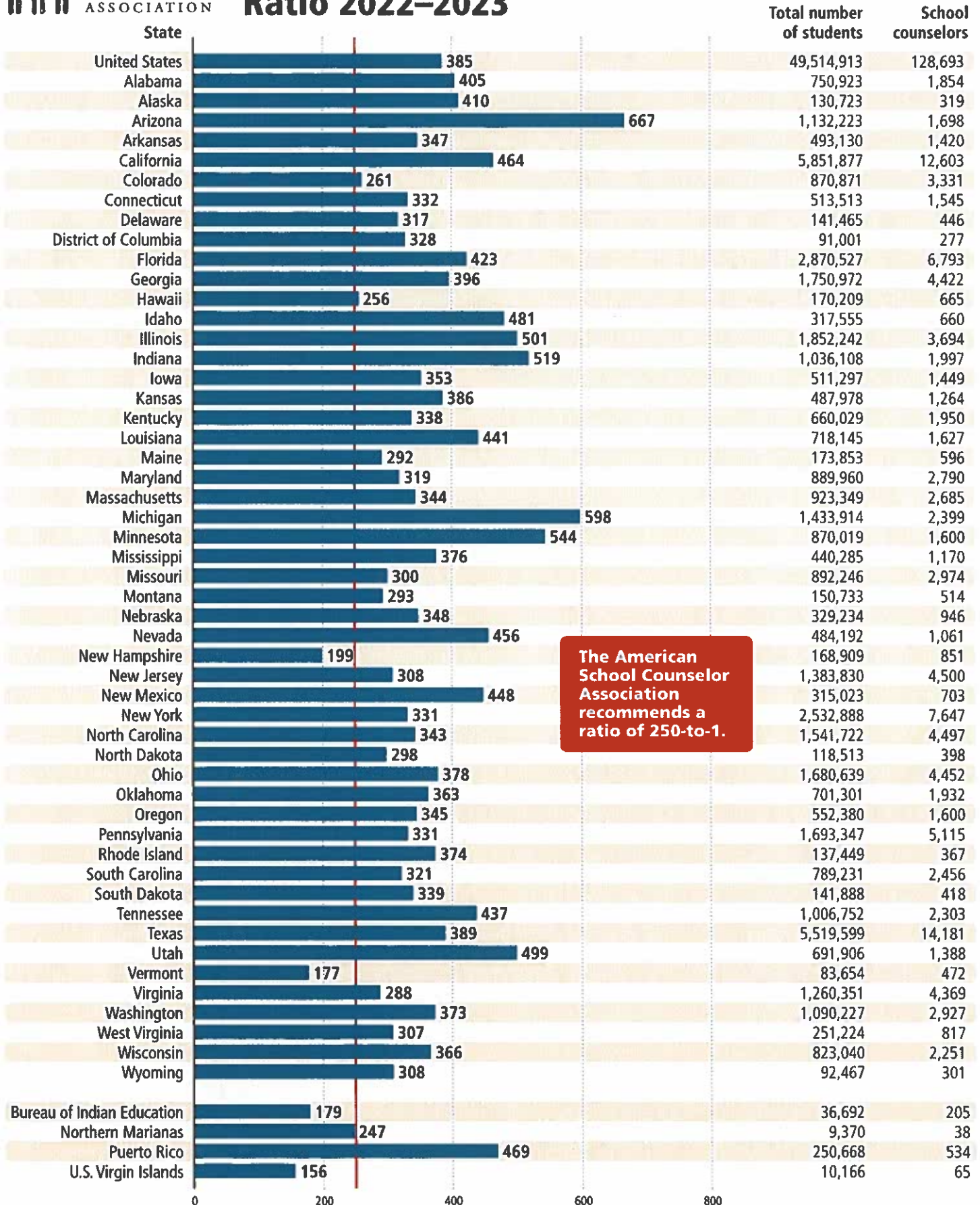




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# Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio 2022–2023



**The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of 250-to-1.**

Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey, 2022-23 v.1a. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/tables/2022-23/v1a/>  
 Note: Data was not reported by Guam and American Samoa.





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## School Counselors Matter

**School counselors are just one part — but an important part — of a system that ensures students have excellent educational experiences.**

As part of a school support team, school counselors provide critical social-emotional and academic supports. Through a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes success and achievement for all students, school counselors can help set students on a path for postsecondary success.

In particular, students of color and students from low-income families benefit from having more access to school counselors. For example, [Black students are more likely than](#) their White peers to identify their school counselor as the person who had the most influence on their thinking about postsecondary education. And research [links](#) the student-to-school-counselor ratios that meet the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommendation in high-poverty schools to better academic outcomes for students, such as improved attendance, fewer disciplinary incidents, and higher graduation rates.

**Simply put: There are not enough school counselors in the U.S.**

The [ASCA recommends](#) that schools maintain a ratio of 250 students per school counselor, and that school counselors spend at least 80 percent of their time working directly with or indirectly for students.

- **Across all schools, the average student-to-school-counselor ratio is [464 to 1](#).**

What's more, nearly 1 in 5 students — about 8 million children — do not have access to a counselor in their school at all, and nearly 3 million of those students do not even have access to other school support staff, such as school psychologists or social workers.

- **Across high schools, the average student-to-school-counselor ratio is 311 students to 1.**

Only 1 in 5 high school students is enrolled in a school where there is a sufficient amount of school counselors. This means there are 11 million high school students who are enrolled in a school without enough school counselors.

**Too often, school counselors are not available to students of color and students from low-income families.**

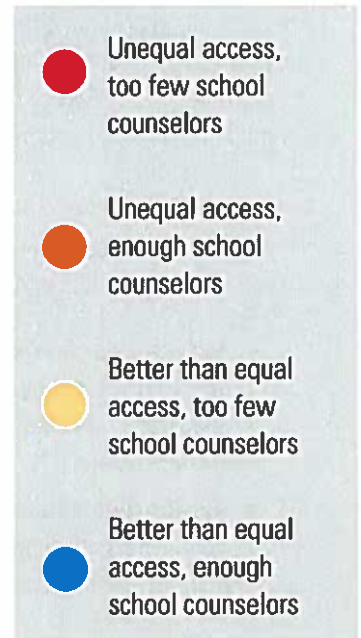
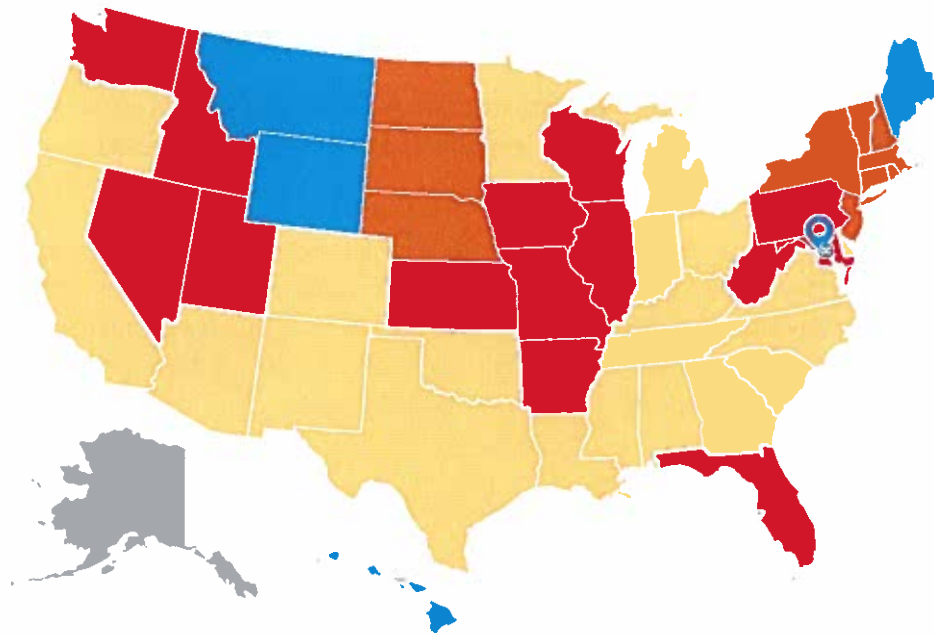
Students of color and students from low-income families have been overlooked and underserved for far too long. If anything, they deserve *more* access to school counselors than their peers — not the same, and certainly not less. And yet, the schools serving the most students of color or the most students from low-income families are shortchanged when it comes to school counselors.

- **Across all schools**, 38 states are shortchanging either their students of color, students from low-income families, or both.
- **Across high schools**, a school counselor who serves predominantly students of color has to serve 34 more students every year than a school counselor who serves fewer students of color, and 27 states are shortchanging either their students of color, students from low-income families, or both.

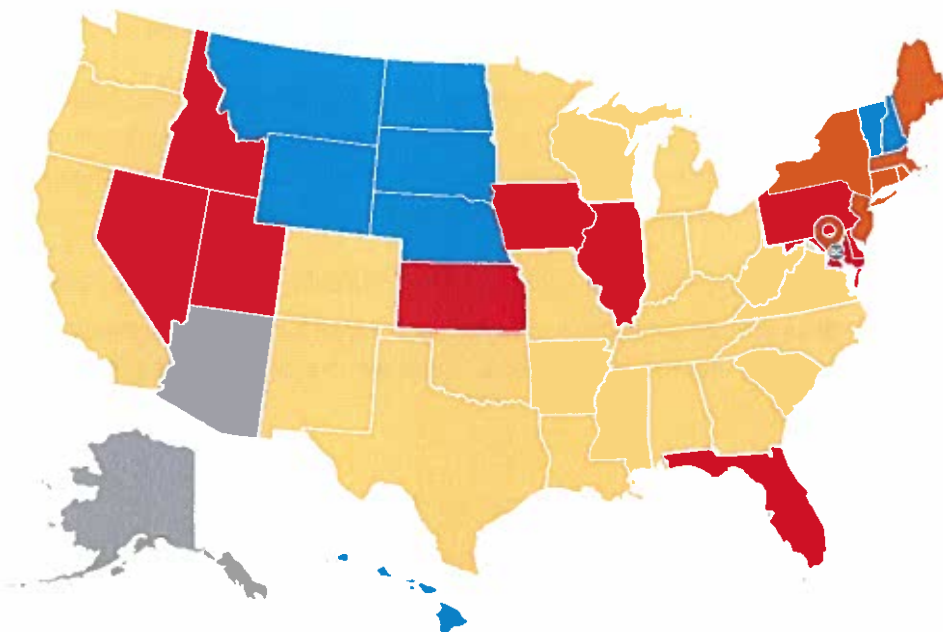
**38 states are shortchanging either their students of color or students from low-income families, or both.**



**Figure 1: Statewide High School Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio and Access for Students of Color**



**Figure 2: Statewide High School Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio and Access for Students from Low-Income Families**





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**These data paint a clear picture: In too many states, students — especially students of color and students from low-income families — do not have meaningful access to counselors.**

School counselors can play a critical role in ensuring that students get opportunities to have safe, enriching experiences in and out of school, and in helping prepare students for postsecondary success — all in ways that meet their individual needs. But it's difficult to do that meaningfully if school counselors are responsible for supporting unmanageable numbers of students.

### What Advocates Can Do

Here are some questions that education leaders and advocates should ask about how school counselors are being incorporated into plans for improving opportunity and outcomes for all students — especially for students of color and students from low-income families:

#### If adequacy is a problem in your state or district:

- Is there a [set requirement](#) for the number of school counselors per school or per number of students? If so, are the requirements being met? If not, what is the strategy for ensuring that there is an adequate number of high-quality school counselors in each school?
- Are there particular districts across the state where the problem is most pronounced? If so, what can be done to support those districts to place more school counselors in schools?
- What, if any, funding can be leveraged in the short term to address the most severe shortage areas? In the long term?
- How is the state or district ensuring there is a pipeline of school counselors? How does that strategy include partnerships with colleges and universities to appropriately train new school counselors?

#### If equity is a problem in your state or district:

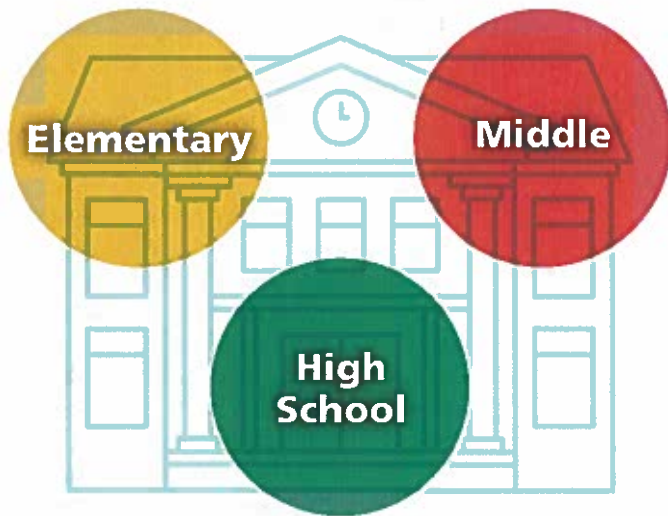
- What are the policies or procedures for allocating school counselors across districts or schools, and why is the distribution of school counselors inequitable?
- What is the strategy for providing more school counselors in high-need schools?



## Who are School Counselors?

**S**chool counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve student success for ALL students by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

### EMPLOYED AT ALL LEVELS



Also employed in district supervisory positions; and school counselor education positions



### LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

School counselors work to maximize student success, promoting access and equity for all students. As vital members of the school leadership team, school counselors create a school culture of success for all.

#### ▶ School counselors help all students:

- apply academic achievement strategies
- manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills
- plan for postsecondary options (higher education, military, work force)

#### ▶ Appropriate duties include providing:

- individual student academic planning and goal setting
- school counseling classroom lessons based on student success standards
- short-term counseling to students
- referrals for long-term support
- collaboration with families/teachers/ administrators/ community for student success
- advocacy for students at individual education plan meetings and other student-focused meetings
- data analysis to identify student issues, needs and challenges
- acting as a systems change agent to improve equity and access, achievement and opportunities for all students

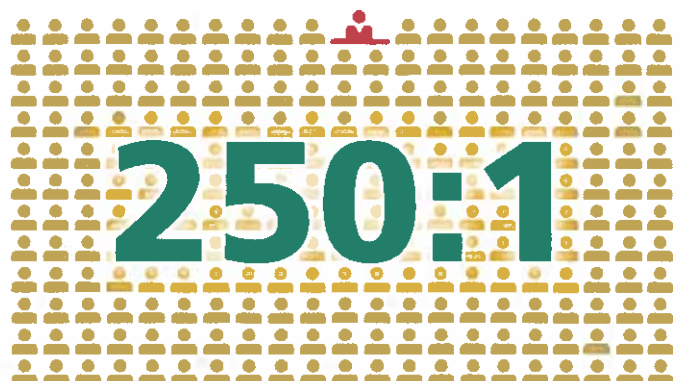


### SCHOOL COUNSELOR QUALIFICATIONS

- ▶ Hold, at minimum, a master's degree in school counseling
- ▶ Meet the state certification/licensure standards
- ▶ Fulfill continuing education requirements
- ▶ Uphold ASCA ethical and professional standards

### IDEAL CASELOAD

250 students per school counselor



# The School Counselor's Role

**S**chool counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes. They lead, advocate and collaborate to promote equity and access for all students by connecting their school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of ASCA and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: define, deliver, manage and assess.

School counselors work to create a future world where all students thrive.

## DEFINE

School counselors create school counseling programs based on three sets of standards that define the profession. These standards help school counselors develop, implement and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes.

### Student Standards –

ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success

### Professional Standards –

- ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

## MANAGE

To be delivered effectively, the school counseling program must be efficiently and effectively managed. School counselors use program focus and planning tools to guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results.

### Program Focus

- Beliefs
- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement

### Program Planning

- School Data Summary
- Annual Student Outcome Goals
- Action Plans
  - Classroom and Group
  - Closing the Gap

- Lesson Plans
- Annual Administrative Conference
- Use of Time
- Calendars
  - Annual
  - Weekly
- Advisory Council

## DELIVER

School counselors deliver developmentally appropriate activities and services directly to students or indirectly for students as a result of the school counselor's interaction with others.

These activities and services help students develop the ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success and improve their achievement, attendance and discipline. Through the school counseling program, school counselors ensure equitable academic, career and social/emotional development opportunities for all students.

### Direct Services with Students

Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students and include the following:

- Instruction
- Appraisal and Advisement
- Counseling

### Indirect Services for Students

Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others including:

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

## ASSESS

To achieve the best results for students, school counselors regularly assess their program to:

- determine its effectiveness in helping all students succeed
- inform improvements to their school counseling program design and delivery
- show how students are different as a result of the school counseling program

School counselors also self-assess their own mindsets and behaviors to inform their professional development and annually participate in a school counselor performance appraisal with a qualified administrator. The ASCA National Model provides the following tools to guide assessment and appraisal.

### Program Assessment

- School Counseling Program Assessment
- Annual Results Reports

### School Counselor Assessment and Appraisal

- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment
- School Counselor Performance Appraisal Template



