

Rhode Island School Counselor Association

Strategic Plan 2008-2011



Rhode Island School Counselors
*Making a World of Difference
in the Lives of Our Students*

February 2008

Introduction

Mission Statement

The mission of the Rhode Island School Counselor Association is to promote excellence in the profession of school counseling along with the development of all students.

The RISCA strategic plan is grounded in the *ASCA National Model* (2005, Revised) and the *Rhode Island Framework for K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling* (2005). The ASCA model articulates the need for comprehensive school counseling programs as a vital contributor to student success and school reform. It provides counseling standards for student success in three developmental domains—academic, career and personal/social, and provides standards of excellence and ethical standards for professional school counselors.

The Rhode Island Framework shows how the vision for comprehensive school counseling programs described in the ASCA model can be realized through the dedicated work of school counselors throughout our state. The framework links K-12 school counseling with Rhode Island K-12 educational regulations (e.g., Regent’s High School Regulations and the Rhode Island High School Diploma System) and demonstrates how school counseling can be used as the infrastructure for personalizing student learning. The framework also describes how the *RISCA Toolkits* provide structured processes, clearly-defined protocols and easy-to-use tools to help districts implement comprehensive school counseling programs. The framework and toolkits are available for free download on the RISCA website (www.rischoolcounselor.org).

A strategic plan should be a vision that compels us to act and to be accountable for our actions. Rhode Island school counselors are committed to accountable talk and accountable walk. Our accountability is based on what needs to be done to maximize the power and potential of school counselors to help students succeed and to help schools transform themselves into more personalized learning environments.

The RISCA Strategic Plan articulates our accountable talk. We hold ourselves accountable for achieving these results:

- Strategic and annual plans for school counseling.
- Well-defined and documented school counseling programs, including an essential counseling curriculum.
- Proactive involvement by counselors in Individual Learning Plans and Advisories.
- School counseling data management systems.
- Meaningful and substantive professional development.

- Operational guidelines that include clearly-defined roles and responsibilities for school counselors, and policies and protocols.
- Individual counselors planning for results.
- Family and community engagement.

The *Rhode Island Framework for K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling* and the *RISCA Toolkits* provide the means by which these results will be achieved. We are committed to these results because we know we can make a difference in our students' lives. We are committed because we know we can be vital contributors to school reform and the health of our school communities. We are already generating a growing body of evidence of our progress toward these results. This is our accountable walk.

Strategic Directions for 2008-2011

RISCA developed its strategic plan by focusing on areas that are considered critical to the future of K-12 school counseling and to the success and growth of the RISCA organization. Each area is considered critical because action plans must be developed for that area if the strategic goals of RISCA are to be achieved. Failure to do so can seriously jeopardize RISCA's ability to fulfill its mission.

The table on the following pages identifies the critical areas, along with the expected results for each area and the primary actions steps to be taken to achieve the results. Taken as a whole, these results illustrate the role of RISCA in Rhode Island school counseling through 2011. The critical areas are listed alphabetically. The order does not suggest priority, as all areas are considered critical to the success of RISCA.

RISCA is a vital force in Rhode Island school counseling. School counselors are significant contributors to student success and school reform. Comprehensive school counseling programs are a powerful infrastructure for the personalization of student learning.

RISCA's strategic plan for 2008-2011 begins on the next page.

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Critical Area	Results	Action Steps
Budget	A business plan is updated annually.	Develop and submit plan annually (with proposed budget for upcoming school year) to the RISCA Governing Board for approval.
By-Laws and Ethics	By-laws are amended, as needed.	Decide on voting roles of existing and potential Governing Board members.
		Engage past RISCA officers to contribute to the future of RISCA once they leave office.
Communications	RISCA publishes a periodic newsletter.	Publish a RISCA Newsletter three times a year.
		Ask each Board member and/or Committee Chair to write an article for the newsletter.
		Add new columns to the newsletter.
		Establish an Advertising Sub-committee under the Communications Committee.
		Increase advertising in the newsletter.
		Co-ordinate layout and printing of newsletter with the Chariho Graphic Arts Department.
	RISCA provides a website.	Maintain up-to-date and accurate information on the website.
RISCA events are widely publicized via the ListServe.	Post important announcements for RI school counselors via the website, newsletter and ListServ.	
A comprehensive public relations campaign promotes RISCA.	Design and implement a public relations campaign that promotes RISCA and its programs.	
Grants	RISCA becomes financially self-sufficient.	Develop and submit proposals to potential funding sources to fund RISCA's operation and professional development initiatives.
Membership	Membership is increased.	Design and conduct a membership campaign to involve more people in RISCA.

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Critical Area	Results	Action Steps
Partnerships	A RISCA Partners Program is developed.	Establish guidelines and protocol for developing/enhancing RISCA partnerships.
	Current RISCA partnerships are enhanced.	Enhance RISCA's partnership with the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with the National Leadership Cadre (NLC).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with RI School Superintendents' Association (RISSA).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with RI Association of School Principals (RIASP).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with RI Higher Education Assistance Authority (RIHEAA).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with RI Association of Admission Officers (RIAAO).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with RI Middle Level Educators (RIMLE).
		Enhance RISCA's partnership with the Learning First Alliance/Rhode Island (LFA/RI).
		Continue partnerships with Rhode Island institutions of higher education.
New partnerships are developed.	Gain a seat on the PreK-16 Governor's Council.	
Professional Development	Annual professional development opportunities are conducted in the spring, summer and fall of each year.	Conduct the Spring Conference.
		Conduct the Summer Institute.
		Conduct the Fall Conference.
		Produce a Planning and Implementation Guide for each professional development event.
	Theme-based professional development workshops are conducted that address key initiatives and critical issues in Rhode Island K-12 school counseling.	Ensure school counselors are informed about the RI High School Diploma System.
		Ensure school counselors are informed about their role as advocates, school leaders, and overseers of student involvement.
		Ensure school counselors are informed about their role in the Commissioner's Review and Other Regulations.
		Provide workshops on the ILP Program and Advisories.
		Provide workshops on career development.

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Critical Area	Results	Action Steps
Professional Development, cont.		Provide guidance to school counselors on using SALT.
		Provide guidance to school counselors on producing SPARCs.
		Provide workshops on a school counseling data management system.
	A RISCA Coaches Program is designed and implemented.	Design a RISCA Coaches Program.
		Obtain funding for the Coaches Program.
		Train the Coaches.
		Implement the Coaches Program.
		Evaluate the impact of the Coaches Program.
	Professional development partnering opportunities are developed with Providence College and Rhode Island College.	Explore and develop additional professional development partnering opportunities with Providence College.
		Explore and develop professional development partnering opportunities with Rhode Island College.
		Design and deliver professional development opportunities for PC and RIC faculty on the RISCA Professional Development Initiatives.
		Evaluate the impact of the professional development partnerships.
	Professional development opportunities are provided to members of RISCA partners.	Provide professional development on the RISCA initiatives to RI K-12 administrators (e.g., principals, superintendents and their cabinets).
	Resources for school counselors are identified and information on how to access them is disseminated.	Compile and disseminate a list of resources for school counselors.
	Public Policy	Policy and legislation related to school counseling is promoted among educational policy makers.
Ensure at least one RISCA representative attends each meeting by the RI Board of Regents.		
Ensure representation by RISCA at RI Department of Education meetings/events that impact K-12 school counseling.		

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Critical Area	Results	Action Steps
Public Policy, cont.		Collect individual school district policy language that supports K-12 comprehensive school counseling programs.
		Provide districts with supportive policy language for K-12 comprehensive school counseling programs.
		Encourage RISCA members to attend their respective school committee meetings and promote policies supportive of K-12 school counseling.
Recognitions and Awards	Rhode Island counselors and supporters of comprehensive school counseling are recognized for their professional contributions.	Establish selection criteria and procedures for the Counselor of the Year Award.
		Establish selection criteria and procedures for the Advocate of the Year Award.
		Establish selection criteria and procedures for the Legislator of the Year Award.
		Establish procedures for the SPARC Award.
		Present awards at the RISCA Spring Conference.
School Counseling Data Management	K-12 school counseling in Rhode Island is data-rich and data-driven.	Design and implement a school counseling data management system.
Strategic and Annual Planning	A strategic and annual planning process for school counseling is implemented.	Review and update (if needed) RISCA's Strategic Plan annually.
Technology	Information for using technology in support of K-12 school counseling is identified and shared.	Review literature and resources related to technology for K-12 school counseling and disseminate valuable information to school counselors.
		Conduct a survey regarding what software RI school counselors are using.
		Analyze and distribute the survey results.