



Arkansas Connections Academy Comprehensive School Counseling Plan 2025 - 2026

Sarah Greenbank

Director of Student Success

sgreenbank@arca.connectionsacademy.org

918-931-3398

Jessica Peresta

Assistant Director of Student Success

jperesta@arca.connectionsacademy.org

479-966-9061

High School Counselors

Courtney Jones

coujones@arca.connectionsacademy.org

479-633-7544

Emily Morrison

emorrison@arca.connectionsacademy.org

479-323-1761

Amber Hayes

amhayes@arca.connectionsacademy.org

401-264-0198

Jordan Bradley

jobradley@arca.connectionsacademy.org

479-485-3751

Stephanie Dicamillo

sdicamillo@arca.connectionsacademy.org

479-553-9274

LJ Marlett

jmarlett@arca.connectionsacademy.org

479-579-9614

TBD

K-8 Counselors
Kayleigh O'Brien
kobrien@arca.connectionsacademy.org
479-662-9344

Tambie Kilp
tkilp@arca.connectionsacademy.org
479-662-9164

I. FOUNDATION

Arkansas Connections Academy Mission Statement

Arkansas Connections Academy (ARCA) will offer families throughout the state access to a quality education by providing the personalized learning inherent in a high quality online school. ARCA will provide a complete public school experience for students in grades K-12 focusing on the students' academic growth, social and emotional needs, and post-secondary goals. The school will embody multiple hallmarks of excellence: a rigorous curriculum aligned to the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks; licensed teachers actively engaged with students and families; and an educational management system designed to provide accountability through data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Arkansas School Counseling Vision

In partnership with parents, educators, and community, will facilitate a comprehensive school counseling program to ensure ALL students are prepared academically, intellectually, and emotionally with the knowledge and skills essential for life-long learning in an ever-changing society.

Arkansas School Counseling Mission

All students are entitled to receive the benefits of a school counseling program that is developmental in nature, preventive in design, and comprehensive in scope. By having access to professional school

counselors, every student can obtain the tools necessary to become responsible productive citizens and life-long learners. Arkansas Connection Academy school counselors will facilitate the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students to help maximize their potential as productive human beings and prepare them to function effectively in an ever-changing society.

BELIEFS

Arkansas Connections Academy provides each student access to the School Counseling Program to support each student's right to be respected and treated with dignity. Furthermore, we believe that all students

- can achieve at high academic levels
- can achieve career and personal/social success
- shall be provided equitable access to school counseling programs and services, and that an effective school counseling plan should:
 - be guided by the American School Counselor Association's Principles of Ethical Standards for School Counselors; and ensure appropriate goals, expectations, support systems, and experiences for each student
 - be developmental, comprehensive, and preventive in nature
 - Include programs focused on prevention, intervention, and student developmental needs
 - be planned, coordinated, and managed by school counselors in collaboration with nurses, school resource officers, social workers, and community resources with the support of administrators, parents, and community
 - provide annual self-appraisal and evaluations of the counseling program

Goals

ARCA's counseling and guidance program focuses on developmental needs of all students. Counselors demonstrate respect for each individual's dignity and worth and

encourage each student to develop individual responsibility and decision-making skills.

Counselors coordinate the school guidance program and involve all staff members in designing and implementing plans to meet four major goals:

- To develop an education plan and utilize educational opportunities and alternatives consistent with academic standards and student career aspirations that are aligned with student's success plans.

- To develop appropriate interpersonal and communication skills for a variety of social and work settings.

- To develop career options consistent with their interests, abilities and values. ● To demonstrate the importance of making an individual contribution to the community through community service learning.

II. MANAGEMENT

A. Implementation

Curriculum, small-group, and closing-the-gap action plans including developmental, prevention and intervention activities and services that measure the desired student competencies and the impact on achievement, behavior, and attendance, is used to implement the comprehensive school counseling program. The following are used in the ARCA school counseling programs:

- Student Needs Assessment
- Teacher Survey of Student Needs
- Parent Survey of Student Needs
- Attendance Data
- Discipline Data
- Measures of Academic Progress
- ATLAS
- ACT
- ELPA 21
- Student Success Coach Progress Monitoring Data
- Response to Intervention (RTI)

B. Evaluation

School counselors along with Student Success Coaches collect and analyze needs assessment data throughout the school year. These are based upon building needs assessments, school counselor competency and school counseling program assessments, use of time assessments, and annual agreements with district administration that addresses how the school counseling program is organized and how goals will be accomplished.

Guidance Program Calendar

<u>July</u> • Summer School Enrollment • New Student Enrollment • Evaluate Counselor Assignments/ caseloads • Plan for up upcoming school year • Update guidance website	<u>August</u> • Professional Development • New Student Enrollment • Send transfer files to new schools • Resolve Schedule Conflicts • Set up concurrent and dual enrollments	<u>September</u> • Meet with students individually • Develop/ Adjust Student Success Plans • Disseminate Scholarship Information • Check Senior Transcripts • College Scholarship Applications • Communicate Graduation Information to Seniors	<u>October</u> • Anti-Bullying Month • Financial Aid Workshops • College Fair • Career Day • Individual/ Group Counseling • Parent/ Teacher Conferences
<u>November</u> • ARSCA Conference • Discuss Graduation	<u>December</u> • Contact At-Risk Students • Individual/	<u>January</u> • Evaluate 1st Semester Needs/ Goals • Adjust	<u>February</u> • ACT for 11th graders • National School

with Seniors • Individual/ Group Counseling • Support for Struggling Students	Group Counseling • College Applications	Schedules based on course failures • Individual/ Group Counseling • ACT Preparation	Counselor's Week • Returning Student Course Selection • Individual/ Group Counseling • Career Day
<u>March</u> • AP Test Registration • Individual/ Group Counseling • Continue with Returning Student Course Selection	<u>April</u> • State Testing • Senior Graduation Checks • Individual/ Group Counseling	<u>May</u> • Grade level Parent Information Meetings • Graduation • Summer School Registration • Individual/ Group Counseling	<u>June</u> • Schedule Adjustments due to failures • Summer School Enrollment • Evaluate School Counseling Program Goals

III. DELIVERY

DIRECT AND INDIRECT COUNSELING

1. STUDENT SUPPORT- School counselors, with the support of teachers/faculty, parents, and administrators, develop and organize counseling activities. The school team guidance topics focus on

- Problem-solving
- Decision-making
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Self-understanding
- Effective Interpersonal and Communication skills

- Interpreting student information, such as standardized tests
- Conflict Resolution
- Effective Study skills
- Positive Attitudes toward School
- Career Awareness
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Comprehension and Acceptance of Differences in People (racial, gender based, cultural, religious, physical)
- Attendance
- Child Protective Services Reporting 1-800-482-5964

2. INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP COUNSELING- ARCA counselors work with students in groups and individually to provide developmental guidance and crisis intervention. This guidance is tailored to the students' needs. Referrals along with topics covered are communicated from stakeholder referrals and/or assessments.

3. COORDINATION - ARCA school counselors coordinate the use of school and community resources. The team assists parents in gaining access to services their children need such as a child psychologist through a referral and follow-up process. The team serves as liaison between the school, home, and community agencies so that efforts to help students are successful and reinforced. Additionally, counselors (LPC) from local agencies work in conjunction with the School Counselor to assess the well-being of students and support them emotionally and academically.

When making referrals, counselors maintain relationships with a variety of school staff and community agencies. These agencies include departments of health and social services, mental health centers, juvenile courts, and advocacy groups. Counselors identify school and community resources and establish procedures for communication. Counselors may be involved with helping students and their families gain access to the services they need such as identifying special

needs and referring them to resources in and outside the school; maintaining contacts with outside resources; developing, publishing, and/or distributing a list of community resources, referral agencies, and hotlines for parents. Counselors refer students to mental health agencies.

4. CONSULTATION- ARCA school counselors support consultation to best serve individual student needs. These services can include conducting professional development workshops and discussions with teachers and other school personnel on subjects such as substance abuse, child abuse, SEL, human trafficking, and bullying; assisting in the identification and development of programs for students with special needs; participating in school committees that address substance abuse, human growth and development, school climate, and other guidance-related areas; conducting parent education classes. Counselors also support the school Response To Intervention (RTI) team.

5. PARENT AND TEACHER COMMUNICATION- Teachers shall communicate with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students during the school year to discuss the student's academic progress. Frequent communication with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students not performing at the level expected for their grade occurs. Personal conferences will be held with parents if a student is to be retained at any grade level. Parents will receive a notice of retention and the reasons for retention shall be communicated.

6. SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS AND NEEDS- Counselors work with students from culturally diverse populations and students with disabilities. Counselors promote acceptance through classroom guidance lessons, group support, and one-to-one discussions as needs arise.

7. ORIENTATION PROGRAMS - Orientation programs by grade band and level are included. ARCA will conduct an Incoming 9th Grade Parent Orientation Night to help transition students/parents to high school. The ARCA counseling department also hosts a Financial Aid Night as well as various college representative virtual visits. Furthermore, ARCA hosts a Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Informational meeting for students and parents to assist them in becoming familiar

with those opportunities.

8. CAREER AWARENESS- School counselors provide a career planning process for students to include career awareness, employment readiness, career information, and/or the knowledge and skill necessary to achieve career goals. ARCA school counselors will utilize Navigator and Student Success Plans to help facilitate this process and track data. Students also have the opportunity to take various career related courses, participate in community service as well as job shadowing programs. ARCA promotes dual enrollment with the student's local career/technical secondary schools to take advantage of courses related to their career of interest. Students and families will be made aware of the career pathways available for the upcoming school year and how to achieve Completer Status.

9. ACADEMIC CLASS SELECTION- Counselors act in a consulting capacity at all levels in guiding students toward educational and career objectives. ARCA students will begin selecting courses for next school year in March.

10. UTILIZATION OF STUDENT RECORDS- ARCA counselors have access to files regarding their assigned students kept by the school district. Student records are kept in a central location. Counselors also use information from eSchool, 504 records, IEP records, and Triand as needed. High school counselors also utilize Student Success Plans, graduation checklists, and transcripts.

12. AT-RISK STUDENTS- When a student has high absenteeism and is questioning dropping out of school, counselors and administrators work to provide support and alternatives to dropping out of school. A plan may be set up to assist the student to work collaboratively with teachers and counselors to achieve academic success.

13. BULLYING PREVENTION- ARCA has many students that come to us because of bullying in their former school. Counselors follow up with these students after they enroll to provide

support if needed. ARCA is an all online school, so many of these bullying issues do cease. ARCA participates in Anti-Bullying Month in October. School counselors will conduct presentations to students of all grade levels about bullying, how to identify, report and how students can empower themselves. ARCA will also do interviews with local news stations about the bullying, and more specifically cyber bullying. ARCA will also post information to Facebook, send emails and update the school counseling website with bullying information.

14. SCHOOL SUICIDE / CRISIS PLAN- Staff members make immediate referrals to the counselor when they identify a student to be at risk for self-destructive behavior. Any student who is referred is screened by the counselor, parents are notified, and a referral is made to a mental health professional. If a student death occurs, the faculty will be notified immediately. Staff

members will meet so that complete, accurate information can be disseminated and plans for the aftermath of the tragedy can be reviewed. Additional counseling services provided by representatives of area mental health agencies, members of the ministerial alliance, and other school district counselors will be made available to students and staff members. Follow-up counseling will be available to those who need it.

BENEFITS OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Benefits for Students

- Improves academic skills and promotes success through high school graduation
- Builds decision making and problem solving skills
- Increase skills in college and career planning and awareness

Benefits for Parents

- Increased access to resources and programming that supports family engagement and social, emotional, and academic success
- Opportunities to participate in individualized academic planning for their

student(s) ● Provide support for their child's social/emotional development including conflict resolution skills, especially as pertains to district anti-bullying policies

Benefits for Teachers

- Provide support to the classroom to improve student academic performance
- Interdisciplinary team efforts to address educational goals
- Encourage positive relationships with students, parents, administrators, educational board and community leaders

Benefits for Administrators

- Monitoring and evaluating guidance program success to inform school wide decisions regarding social, emotional, psychological, and academic development
- Provide opportunities to promote student success in the school, district and local community
- Monitor student success and provide support to ensure achievement of overall school and district goals

Benefits for Counselors

- Provide a comprehensive plan to reach all students in the school community ●
- Provide clearly defined roles and functions for system wide counseling effectiveness ●
- Increase the effectiveness of the program through accountability and continual improvement

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms, school counselors analyze school and school counseling program data to determine how students are different as a result of the school counseling program.

School counselors use data to show the impact of the school counseling program on student achievement, attendance and behavior and analyze school counseling program assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students. The performance of the school counselor is evaluated on basic standards of practice expected of school counselors implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

Data is evaluated by the administrative team to determine if processes need to be implemented or changed. Graduation rate and on/off cohort percentage data is an important factor in determining new processes. ARCA is focusing this school year on working heavily with students that are off cohort to get them back on track. High school and middle school staff will be divided into pods to help focus on those students. School counselors will meet more regularly with those off cohort students to set goals and criteria for becoming more successful.

Goal Data Points

1. Student Academic Success -Attendance Reports ● -Grade Distribution Reports ● -Student Exit Surveys ● -Graduation Rate ● -Presentations ● -State Report Card ● -State Assessment Results
2. Social/Emotional Well-Being -Individual/Group Counseling ● -Guidance Curriculum Lesson Plans ● -Mental Health Facility Referrals/Follow-Ups
3. College/Career Planning -College Applications/College Acceptance Rates ● -Career Fair Attendance ● -4 year Plans ● -Interests Inventories ● -Student Success Plans

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

ARCA school counselors administrative duties include assisting with Triand (Roll Call), state assessments, master schedule, 504 conferences, IEP conferences, Student Success Plans and other duties as assigned.

References:

Arkansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program Guide:

[https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201229105113_School_Counseling_Program_Guide.Post 1 1.pdf](https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201229105113_School_Counseling_Program_Guide.Post%201%201.pdf)

Arkansas School Counselor Association

<https://www.arschoolcounselor.org/home/home/>

American School Counseling Association Standards and Competencies:

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/a8d59c2c-51de-4ec3-a565-a3235f3b93c3/SC-Competencies.pdf>