

# The School Counselor: A Critical Resource for Students

Amanda Fitzgerald, Ed.D.

Assistant Deputy Executive Director

American School Counselor Association

[afitzgerald@schoolcounselor.org](mailto:afitzgerald@schoolcounselor.org)



# WHO ARE SCHOOL COUNSELORS?

School 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



## 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



For more information, resources please visit [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)



## SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S ROLE

School counselors are vital members of the education team and maximize student success

- ▶ **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

## IDEAL CASELOAD

250 students per school counselor



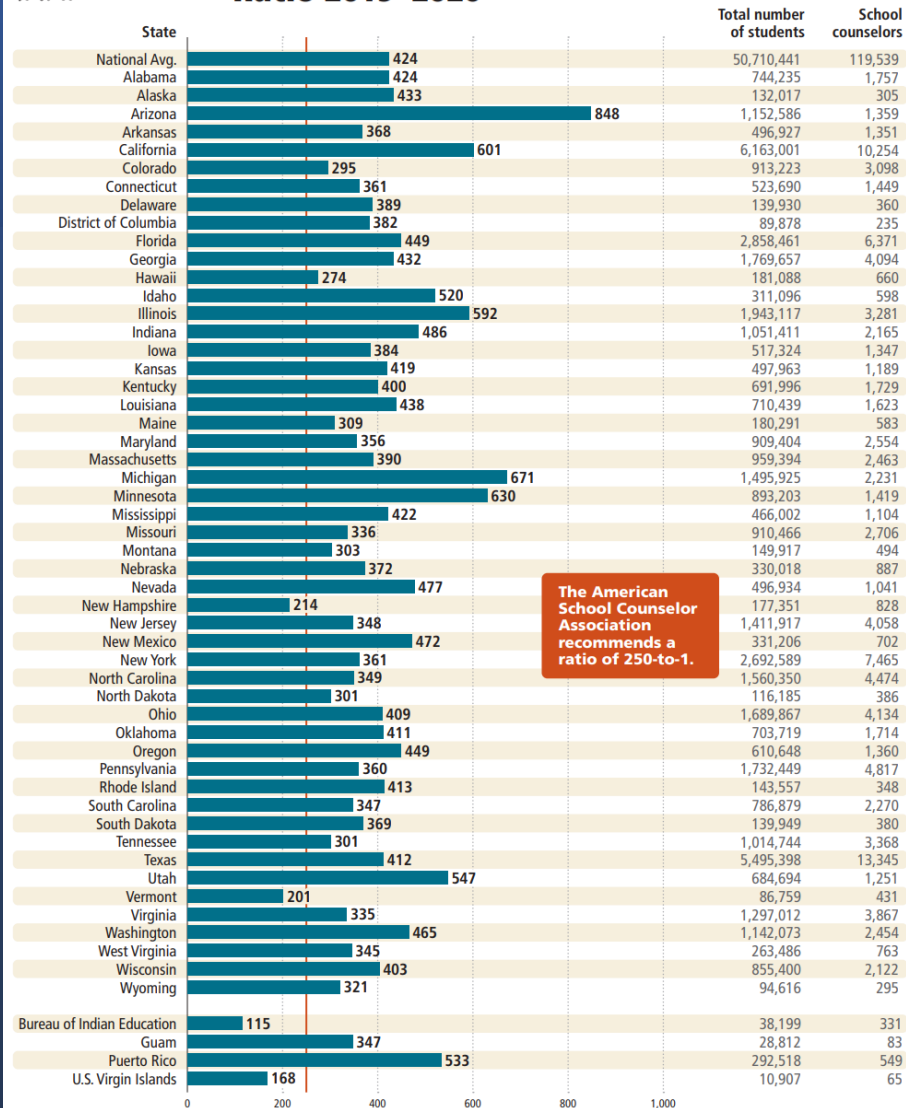
# School Counselors Impact:

- Attendance
- Academic Achievement
  - Gatekeeping, Achievement and Opportunity Gaps
- Discipline Referrals
  - Increased Supports – Less expulsions/suspensions



AMERICAN  
SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR  
ASSOCIATION

## Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio 2019–2020



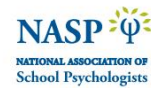
The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of 250-to-1.

Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey," 2019-20 v.1a. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/2019/2019-20-v1a-nces-ed-gov-ccd-elsv/>

## Ratios = Equity

- Who has access?
- Who needs access?
- How are we accountable?  
(KY & ESSA)

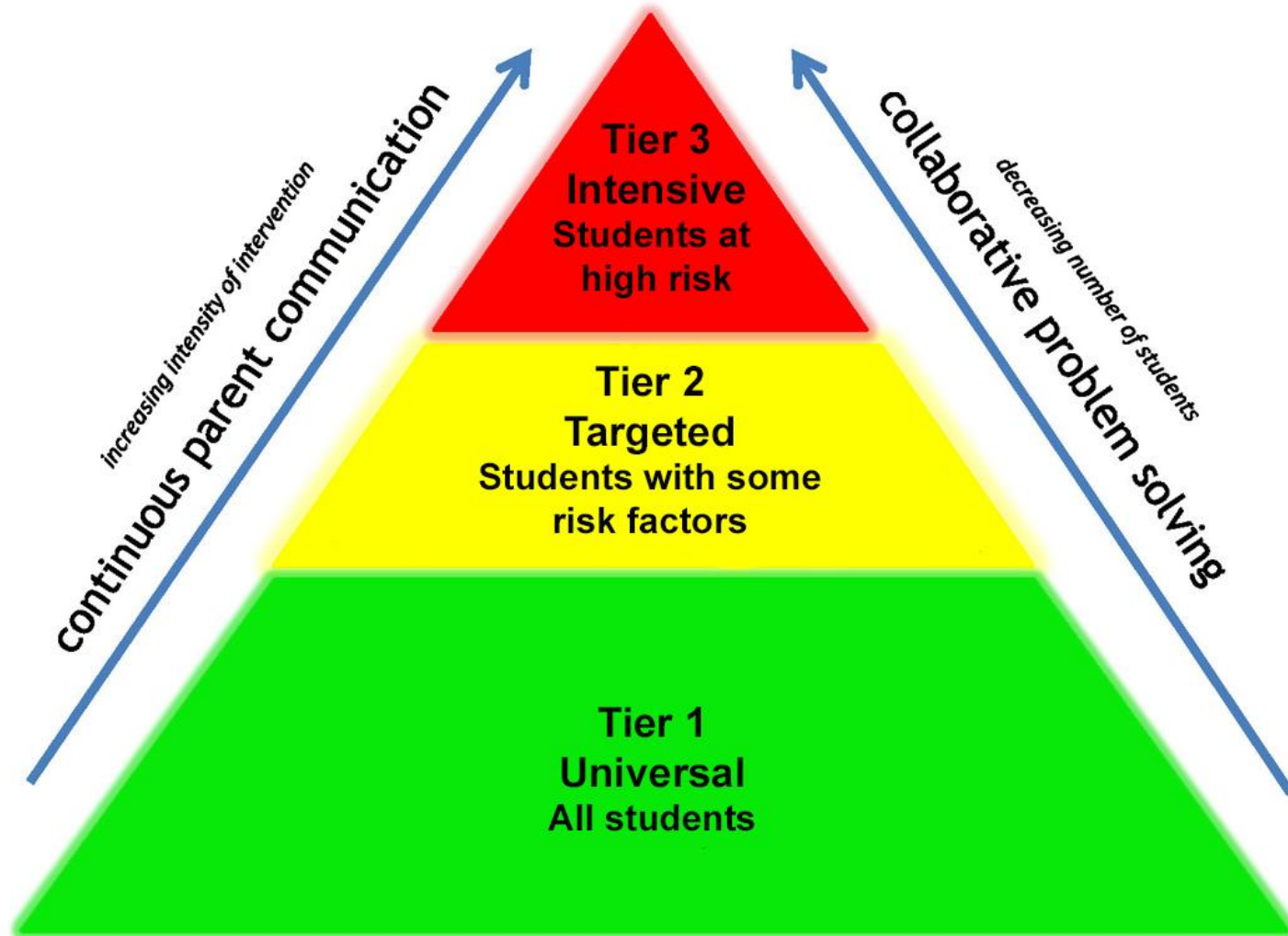
# A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools





# The Continuum of Care

All School-Employed Mental Health Professionals		Most School-Employed Mental Health Professionals	Some School-Employed Mental Health Professionals	
School-Based Prevention & Universal Interventions	Identification of Students with Mental Health & Behavioral Concerns	Targeted School-based Interventions with Community Support	Intensive School-based Interventions with Community Support	Intensive Community-based Interventions with School Support
All Students		Students Identified as needing intervention	Students with Severe/Chronic Problems	





# COVID Response and Recovery

- Loss of Instructional Time
- Grief/Loss
- Routine
- Educator Wellness/Burnout/Self-care
  - Shared Trauma

# Sample State Policy

- Ratio Mandate
  - 50%
  - Annual Funding Challenges
- Comprehensive School Counseling Program
  - Mandates student access to the program, not the person
- Role protection
  - 80% of time
  - Defining Appropriate Roles = Test coordination Removal



# Federal Investment

What's next?

# Policy Recommendations

- Increase the number of school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers (including pipeline)
- Increase investments in prevention and early interventions – especially in elementary schools
- Balance physical safety with psychological safety