Model Training

### Leadership Development

- Graduate Student leadership metrics
- School Counselor leadership metrics
- WSCA leadership metrics
- Leadership Academy
- Award Winner leadership metrics
- WSCPAR & RAMP

## Commitments

- Key Stakeholders (including but not limited to) school administrators, policymakers, and community members will understand the impact made by the school counselor implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about leadership and advocacy principles.

## Key Performance Indicators

### Advocacy

- School counselor role education
- Advocacy resources
- Afternoon on the Hill engagement
- WSCA “at the table” at the Local, State, & National Levels
- Legislative agenda

### Stakeholder Engagement

- Partnerships
- Promotion of the School Counseling profession
- Press releases
- Promotion of legislative agenda
- National School Counselor Week metrics

### Leadership

- State and National Awards
- WSCA Directors of Operations & Staff
- Equity metrics



# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Commitments

- Our organizational values set our standards of behavior always using an equity lens.
- We plan our work and use our strategies to guide our decision-making and measure our performance.
- We use effective, data-driven processes and tools that help us achieve our goals and demonstrate our compliance with our governing structures.
- We uphold our professional standards & ethics, working with passion and motivation.
- We have the professional qualifications and personal competencies to help our members succeed.
- We are focused on creating systems, structures, and processes that allow seamless transitions to minimize association services disruption
- We continuously strive to improve through leadership & professional development.

## Key Performance Indicators

- Progress and measurement of Strategic Action Plan initiatives
- Data Dashboards
- Monitoring Reports
- Financial Reports
- Use The Phillips ROI Methodology or something similar to calculate the ROI of projects consistently
- Director of operations vacancies
- Participation in Leadership Development Institute
- Compliance with WSCA Volunteer and Staff Handbook policies
- Utilization of WSCA provided resources





# THE DETAILS

## EXCELLENCE IN EQUITABLE SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICE

### Key Initiatives

#### 1.1 Determine the school counselor population, profiles, and needs.

To support our members in achieving “excellence in equitable school counseling practice,” we must first have a solid understanding of Wisconsin school counselors. Basic demographic information, where counselors work, years of professional experience, credentials, and WSCA engagement are critical core elements that we need to track and use to get a clear picture of who school counselors are. This will allow us to customize our interaction to meet members' personalized needs.

We will create a permanent framework to gather, prepare and monitor this information regularly. In turn, this data will become critical input in developing initiatives such as creating leadership opportunities, developing communication and engagement strategies and tools, and resource and association planning using an equity lens.

#### 1.2 Create and Implement Membership Engagement Strategy.

Current levels of membership engagement metrics do not meet our targets. Therefore some school counselors are not as prepared as they should be in terms of having the knowledge necessary for effective, equitable school counseling practices to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs.

In order to increase school counselors' motivation to engage with the resources provided by our association, we must help them understand the value of membership and feel that they have active roles in their association experience. To do so, we will aim to develop a comprehensive strategy to actively motivate and engage school counselors at all levels and sectors of the organization.

As part of the strategy, a WSCA engagement metric will be created that includes some of the following data points: attendance at WSCA events, accessing resources (website, social media, e-blasts, newsletter, etc.), membership retention, WSCPAR, professional recognition, professional development presenter, WSCAlink author, WSCA volunteer, WSCA leader, social media engagement, SIG member.

#### 1.3 Define the Value of WSCA Membership.

As expressed in Key Initiative 1.2 - Create and Implement Membership Engagement Strategy, current levels of membership engagement metrics do not meet our targets. In addition, the WSCA is faced with an increasing number of other organizations offering professional development that is relevant to school counselors.

To ensure that school counselors choose WSCA, we must demonstrate the worth of joining the association by providing outstanding customer service and opportunities to engage with our high-quality professional development, networking, resources, collaboration, mentoring, and leadership opportunities/development.

We must define, articulate, and communicate why school counselors should invest in their WSCA membership and define what WSCA can uniquely offer. This will enable us to differentiate ourselves from other opportunities.

Our goal is for WSCA to be the go-to for anything related to school counseling in the state of Wisconsin. For this to be successful, member value becomes a critical component in earning the engagement of counselors, administrators, and stakeholder groups. In addition, a compelling and robust school counselor presence will increase WSCA's reputation and experience as a statewide representative for school counselors.



# EXCELLENCE IN EQUITABLE SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICE

## 1.4 Foster an Environment of Being a Data-Driven Organization.

As a professional member association, our success is dependent on meeting our members' needs. Using an equity lens and through the continuous collection and reflection of information, needs, and concerns expressed by members, we strive to be the strongest state-level school counselor association in the United States.

## 1.5 Actively Support Equity Efforts Across the School Counseling Profession.

School counselors that represent their student populations play an essential role in ensuring students maintain their motivation to succeed. Unfortunately, 69% of the student population is white, while 93% of school counselors are white. While some school counselors have engaged in some form of equity training, there is still much work to address the institutionalized disparities in our state.

We must proactively and regularly seek the infusion of equity across all areas of our organization. This includes the involvement and support of counselors of color to be active, visible members of the school counseling profession and our association. To this end, here are some examples of what this work will look like:

- Create a welcoming environment that cultivates a culture of openness and inclusion for counselors of color.
- Proactively communicate and support specific opportunities to get involved and voice concerns.
- Work in collaboration with DPI to increase the diversity of the school counselor pipeline and the recruitment and retention of practicing school counselors.
- Adhere to our commitment to using an equity lens across the organization, emphasizing infusion in all professional development opportunities.
- Supporting school counselor awareness on how the ASCA Model can address equity and opportunity gaps in their school counseling programs.

## 1.6 Enhance Visibility and Awareness of the School Counselor Role

WSCA offers vital programs and resources that enable school counselors to become leaders and advocates for their role at the local and state level. Regrettably, these are not sufficiently known or understood internally and externally. As a result, participation and accessing available resources are affected, and clarity of the role of a school counselor is compromised.

We must develop specific communication strategies and tools, including clearly defined programs and resources for school counselors, identified stakeholders and targeted key messages, transparent processes to access resources, and ongoing promotion/advertising initiatives.

## 1.7 Ensure all School Counselors have Access to High-Quality Resources

Any organization can put together a conference, webinar, or resource. WSCA is committed to the vision that "Wisconsin to be the model for excellence in equitable school counseling practice, exemplified by the advocacy, leadership, and expertise of the members of the WSCA." This then drives us to partake in these activities and do them at the highest level of quality.

The goal of school counselor excellence is a powerful objective, clearly understood and held in high regard by WSCA. But while it is easy to make this statement and there is a sincere desire to do so, many things can get in the way, such as daily responsibilities, administrative demands, dependency on volunteer leadership, and even our own processes. On an organization-wide level, we will work to make sure we cultivate a member-focused mindset across WSCA. All leaders must understand the connection between their work and the ultimate goal of school counselor excellence.

WSCA defines school counselor excellence in the following ways:

- School counselors (active and pre-service) have the knowledge necessary for effective school counseling practices to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs.
- School Counselors know current ethical and professional practices and their application.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about trends in school counseling and education.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about leadership and advocacy principles.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about equitable and culturally responsive practices.

## 1.8 Create Opportunities for Leadership & Advocacy

Members rely on WSCA to be leaders and advocates at the local, state, and national levels. To do so, WSCA needs the support and participation of members to create a statewide culture of school counselors as educational leaders. School counselors must be active, visible members of the communities in which they operate, demonstrating the value and impact that school counselors have on students. Some initiatives in this area are:

### Local Level

- Advocacy toolkit, ASCA Model Training

### State Level

- Afternoon on the Hill, Monthly legislative updates in WSCALink, WSCPAR

### National Level



# THE DETAILS

## ADVOCACY, LEADERSHIP, & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### Key Initiatives

#### 2.1 Increase Awareness of WSCA Value for School Counselors and Their Role to Stakeholders

WSCA's vision is for "Wisconsin to be the model for excellence in equitable school counseling practice, exemplified by the advocacy, leadership, and expertise of the members of the WSCA." To do so, we must have strong relationships not just with school counselors but also with administrators, districts, and community groups for them to understand the unique school counselor role. School counselor leadership and collaboration around student and family initiatives support schools and districts to achieve organizational goals.

WSCA has connections and relationships with key stakeholders. We want to continue building additional partnerships and strengthening engagement to ensure that communication flows in a timely and efficient manner. As such, we must design a comprehensive strategy that identifies key organizations and individual contacts, outlines what WSCA can offer them, what WSCA needs from them, and areas of mutual benefit, and proposes how the working relationship can be developed.

Some initiatives to support the work in this area are:

- Create a communications plan to promote member value & education around the school counselor role
- Increasing awareness of the high-quality professional development provided by WSCA
- Increasing awareness about leadership development opportunities as well as professional recognition awards available
- Continue to increase WSCA "at the table" with stakeholder groups

#### 2.2 Become the Trusted Source for Wisconsin School Counseling Information

WSCA will be the source for information regarding school counseling in Wisconsin. We must first have a solid understanding of Wisconsin school counselors, which includes: demographic data, where counselors work, years of professional experience, credentials, and counselor-identified needs. We will work towards creating a permanent framework to gather, prepare and monitor this information regularly. In turn, this data will become critical input in developing communication and education initiatives for stakeholder groups about the school counseling profession.



# ADVOCACY, LEADERSHIP, & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## 2.3 Establish and Nurture Partnerships Centered on Equity

Everything that WSCA does must include an equity lens. To that end, we recognize that equity work cannot be done alone or in isolation. It is critical that WSCA partner with many organizations to effectively engage in and impact the educational disparities that our students face.

We must proactively and regularly seek these partnerships with a broad range of stakeholder groups. As such, we must design a comprehensive strategy that identifies key organizations and individual contacts, outlines what WSCA can offer them, what WSCA needs from them, and areas of mutual benefit, and proposes how the working relationship can be developed.

## 2.4 Create Opportunities for Local, State, and National School Counselor Leadership & Advocacy

WSCA provides leadership & advocacy at the local, state, and national levels. To do so, WSCA creates opportunities for counselors to demonstrate educational leadership. These WSCA leaders are active, visible members of the school counseling profession, with a commitment to sharing the value and impact that school counselors have on students.

They show this impact in the following ways:

### Local Level

- Provide advocacy resources for local level implementation
- Advocacy consultation available for members

### State Level

- Create legislative agenda
- Dedicated WSCA leadership focused on government relations
- Afternoon on the Hill
- WSCA position statements
- WSCA “at the table”

### National Level

- WSCA “at the table”
- Connection to ASCA

### Provide Leadership Opportunities within WSCA

- Leadership Academy
- Directors of Operations
- Committees
- Regional Ambassadors
- Mentoring Program
- Special Interest Groups

### Honor and Recognize School Counselor Leaders

- WSCA Professional Recognition awards (school counselor of the year, school counseling team, equity in action)
- WSCPAR
- RAMP



# THE DETAILS

## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### Key Initiatives

#### 3.1 Ensure staffing and frameworks (including operational policies, procedures, and tools) to meet current and emerging organizational needs.

At WSCA, our operational framework uses the Policy Governance Model. Our work is also supported by the Board Policy Manual, WSCA Employee Handbook, WSCA Volunteer Leader Handbook, and WSCA By-Laws. A secondary type of governance exists through our job descriptions and processes, which determine the “rules” and define individual accountabilities.

Since many of these elements were initially put into place, the professionalism of our organization has increased. WSCA today is a more robust organization with greater experience, competency, and depth of knowledge than ever before.

Our ongoing initiatives to keep these governance elements up to date must continue. At the same time, it is essential to look at these primary and secondary types of governance holistically to determine if they reflect the organization’s needs and see if new guidelines are required.

#### 3.2 Effectively Attract and Retain Volunteer WSCA leaders

Without the right people in the right jobs at the right time, an organization cannot achieve its goals. As WSCA continues to grow, the need for qualified, competent staff and volunteers will also grow. It will not be possible to develop or source the necessary talent without a clear understanding of the organization’s future needs.

By defining the value of the volunteer leadership experience, we can understand why school counselors are choosing to volunteer and remain in a leadership role with WSCA. Volunteers remain with an organization because they feel a solid intellectual and emotional connection or engagement towards the organization. We must develop an explanation of the “get and

give” between WSCA and its leaders, i.e., what the benefit of volunteering at WSCA is. This sets clear expectations on both sides: recruiting/retaining is more successful as the organization can better identify future leaders, and turnover tends to decrease as volunteers have a more accurate picture of the organization, resulting in fewer surprises and disappointments.

A strong welcome and onboarding program is a powerful way to reinforce new volunteers’ decision to join WSCA, ensure they can assume their new roles smoothly, and integrate them fully into the organization. WSCA must develop a comprehensive Onboarding Program that goes beyond the basic orientation. The Program should create a welcoming environment, share the organization’s culture, values and behaviors, introduce colleagues and staff to build strong working relationships, including pairing new directors of operations with a mentor to learn more about WSCA. This process includes regular follow-ups with leaders to proactively address emerging issues.

Beyond the onboarding process, professional development and leadership opportunities are provided to support ongoing satisfaction and enrichment of a volunteer’s current role or prepare them to assume different roles within the organization.

Reliance on volunteer leaders can cause operational issues in that regular tasks are not performed. They may also expose the organization to significant risk by not having leaders available to step into critical jobs when these become vacant. We must develop succession planning systems that allow us to be prepared to support service continuity when key people leave or when key positions are vacated, ensure a continuing supply of qualified and motivated people, and reinforce a commitment to developing school counselor leaders. In addition, a succession plan will support our external reputation as the expert on Wisconsin school counseling that invests in its members and provides opportunities and support for leadership.



# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## 3.3 Optimize Technology, Data Management, & Recordkeeping

As volunteer leaders, members, and stakeholders interact across the organization, we need to present a unified, consistent approach and voice and be prepared to smoothly execute the administrative processes. Technology is an essential element to all that we do. Whether simply using email or sophisticated data systems, we rely heavily on our technological capabilities.

There is a strong appetite to better use the technology we have and find new solutions for our everyday administrative, operational, and communication needs. We must develop a comprehensive technology strategy that depicts the current and future state of the use of technology at WSCA, defines the desired user experience, efficiently implement training needs, and identifies resources needed for successful member engagement.

Managing data and maintaining accurate records are critical to WSCA operations. We rely on data for a variety of reasons. At present, our ability to keep data/records varies widely across WSCA, and generating reports often requires significant effort or manual intervention. As WSCA grows, our need for and reliance on solid data management and recordkeeping will increase. As such, we must develop a Data Management Strategy to decide on the critical data to manage, guide investments in data systems and set standards for collection, determine data storage and destruction, and ensure WSCA can manage its operations and prepare routine reports easily using the appropriate processes and tools.

## 3.4 Design a framework to effectively support members

While members are the heart of WSCA, they are also a very diverse group with different communication needs and expectations. To support their success, it is essential that we communicate with members effectively, both to send and receive information.

An area of concern is not having an intentional membership engagement strategy. This lack of knowledge impacts WSCA's ability to communicate with school counselors effectively. We recognize the need to create an environment where members feel that their feedback is welcomed. Consequently, the implementation of this Key Initiative will be closely tied to Key Initiatives 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3 that address the creation of membership strategies.

Offering well-functioning, safe, welcoming, and culturally relevant environments are essential in encouraging member engagement and building support from stakeholders. As we continue to grow in terms of members, programs, and partnerships, the need for program sustainability will also increase. With the combined input of other Key Initiatives, developing a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy will provide us with a clear view of the quantity and quality of the resources needed to meet member needs.



# THE PLAN AT A GLANCE

## EXCELLENCE IN EQUITABLE SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICE

### Commitments:

- School counselors (active and pre-service) have the knowledge necessary for effective school counseling practices to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs.
- School Counselors have the knowledge about current ethical and professional practices and their application.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about trends in school counseling and education.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about leadership and advocacy principles. School counselors are knowledgeable about equitable and culturally responsive practices.

### Key Initiatives:

- 1.1 Determine the school counselor population, profiles, and needs.
- 1.2 Create and Implement Membership Engagement Strategy.
- 1.3 Define the Value of WSCA Membership.
- 1.4 Foster an Environment of Being a Data-Driven Organization.
- 1.5 Actively Support Equity Efforts Across the School Counseling Profession.
- 1.6 Ensure all School Counselors have Access to High-Quality Resources
- 1.7 Create Opportunities for Leadership & Advocacy
- 1.8 Enhance Visibility and Awareness of the School Counselor Role

### Key Performance Indicators:

#### Equity/Inclusion

- Diversity of counselor representation across the WSCA organization
- Membership demographics
- Equity Indicators for WSCA sponsored and hosted events
- Locations of WSCA sponsored events

#### Events & Resources

- Satisfaction rate of counselors and stakeholders participating in WSCA events
- Counselor engagement in WSCA sponsored events, resources, & coaching/consultation
- Resources focused on highly effective counseling
- ASCA Model Training

#### Membership

- Membership Engagement Metric
- Percentage of school counselor WSCA membership vs. school counselor population
- Membership Retention Rate
- Graduate Student Membership
- Member Input & Feedback

#### Leadership Development

- Graduate Student leadership metrics
- School Counselor leadership metrics
- WSCA leadership metrics
- Leadership Academy
- Award Winner leadership metrics
- WSCPAR & RAMP

## ADVOCACY, LEADERSHIP, & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### Commitments:

- Key Stakeholders (including but not limited to) school administrators, policymakers, and community members will understand the impact made by the school counselor implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.
- School counselors are knowledgeable about leadership and advocacy principles.

### Key Initiatives:

- 2.1 Increase Awareness of WSCA Value for School Counselors and Their Role to Stakeholders
- 2.2 Become the Trusted Source for Wisconsin School Counseling Information
- 2.3 Establish and Nurture Partnerships Centered on Equity
- 2.4 Create Opportunities for Local, State, and National School Counselor Leadership & Advocacy

### Key Performance Indicators:

#### Advocacy

- School counselor role education
- Advocacy resources
- Afternoon on the Hill engagement
- WSCA “at the table” at the Local, State, & National Levels
- Legislative agenda

#### Leadership

- State and National Awards
- WSCA Directors of Operations & Staff
- Equity metrics

#### Stakeholder Engagement

- Partnerships
- Promotion of the School Counseling profession
- Press releases
- Promotion of legislative agenda
- National School Counselor Week metrics

## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### Commitments:

- Our organizational values set our standards of behavior always using an equity lens.
- We plan our work and use our strategies to guide our decision-making and measure our performance.
- We use effective, data-driven processes and tools that help us achieve our goals and demonstrate our compliance with our governing structures.
- We uphold our professional standards & ethics, working with passion and motivation.
- We have the professional qualifications and personal competencies to help our members succeed.
- We are focused on creating systems, structures, and processes that allow seamless transitions to minimize association services disruption
- We continuously strive to improve through leadership & professional development.

### Key Initiatives:

- 3.1 Ensure staffing and frameworks (including operational policies, procedures, and tools) to

### Key Performance Indicators:

#### Advocacy

- Progress and measurement of Strategic Action Plan initiatives
- Data Dashboards
- Monitoring Reports
- Financial Reports
- Use The Phillips ROI Methodology or something similar to calculate the ROI of projects consistently
- Director of operations vacancies
- Participation in Leadership Development Institute
- Compliance with WSCA Volunteer and Staff Handbook policies
- Utilization of WSCA provided resources

- meet current and emerging organizational needs
- 3.2 Effectively Attract and Retain Volunteer WSCA leaders
- 3.3 Optimize Technology, Data Management, & Recordkeeping
- 3.4 Design a framework to effectively support members