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"Develop Student Assessments" Overview

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Introduction to "Develop Student Assessments"

Primary Components of a Learner-Centered CBA

The graphic below displays the primary components of a learner-centered CBA. Assessing students is the third primary component. Student assessments are required to determine what and how well students have learned.
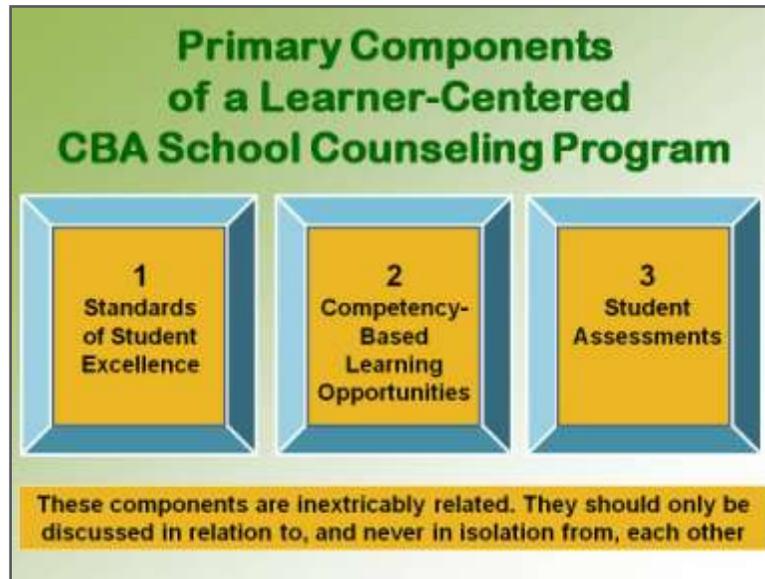
As a reminder, or in case you have not reviewed the first two sections in the "Develop a CBA" module, a brief summary is provided to establish the relationship among the three components. Student excellence is defined using research-based constructs and sub-constructs, and a results-based approach wherein the results students are expected to achieve are articulated as standard and competency statements. In a CBA, academic, metacognitive, social-emotional and career competencies are defined in terms of motivation, self-direction, self-knowledge and relationships, along with their associated sub-constructs.

The standard and competency statements form the basis of meaningful learning opportunities (primarily learning targets for CBA curriculum acuities) in which students can learn what is expected of them in the school counseling program and how to apply their learning in authentic contexts. Students are provide multiple opportunities to practice applying their learning in order to develop their proficiency and mastery of knowledge and skills, and to demonstrate to others how much and how well they have learned what they are expected to achieve.

Focus on Student Results

A construct-based approach to school counseling is a results-based program that focuses on achieving four types of results: a) student results, b) school counseling program results, c) organizational support results and d) school counselor performance results. This section will focus on student results and how we assess them in relation to the results we expect them to achieve through participation in a CBA school counseling program.

A CBA is learner-centered. CBA school counseling programs are designed to help students achieve the results articulated in our vision statement displayed in the graphic below.
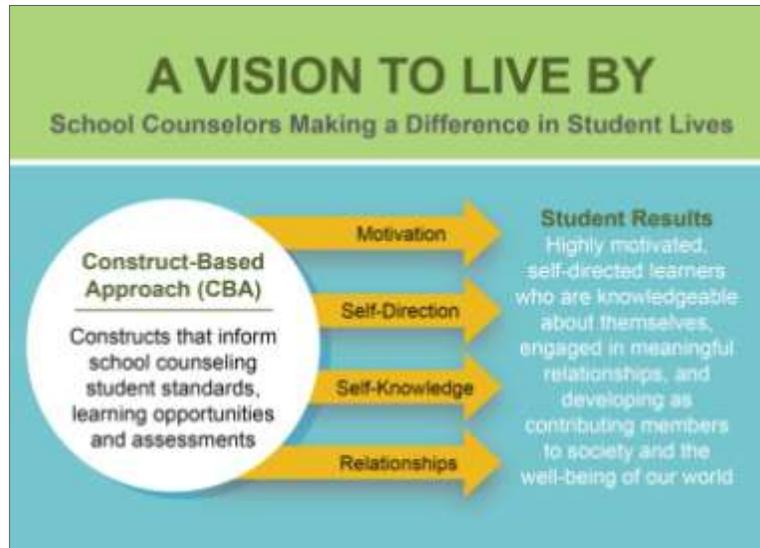
By participating in CBA school counseling programs, students learn how to learn, plan for their future success and cope with the challenges of growing up, developing as proficient life-long learners, and being prepared to enter and benefit from educational and career opportunities in the postsecondary world. Student assessments are critical to the ability of school counselors to help students achieve these results.

Role of CBA Student Assessments

The desired results for students participating in a CBA school counseling program are to achieve the twelve "**CBA Student Standards**" and by doing so achieve the results articulated in "A Vision To Live By." Student assessments are integral to this process by generating data that determines students' status in relation to what is expected of them. Without student assessment data, school counselors, other educators and parents/guardians would have no way of understanding students' learning needs, potential and outcomes. Nor could it be determined what activities and interventions would be most appropriate to fulfill those needs and help students achieve at their highest potential.

Student assessments are tied directly to the CBA student results (standards and competencies) which students are expected to achieve through participation in the counseling program. On their own, however, the standard and competency statements lack relevance unless they are contextualized in meaningful learning opportunities where they become the primary learning targets for students to achieve. CBA student assessments determine whether students are achieving the results the CBA learning opportunities are designed to help them achieve.

Student assessments, therefore, are inextricably related to the first two components of a learner-centered CBA and should only be discussed in relation to, and never in isolation from, each other.

Data Needed to Make Informed Decisions

CBA student assessment is the use of observation and systemic data collection methods to assist local decision making in the short-term related to discrete interventions and specific activities that are components of the school counseling program.

The primary purpose of CBA student assessments is to provide key constituencies with accurate and timely data that are needed to make informed educational decisions. Accurate and timely information is needed on both: a) academic performance and b) social, emotional and career competencies related to academic performance.

Student assessment is a multi-faceted process. Data collected are used in a variety of ways by various constituent groups. For the purpose of this discussion, we identify four constituencies which are the primary beneficiaries of the data collected: a) students, b) parents/guardians, c) counselors and other support staff, and d) teachers. These four groups have the greatest capacity for analyzing the data and potential for making adjustments to students' learning plans.

Each constituent group will have its own uses for the data. Students will use it to understand where they are in relation to what is expected of them. Parents/guardians will use the data to learn more about their children's learning strengths and areas in need of improvement, and increase their level of involvement in their children's education. School counselors, other professional support staff and teachers will use the data to determine the most appropriate learning plan for each student, and the activities and interventions needed to support student achievement and well-being.

Other constituent groups such as building and central administrators, school boards, state departments of education are also important users of student assessment data, but they do not have the same type of direct interaction with students as the four primary groups we have identified. These groups focus more on planning, program design, management and evaluation, and policy issues.

Three Types of Student Assessment Outcomes

Student assessments are an ongoing process, occurring at pre-defined intervals (e.g., end of activity, end of grade) or on an as-needed basis when data is required to address an emerging issue or unanticipated problem.

It is helpful to differentiate three types of student outcomes that occur along the PreK–12 learning continuum: immediate, proximal and distal. These three types of outcomes signify when certain types of results can be expected, beginning with the delivery of the interventions to students and ending when students are expected to have achieved the long-term results. Data are generated all along the PreK–12 learning continuum in order to determine immediate impact (short-interval of time following the intervention), mid-range results (to determine the extent to which students are successfully applying their learning) and long-term results (students' thinking and behavior reflect expected changes over time within the targeted population). The three types are displayed in the graphic below.
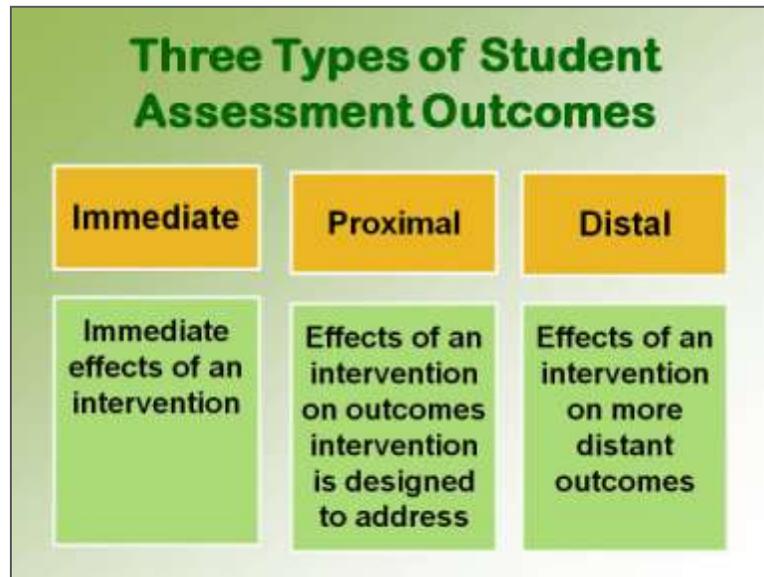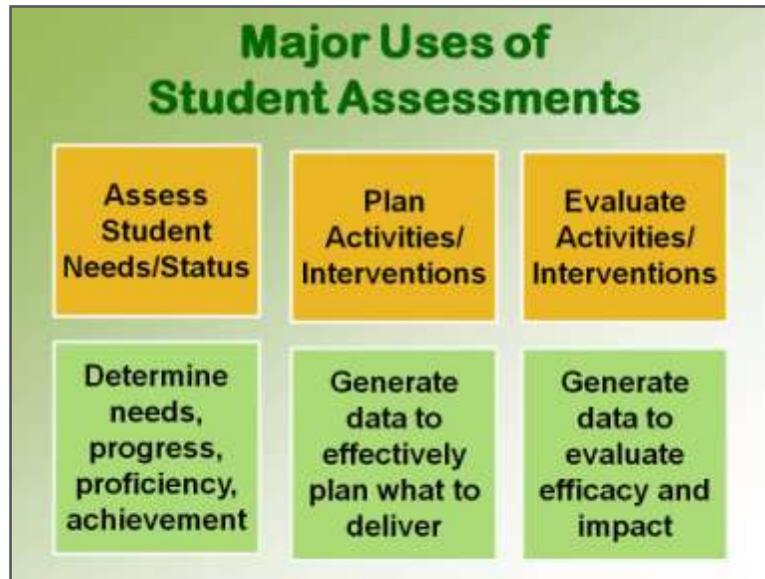
See Dimmitt, C., Carey, J. C. & Hatch, T. A. (2007). *Evidence-based school counseling: Making a difference with data-driven practices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin for more information on this and other data-related topics.

It is important to remember that student learning occurs over time and at varying rates. Assessments, therefore, are not a simple one-time snapshot, but an ongoing monitoring of what students have learned and how well they are applying their learning. Preparations need to be made to ensure that immediate, proximal and distal outcomes are identified and for which meaningful data are gathered, analyzed and used to guide student learning and improve the counseling program and counselor practice.

Three Major Uses of Student Assessments in a CBA

Student assessments have three major uses in a CBA. The first has to do with data we gather to determine students' needs and status in relation to expected CBA student results. The other two have to do with accurately determining which school counseling activities and interventions to deliver to students, and evaluating the efficacy and impact of those activities and interventions. The graphic below identifies the primary function of each usage type.

Major Uses of Student Assessments

| Assess Student Needs/Status	Plan Activities/ Interventions	Evaluate Activities/ Interventions
Determine needs, progress, proficiency, achievement	Generate data to effectively plan what to deliver	Generate data to evaluate efficacy and impact

Assess Student Needs and Status

As noted above, the results we want students to achieve are articulated as standard and competency statements. These statements and associated criteria for knowing when students have achieved them, define where students are expected to end up as a result of their learning experiences. In order to measure their progress and improvement, it is necessary to first determine each student's current status in relation to the results they are expected to achieve.

For example, in a CBA curriculum activity designed to teach students anti-bullying strategies, a pre-survey can be given to determine whether a student has already acquired relevant knowledge (e.g., roles assumed by individuals in a bullying situation) and whether the student is knowledgeable about and has applied various strategies that can be used to diffuse or resolve a bullying situation. The gap between what students know and are able to do in relation to what we expect them to know and do constitutes "student need."

Three terms that are useful in describing student needs and status are progress, proficiency and achievement. Each characterizes a level or degree of knowledge and competence (skill) in relation to relevant CBA standards and competencies. These determinations are important in helping to make informed decisions in the planning and evaluation uses of assessment data.
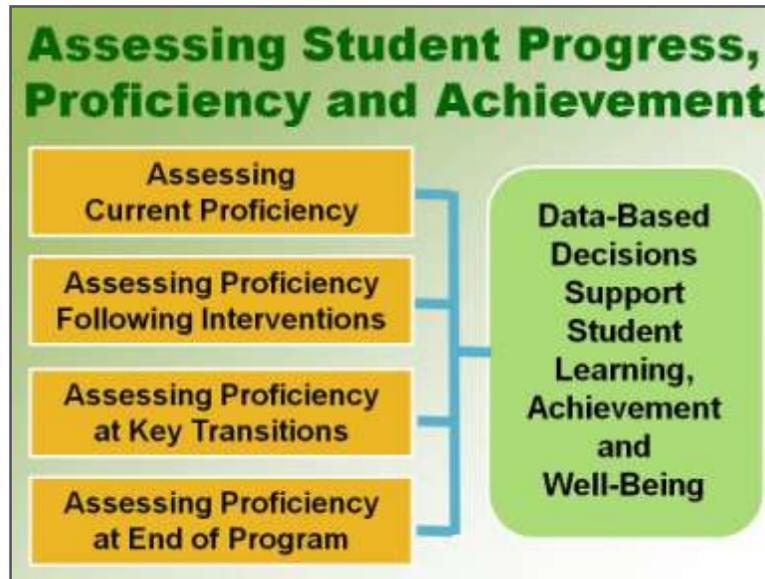
Progress

The notion of "progress" in a CBA signifies students' level or degree of attainment or completion in relation to specified results they are expected to achieve (standards and competencies). Progress can be measured in many ways, but all measurement results are intended to provide key personnel (e.g., students, parents/guardians, counselors, teachers, administrators) with vital information all along the PreK-12 learning continuum, especially at scheduled assessment intervals. This is necessary so that important educational decisions can be made to support students' learning, both individual and collective.

Gathering data on progress, or the extent to which a student has improved since beginning the specific learning process, is very important. Equally important is the reporting of data. This also can take many forms. Most critical from the perspective of students' learning is the immediate feedback given to students and their parents/guardians regarding their status, strengths and areas in need of improvement in terms of their immediate, proximal and distal goals. This information, provided in a timely fashion, is invaluable in keeping each student's individual learning plans up to date and accurately reflecting their actual current status and needs.

Student report cards are another commonly used way to provide students and adults concerned with students' achievement and well-being. Report cards distribute vital information on student progress at specified intervals (e.g., end of each reporting period). A CBA Report Card that can be incorporated into or accompany a school report card is discussed later in this section. In addition, a teacher-rated scale for assessing metacognitive awareness/skills and social-emotional development is provided for your use.

Individual student assessment data are aggregated and reported to establish group, whole class, whole grade and whole school data profiles based on student assessment data. These data are critical to the second and third major uses of student assessment data.

Proficiency

The notion of "proficiency" indicates the acquisition of relevant knowledge and mastery of appropriate skills (the ability to perform at specified levels of competence within reasonable

timeframes). Proficiency specifies how well students are performing specific tasks and performing in the program as a whole. There are a variety of terms used to distinguish among levels of proficiency (e.g., not proficient, proficient, above proficient). A goal for the school counseling program is that students will demonstrate their proficiency in terms of knowledge acquisition and skill development associated with the CBA standards and competencies.

Achievement

The notion of "achievement" indicates that students have reached a certain milestone, benchmark or learning target along the PreK–12 learning continuum. Students are expected to achieve standards and competencies, meet required learning objectives and educational milestones, and demonstrate that positive learning processes and outcomes are evident in their thinking and behavior.

Achievement can occur at a variety of levels. Students can be said to have achieved the learning targets of an individual CBA school counseling curriculum activity. They can be said to have achieved a result by demonstrating their mastery of relevant knowledge or proficiency in demonstrating their ability to perform a specific skill or task. Achievement can be attained in short time spans or time spans that stretch over days or months or multiple school years. In these cases, full achievement (e.g., a CBA standard) will have many smaller accomplishments (competencies) that all contribute to finally achieving the standard.

This helps answer the question as to when it can be said that a student has achieved the CBA student standards. Students have achieved the CBA standards when they demonstrate their proficiency (show their ability to do it) in terms of all twelve CBA standards. This ability is demonstrated primarily in terms of achieving the learning targets (competency statements) in the learning opportunities in which they have participated.

A CBA combines high standards for student excellence with high expectations for student performance. It provides a delivery system for engaging students in meaningful learning opportunities, primarily through the CBA curriculum. The curriculum provides students with opportunities to learn what we are teaching them, successfully apply their learning in authentic contexts, and demonstrate their proficiency and achievement to others. Student assessments are needed to generate information about student progress and challenges. The focus of CBA student assessments is to determine the extent of students' learning in order to guide students along their path to continuously improving their learning outcomes.

Plan Activities and Interventions

School counseling activities and interventions need to be planned. Planning involves the identification of a) activities and interventions that are needed most and b) students who most need specific activities and interventions. This involves data related to individual performance, sub-population performance and total student population performance. Collecting planning data is used to decide and plan for a) where school counseling activities and interventions need to be focused and b) which students need which type(s) of help.

There are many types of planned activities and interventions that are needed to address students' individual and collective needs. A CBA curriculum scope and sequence is one example of a comprehensive plan for delivering curriculum activities (planned interventions) to students throughout the PreK-12 learning continuum.

Evaluate Activities and Interventions

Evaluation data is collected to determine whether a targeted specific school counseling activity or intervention had its desired effect on students. Targeted activities and interventions are designed to focus on a set of sub-constructs. Evaluation requires the measurement of changes in students' thinking and behavior as they relate to these sub-constructs. Evaluation results are used to make decisions about whether to continue, modify or discontinue the activity or intervention and to inform stakeholders of the impact of the work of school counselors.

This use of student assessments is tied directly to the constructs and sub-constructs which form the foundation of a CBA. Evaluation data, therefore, needs to reflect the impact of these on student achievement and well-being.

The CBA core curriculum, as delineated in the CBA scope and sequence, provides the primary learning opportunities for students' to learn about and demonstrate proficiency in the CBA constructs and sub-constructs. Student assessments embedded in the CBA curriculum activities generate data about how well students are learning about the constructs and sub-constructs and are able to successfully apply their learning in their lives.

Managing Student Assessment Data

As we have seen, student assessment data are generated on an on-going basis and are distributed in a timely fashion to various constituencies that need the information to make informed decisions. Students and their parents/guardians, school counselors and teachers are the primary beneficiaries of CBA student assessment data as they have the greatest potential for using the data to improve students' learning processes and learner outcomes on a consistent basis.

The management of student assessment data is a complex and demanding process. To effectively manage all this data requires a school counseling data management system (SCDMS) that identifies critical data to be collected, and efficiently produces and organizes the data in formats that are easy to access, analyze and apply. Well-management data processes are required for effective data-based decision making.

A SCDMS needs to be planned for and effectively operationalized in order to ensure an efficient delivery of a comprehensive CBA school counseling program. Both student assessment data and CBA program evaluation data are used to generate the level of data needed to monitor and improve specific activities and interventions in particular, and the school counseling program as a whole.

Student assessment focuses on both individual student performance and aggregated data that reveals patterns and trends in groups, classes, grades, levels, schools and the district. Three important types of student assessments used in a CBA are: a) assessments embedded in CBA curriculum activities that determine student progress, proficiency and achievement of activity-specific results, b) students' metacognitive awareness and skill development that determine how students understand their learning and regulatory processes and act to improve them, and c) students' social-emotional learning (as measured by the Protective Factor Index discussed later in this document).

All this data needs to be viewed as an integrated whole consisting of critical information about various aspects of student learning and performance over time. A well-constructed technology platform, including a comprehensive student information system into which a variety of data elements are input frequently and consistently, is required. Such a system allows for the efficient gathering, processing, analysis and distribution of meaningful data in a timely fashion to those who need it to make informed decisions.

A defining characteristic of a SCDMS is that it makes critical information accessible in a timely fashion in easy to understand formats that can be immediately used to make decisions and take action. Accurate and timely data are the key to making effective educational decisions that are capable of having the greatest positive impact on students' development and learning. It is important in a CBA, therefore, that critical data be available to school counselors, and to the data teams on which they serve ,in a timely fashion. This aspect of student information systems is especially important in using the PFI discussed below to collect ongoing data on students' social-emotional and behavioral development.

Reporting Student Assessment Data

Data gathered by schools related to student progress and achievement are generally focused on cognitive development and confined to indicators of academic achievement in content area courses, and measurement by standardized tests. Little or no attention is paid to two other factors that research is now demonstrating are equally as important as cognition-focused learning and assessments: metacognitive awareness/skill and social-emotional learning. This lack of focus results in an incomplete understanding of the learning process. Subsequently, it constrains our ability to figure out how to improve student learning outcomes.

The CBA helps to rectify this situation by focusing on the four research-based constructs of motivation, self-direction, self-knowledge and relationship, all of which address students' metacognitive, social-emotional and behavioral developmental needs. A CBA helps to understand student motivation and how it influences students' thinking and behavior patterns. It helps understand how students become self-directed and self-regulating learners.

A CBA provides students with the knowledge and strategies needed to control and manage their executive functions and how to engage in meaningful interactions that support their learning and

productive lives. The CBA is designed to help students learn how to learn, plan for their future success and cope with the challenges of growing up, achieving at their highest potential, and being prepared to enter and benefit from educational and career opportunities in the postsecondary world.

School counseling programs focus on both prevention and intervention. By participating in a CBA school counseling program, students are provided with relevant knowledge they need to acquire, appropriate skills they need to develop and attitudes, behaviors and habits of mind they need to embrace to be successful in school and in life. These learning opportunities are preventive in that they prepare students in advance to deal with problems and issues that they will encounter in school and throughout life.

School counseling programs also provide interventions which are responses to current and/or emerging needs of students. Using these definitions, a school counseling curriculum is preventive in nature whereas a special program to address an emerging problem with bullying is an example of an intervention. Programs such as RTI and PBIS can be viewed as both prevention and an intervention in nature.

Accurately data that is reported in a timely fashion is essential to determining counseling opportunities that are both prevention-focused and intervention-focused. Student information systems that incorporate meaningful data elements and ensure data availability and accessibility to school counselors and other members of the school community are critical to the successful delivery of a CBA school counseling program.

CBA-Based Protective Factors Index (PFI)

A CBA school counseling program focuses on students' metacognitive, social-emotional and behavioral needs through a variety of prevention and intervention activities. An important contribution school counselors can make to the collection, reporting and analysis of these types of data is through the use of a CBA-based Protective Factors Index (PFI) and the reporting of PFI indicators on the school's student report card.

Researchers at the Ronald H. Fredrickson Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst have developed a "Protective Factors Index" which focuses on metacognitive and social-emotional factors that are strongly related to students' academic performance and well-being. Protective factor indicators reflect social-emotional and behavioral competencies characteristic of proficient and engaged learners. Students are assessed using a teacher-rated scale that is completed at the end of each reporting period and issued as part of, or along with, the school's student report card.

A CBA Report Card is based on the CBA constructs and sub-constructs. A behaviorally-anchored teacher-rated rubric is used to make reliable ratings. It provides students and their parents/guardians with accurate and timely information on educational progress related to students' motivation, self-direction, self-knowledge and relationships. The results of each reporting period can be compared with the results of previous reports to determine a student's progress and/or identify areas of continuing concern that require additional support and interventions.

Aggregated student results can be used to establish patterns among the student population and sub-populations and guide the counseling department in targeting specific areas related to

metacognitive and social-emotion functions that need to be addressed. This allows the CBA to be data-rich and data-decisive in increasing students' capacity to learn and improve their learning outcomes.

The PFI is a major step in developing a systematic approach to collecting and reporting social-emotional data over time so the data can be used by school counselors, teachers, school data teams and parents to more deeply understand students' development in these critical aspect of whole child education. It helps to establish a more comprehensive data repository that allows for the storage, retrieval and analyses of students' needs and achievement by collectively reviewing academic, metacognitive, social-emotional and behavioral data and how they relate to each other.

The PFI enables school counselors to more effectively plan and deliver preventive learning opportunities, and more focused interventions, to students as part of the counseling program. It helps parents/guardians become more involved in their children's education. It provides teachers and data-teams a way to understand academic achievement in terms of metacognitive and social-emotional development.

The reporting of PFI data on the school's student report card at the end of each grading period helps ensure a snap-shot and a longitudinal view of student development in these important non-academic areas. The continuous availability of PFI data throughout the year and across school years enhances the school's student support system of which school counseling is a vital component.

Links to Student Assessment Templates

The intent of the *CBA Website* is to help you get started in developing a CBA, integrating it into your current school counseling program, and delivering CBA learning opportunities to your students. This "Develop a CBA" module thus far has provided information on "Defining student Excellence" as standard and competency statements, and "Developing Meaningful Learning Opportunities" that help students achieve the standards through participation in a CBA school counseling curriculum. This section has focused on "Assessing Student Progress, the third building block required to develop a CBA.

The following templates will help you begin to develop your CBA student assessments. Instructions for each template are provided as "pdf" files. The templates are provided as MS Word "docx" files to input and organize your data.

Descriptions of the assessment instruments are provided below, along with links to the Instructions and Templates.

Links to the "Instructions" and "Templates" associated with the "Develop Learning Opportunities" section of the "Develop a CBA" module are provided below and in the "Free Resources" Module.

[*NOTE: The following hyperlinks will not work once the "pdf" version of this webpage has been downloaded. To access the Templates and Instructions, logon to the CBA Website. The quickest way is to go to the "Free Resources" module, click on "Templates and Instructions" in the Sidebar, and then click on the desired link.*]

Developing Curriculum Embedded Assessments

All CBA curriculum activities have embedded assessments to help determine student progress, proficiency and achievement in relation to the specified results students are expected to achieve through participation in the curriculum activity.

Developing Curriculum Embedded Assessments Instructions

Developing Curriculum Embedded Assessments Template

High School Student Needs Assessment

This template enables high school students to specify the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements related to their learning.

High School Student Needs Assessment Instructions

High School Student Needs Assessment Template

Elementary Parents' Student Needs Assessment

This template enables parents of elementary school students to specify the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements related to their children's social-emotional and metacognitive development.

Elementary Parents' Student Needs Assessment Instructions

Elementary Parents' Student Needs Assessment Template

Protective Factors Index/CBA Report Card

Reporting student assessment data is an essential component of the assessment process. This template uses a teacher-rated scale to record and report student levels of metacognitive awareness/skills and social-emotional development.

PFI/CBA Report Card Instructions

PFI/CBA Report Card Template