The National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) voluntary quality standards are designed for use by schools, districts, state education agencies, youth-serving organizations, foundations, community groups, and others to better understand essential components of quality, set goals as part of existing or emerging continuous improvement processes, set goals when designing new programs, and consider prospective partners.

These voluntary quality standards highlight a significant number of common elements across the five NPSS student support roles – tutoring, mentoring, student success coaching, postsecondary transition coaching, and wraparound/integrated student support coordination. They are essential to any effort to recruit, train, place, and support staff and volunteers in programs that are safe, supportive, and effectively engage students and families. These evidence-based definitions also include distinguishing features for each role.

With this shared vision of quality, the NPSS aims to advance and build upon the field's commitment to expand quality programming in a way that is flexible and aligned with each community’s needs and chosen approach to pandemic recovery and program implementation. The concepts contained within this document are meant to spotlight and elevate existing quality improvement work that is taking place across the country and make it easier for schools and providers alike to identify what else might be needed as they incorporate new roles and expand the number of adults serving in those roles.

- We encourage schools, districts, and state education agencies to include the concepts within the voluntary standards in RFPs or partnership conversations with potential providers of student supports.

- We encourage providers of student supports – including but not limited to youth-serving organizations, school- or community-based programs, and the national, state and local networks that support them – to highlight for schools and key stakeholders how the concepts within the voluntary standards are core to their existing or emerging quality improvement systems and to consider these concepts when incorporating additional student support roles, designing new programs, or developing quality standards and continuous improvement efforts.

- We encourage philanthropy to use the voluntary standards to help set goals for quality and continuous improvement efforts with grantees and in RFPs aimed at increasing student supports nationally, regionally, and locally.

- We encourage state and local efforts building partnerships for student success to use the voluntary standards to guide partner selection and continuous improvement.

For More Information on how to expand, improve or be recognized for the student support efforts in your state or community, please contact the National Partnership for Student Success.
These voluntary quality standards were developed by the NPSS through collaboration between several leading national organizations and drawing upon existing quality standards and quality improvement work that has been developed by these and other organizations based on research over many years. Key collaborators include:

Additional input was also provided by AmeriCorps, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Girls Inc, Horizons National, InnovateEDU, National 4-H Council, U.S. Department of Education, and YMCA of the USA. This work also builds upon the significant contributions towards the understanding and improvement of quality programming made by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Forum for Youth Investment), Search Institute, National Afterschool Association, National Summer Learning Association, and Science of Learning and Development Alliance, among others.
The NPSS Voluntary Quality Standards Framework represents a shared vision of quality, affirming common elements for quality programming and illustrating how they crosswalk with standards that are distinct to each NPSS role.

1 RECRUIT

wholesale recruitment
CAPACITY
Recruitment, Screening & Selection
a clear, culturally-responsive process results in staff and/or volunteers that are reflective of the communities they serve, meet safety requirements for direct work with students in school and community settings, and have the skill sets and mindsets necessary to be successful in their role.

2 TRAIN

role specific training
CONTENT
Pre-Service Training
high-quality onboarding and training, tailored to role and program/partnership requirements.

Ongoing Coaching, Training & Feedback
ongoing support (to the role) through observations, coaching, two-way feedback, and ongoing training or professional development that is specific and appropriately sequenced to the role.

3 PLACE IN PROGRAMS WITH...

key program
COMPONENTS
Distinguishing Features of Program Design
- Tutors
- Mentors
- Student Success Coaches
- Post-Secondary Transitions Coaches
- Wraparound Support Coordinators

See specifics on following pages

developmental
CONTEXTS
Safety Protocols
has all necessary protocols in place to keep students (and their data) safe and implements those protocols with fidelity.

Supportive Structure & Approach Grounded in Youth Development
promoting development, learning, and thriving by engaging children and youth in pro-social, productive, constructive, strengths-based, relationship-driven opportunities.

Climate & Culture
has a defined mission, vision, goals, policies, and procedures that are aligned with broader context and designed/adopted with stakeholders.

Community & Culturally Responsive
designed to successfully meet the needs of the community it serves.

strong student & family
CONNECTIONS
Student Enrollment & Retention
has a defined and equitable approach to identify, engage, and retain students; particular attention is paid to reducing barriers to participation.

Student/Staff (or Volunteer) Relationship
has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build strong, positive relationships between students and adults.

Caregiver Engagement
ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student progress.

essential
CONDITIONS
Commitment to Educational Equity & Social Justice
intentional strategies for promoting equity and belonging throughout program planning and implementation, across all levels of the organization.

LEADERSHIP
Leader Role Clarity
clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership team committed to creating a healthy, safe, engaging, and supportive environment.

Leader Professional Development
program leaders receive ongoing and continuous support and development to implement their roles with fidelity.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
School/Community Staff & Volunteer Engagement
nurture relationships within and across staff, volunteers, and stakeholder groups.

Integration/Alignment with School Schedule
strategically considers timing and sequence of activities with students’ school schedules.

DATA & PRIVACY
Data Systems & Use
leveraging quantitative and qualitative data and systems to identify services for students, monitor progress, improve programming, and strengthen partner collaboration.

Effectiveness & Improvement
demonstrated commitment to understanding overall program effectiveness and process for ongoing improvement. Where feasible, conduct process, outcomes, and impact evaluations to inform and strengthen programming and contribute to evidence base.

Data Sharing
written agreements clearly articulate access to the necessary student-level and school-level data, detail its intended uses, and provide for its timely destruction. Schools and providers maintain control of data and provide training on maintaining confidentiality.
1 RECRUIT

wholesale recruitment
CAPACITY
Recruitment, Screening & Selection
a clear, culturally-responsive process results in staff and/or volunteers that are reflective of the communities they serve, meet safety requirements for direct work with students in school and community settings, and have the skill sets and mindsets necessary to be successful in their role.

Results in: Tutors with the skills and mindsets necessary to be successful in the program.

2 TRAIN

role specific training
CONTENT

Pre-Service Training high-quality onboarding and training, tailored to role and program/partnership requirements.

Ongoing Coaching, Training & Feedback ongoing support (to the role) through observations, coaching, two-way feedback, and ongoing training or professional development that is specific and appropriately sequenced to the role.

3 PLACE IN PROGRAMS WITH...

key program
COMPONENTS

The TQS Quality Standards speak to 7 dimensions: Equity, Tutor, Data Use, Instruction, Learning Integration, Safety, and Cohesion. Items below relate primarily to Instruction while the other dimensions are addressed throughout this page.

Dosage provides each student with at least three 30-minute tutoring sessions per week.

High-quality Materials user-friendly, rigorous, and research-based.

Instructional Practices tutors receive explicit training, modeling, and coaching related to the use of effective instructional strategies (e.g., strong questioning, pacing).

Ratios ratio of students to tutors does not exceed 4:1.

Routines & Structures consistent lesson structure, set instructional routines, and standard procedures to maximize learning; tutor-specific modifications are intentional and informed by student needs.

Setting takes place during the school day or in OST/summer with necessary structures and systems in place to ensure student participation and engagement.

Student Grouping strategically grouped by skill level or language needed to allow the tutor to deliver relevant instruction to the full group.

Tutor Consistency consistent tutoring from the same tutor; any adjustments to groupings occur sparingly and strategically.

strong student & family
CONNECTIONS

Student Enrollment & Retention has a defined and equitable approach to identify, engage, and retain students; particular attention is paid to reducing barriers to participation.

Student/Staff (or Volunteer) Relationship has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build strong, positive relationships between students and adults.

Caregiver Engagement ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student progress.

developmental
CONTEXTS

Safety Protocols has all the necessary protocols in place to keep students (and their data) safe and implements those protocols with fidelity.

Supportive Structure & Approach Grounded in Youth Development promoting development, learning, and thriving by engaging children and youth in pro-social, productive, constructive, strengths-based, relationship-driven opportunities.

Climate & Culture has a defined mission, vision, goals, policies, and procedures that are aligned with broader context and designed/adopted with stakeholders.

Community & Culturally Responsive designed to successfully meet the needs of the community it serves.

essential
CONDITIONS

Commitment to Educational Equity and Social Justice intentional strategies for promoting equity and belonging throughout program planning and implementation, across all levels of the organization.

LEADERSHIP

Leader Role Clarity clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership team committed to creating a healthy, safe, engaging, and supportive environment.

Leader Professional Development program leaders receive ongoing and continuous support and development to implement their roles with fidelity.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

School/Community Staff & Volunteer Engagement nurtures relationships within and across staff, volunteers, and stakeholder groups.

Integration/Alignment with School Schedule strategically considers timing and sequence of activities with students’ school schedules to ensure student participation and engagement.

Curricular Alignment if classroom instruction is based on rigorous and high-quality materials, aligns to classroom curricula, otherwise aligned to state standards. (tutor specific)

DATA & PRIVACY

Data Systems & Use leverage quantitative and qualitative data and systems to identify services for students, monitor progress, improve programming, and strengthen partner collaboration.

Effectiveness & Improvement demonstrated commitment to understanding overall program effectiveness and process for ongoing improvement. Where feasible, conduct process, outcomes, and impact evaluations to inform and strengthen programming and contribute to evidence base.

Formative Assessment provides tutors with support to collect, analyze, and use formative assessment data to inform design of future sessions. (tutor specific)

Student Progress has a system for measuring individual student progress over time and responding to those results; measures of progress include both academic growth and adaptive indicators (e.g., student engagement, student confidence) (tutor specific)

Data Sharing written agreements clearly articulate access to the necessary student-level and school-level data, detail its intended uses, and provide for its timely destruction. Schools and providers maintain control of student data and provide training on maintaining confidentiality.

COORDINATION & LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE
The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring include 6 evidence-based standards that are intended to be applicable across almost every type of youth mentoring program. In addition to 1. Recruitment, 2. Screening, and 3. Training of Mentors, Mentees and Parents/Guardians, the evidence-based standards address:

1. Recruitment, Screening & Selection: has all the necessary protocols in place to keep students (and their data) safe and implements those protocols with fidelity.

2. Supportive Structure & Approach Grounded in Youth Development: promoting development, learning and thriving by engaging children and youth in pro-social, productive, constructive, strengths-based, relationship-driven opportunities.

3. Climate & Culture: designed to successfully meet the needs of the community it serves

4. Mentors, Mentees and Parents/Guardians: the evidence-based standards address:

   - Community & Culturally Responsive
   - Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Racial Justice
   - Leadership
   - School/Community Engagement
   - Data & Privacy

5. Matching & Initiating: Match mentors and mentees, and initiate the mentoring relationship using strategies likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure and be effective.

6. Monitoring & Support: Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and child safety; and support matches through providing ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of each relationship. (Relates to Content, Contexts & Connections sections on this page.)

6. Closure: facilitates bringing the mentoring relationship to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of the mentor and mentee.

For more on the mentor role, see: Becoming a Better Mentor: Strategies to Be There for Young People.
**Six Drivers** central to the SSC model are anchored in the coach/student relationship. Connections to each of the six drivers are noted with the Driver #.

SSCs are fully integrated into the staff team and may be based in multiple settings, including schools, OST/afterschool programs, CBOs, and nonprofits. SSCs commit significant, consistent time throughout the school year or program cycle.

**Holistic Supports Integrated into School**
Integrated social, emotional, and academic development.
- SSCs weave SEL into academic and attendance supports
- SSCs coach students using evidence-based SEL practices
- SSCs provide targeted ELA and math support

*Driver #4 Intentional School Integration & Holistic Support. See also items under School/Community Integration.*

**Authentic Coach/Student Relationship** (Driver #1) has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build strong, positive relationships between students and adults.

**Caregiver Engagement** ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student progress in a way that supports a holistic approach to each individual student.

**Commitment to Educational Equity and Social Justice** intentional strategies for promoting equity and belonging throughout program planning and implementation, across all levels of the organization.

**Leadership**
- *Leader Role Clarity* clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership team committed to creating a healthy, safe, engaging, supportive environment.
- *Leader Professional Development* program leaders receive ongoing and continuous support and development to implement their roles with fidelity.

**SCHOOL/COMMUNITY INTEGRATION**
*

**DATA & PRIVACY** (Driver #2)
- *Data Systems & Use* leverage quantitative and qualitative data and systems to identify services for students, monitor progress, improve programming, and strengthen partner collaboration.
- *Effectiveness & Improvement* demonstrated commitment to understanding overall program effectiveness and process for ongoing improvement. Where feasible, conduct process, outcomes, and impact evaluations to inform and strengthen programming and contribute to the evidence base.
- *Data Sharing* written agreements clearly articulate access to the necessary student-level and school-level data, detail its intended uses, and provide for its timely destruction. Schools and providers maintain control of data and provide training on maintaining confidentiality.

**COORDINATION & LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE**
**POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION COACHES**

**VOLUNTARY QUALITY STANDARDS**

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1 **RECRUIT**

**CAPACITY**

Recruitment, Screening & Selection

- a clear, culturally-responsive process results in staff and/or volunteers that are reflective of the communities they serve, meet safety requirements for direct work with students in school and community settings, and have the skill sets and mindsets necessary to be successful in their role.

Results in:

Identification of school counselors and CBO advisors to play role of Post-Secondary Transition Coach as well as supportive volunteers.

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2 **TRAIN**

**CONTENT**

- Pre-Service Training high-quality onboarding and training, tailored to role and program/partnership requirements (includes e-learning and in-person courses on college advising, application, financial aid, working with adolescents, cultural competency, etc.).

- Ongoing Coaching ongoing support (to the role) through observations, coaching, two-way feedback, and ongoing training or professional development that is specific and appropriately sequenced to the role (includes updates to financial aid process, credentials, high-stakes testing, etc.).

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3 **PLACE IN PROGRAMS WITH...**

**COMPONENTS**

Post-Secondary Transition Coaches work with students to determine best fit and match for post-secondary plans, supporting students in:

- **Better understanding post-secondary pathway options** including dispelling myths about college access and affordability.

- **College list building** specifically with regard to “fit” and “match” principles and expected postsecondary completion rates.

- **Financial aid assistance** (e.g., FAFSA completion, understanding net price award letter review); college application assistance; postsecondary degree, credential, and career exploration and exposure.

- **Successful summer melt prevention interventions** including sources of emergency aid.

Includes individual delivery for personalized supports and group delivery for general information.

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**CONTEXTS**

**Safety Protocols** has all the necessary protocols in place to keep students (and their data) safe and implements those protocols with fidelity.

**Supportive Structure & Approach Grounded in Youth Development** promoting development, learning, and thriving by engaging children and youth in pro-social, productive, constructive, strengths-based, relationship-driven opportunities.

**Climate & Culture** has a defined mission, vision, goals, policies, and procedures that are aligned with broader context and designed/adopted with stakeholders.

**Community & Culturally Responsive** designed to successfully meet the needs of the community it serves.

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**CONNECTIONS**

**Student Enrollment & Retention** has a defined and equitable approach to identify, engage, and retain students; particular attention is paid to reducing barriers to participation.

**Student/Staff (or Volunteer) Relationship** has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build strong, positive relationships between students and adults. Coach develops and maintains ongoing relationship with the student, especially over the summer.

**Caregiver Engagement** ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student progress, in particular to support their understanding of: 1) their critical role in supporting students’ aspirations, and 2) college cost implications and options.

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**CONDITIONS**

**Commitment to Educational Equity & Social Justice** intentional strategies for promoting equity and belonging throughout program planning and implementation, across all levels of the organization. Includes belief that all students can pursue postsecondary pathways.

**LEADERSHIP**

**Leader Role Clarity** clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership team committed to creating a healthy, safe, engaging, and supportive environment.

**Leader Professional Development** program leaders receive ongoing and continuous support and development to implement their roles with fidelity.

**SCHOOL/COMMUNITY INTEGRATION**

**School/Community Staff & Volunteer Engagement** nurtures relationships within and across staff, volunteers, and stakeholder groups. Complements existing services in high schools, community centers, places of worship, extracurricular activities, etc. Taps into volunteer supports/resources as needed, based on the needs of the student.

**Integration/Alignment with School Schedule** strategically considers timing and sequence of activities with students’ school schedules.

**DATA & PRIVACY**

**Data Systems & Use** leverage quantitative and qualitative data and systems to identify services for students, monitor progress, improve programming (e.g., college profiles, graduation rates), and strengthen partner collaboration.

**Effectiveness & Improvement** demonstrated commitment to understanding overall program effectiveness and process for ongoing improvement. Where feasible, conduct process, outcomes and impact evaluations to inform and strengthen programming and contribute to the evidence base.

**Data Sharing** written agreements clearly articulate access to the necessary student-level and school-level data (e.g., which students have completed FAFSA), detail its intended uses, and provide for its timely destruction. Schools and providers maintain control of student data and provide training on maintaining confidentiality.

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**COORDINATION & LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE**
WHOLESALE RECRUITMENT
CAPACITY

Recruitment, Screening & Selection
A clear, culturally-responsive process
results in staff that are reflective of the
communities they serve, meet safety
requirements for direct work with
students in school and community
settings, and have the skill sets and
mindsets necessary to be successful in
their role.

Results in:
School-Level Capacity: hired or
designated FTE to assume
school-level integration and
coordination responsibilities.

ROLE-SPECIFIC TRAINING
CONTENT

Pre-Service Training
High-quality onboarding and training,
tailored to role and program/
partnership requirements.

Ongoing Coaching
Ongoing support (to the role) through
observations, coaching, two-way
feedback, and ongoing training or
professional development that is
specific and appropriately sequenced to
the role.

Key Program
COMPONENTS

Wraparound Support Coordinators work with volunteers,
partners, and the local community to provide students with
the integrated student supports they need to succeed both
inside and outside the classroom. By differentiating
supports, they are able to serve most students in a school
and also focus attention on targeted students that have
significant needs.

School-level leadership team
with functions led by full-time
staff who support school team, manage school partnerships,
and secure resources.

School support team
comprised of school leaders, counselors,
and partners.

School-wide needs assessment, support plan &
implementation

Individual student assessments & development/delivery of
student support plans
students supported with individualized
goals and connections to partners.

Alignment between school-wide goals and student-level goals

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXTS

Safety Protocols
has all the necessary protocols in place
to keep students (and their data) safe and implements those
protocols with fidelity.

Supportive Structure & Approach Grounded in Youth
Development & Community Development
promoting
development, learning, and thriving by engaging children and
youth in pro-social, productive, constructive, strengths-based,
relationship-driven opportunities.

Climate & Culture
has a defined mission, vision, goals, policies,
and procedures that are aligned with broader context
and school-wide climate/culture goals and designed/adopted with
stakeholders; contributes to initiatives to support the whole
school.

Community & Culturally Responsive
designed to successfully
meet the needs of the community it serves.

STRONG STAFF & FAMILY
CONNECTIONS

Student Enrollment & Retention
has a defined and equitable approach to identify, engage, and retain
students; particular attention is paid to reducing barriers.

Student/Staff (or Volunteer) Relationships
has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build
strong, positive relationships between students and adults.

Caregiver Engagement
ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student progress.

Community Access
ensures community members have access to resources. (ISS specific)

Essential CONDITIONS

Commitment to Educational Equity and Social Justice
intentional strategies for promoting equity and
belonging throughout program planning and implementation, across all levels of the organization.

Leadership

Leader Role Clarity
clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership team committed to creating a
healthy, safe, engaging, and supportive environment.

Leader Professional Development
program leaders receive ongoing and continuous support and
development to implement their roles with fidelity.

Leader Support for Coordinator
school and provider leadership empower site coordinator by clearly
establishing and communicating expectations and boundaries of the role of site coordinator to school
staff and community. (ISS specific)

School/Community Integration

Goal Alignment
aligns with school leadership to set goals and monitor progress; school assessments
and school-wide goals are based on identified needs. (ISS specific)

School/Community Staff, Volunteer & Stakeholder Engagement
nurture relationships within and
across staff, volunteers, and stakeholder groups.

Integration/Alignment with School Schedule
strategically considers timing and sequence of activities
with students’ school schedules.

Data & Privacy

Self-Assessment
to establish readiness. (ISS specific)

Data Systems & Use
leverage quantitative and qualitative data and systems to identify services for
students, monitor progress, improve programming, and strengthen partner collaboration

Effectiveness & Improvement
demonstrated commitment to understanding overall program
effectiveness and process for ongoing improvement. Where feasible, conducts process, outcomes,
and impact evaluations to inform and strengthen programming and contribute to the evidence base.

Asset Mapping
develops and maintains up-to-date, accessible information on school- and community-
based resources. (ISS specific)

Student Progress
check-ins/progress monitoring throughout year. (ISS specific)

Data Sharing
written agreements clearly articulate access to the necessary student-level and school-
level data, detail its intended uses, and provide for its timely destruction. Schools and providers
maintain control of student data and provide training on maintaining confidentiality.
REFERENCES:


