ASCA Position Statements

AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

The School Counselor and ...

The School Counselor and Academic Development
(Adopted 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors implementing comprehensive programs strive to have an impact on student growth in three domain areas: academic development, career development and social/emotional development (ASCA, 2012). School counselors recognize students should demonstrate growth in these domains equally to be successful. School counselors understand these domains are not considered separate but are intertwined, each affecting the other (Schenck, Anctil, & Smith, 2010, p. 16). Although this statement focuses on academic development, it is understood career development and social/emotional development need to be considered with equal diligence.

The Rationale
Recent educational initiatives (e.g., No Child Left Behind [NCLB]; Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]) have stressed academic achievement as a measure of school success. As a result, school counseling programs align their program goals with that of the institution, emphasizing academic achievement. School counselors contribute to the educational and academic outcomes of the school by enhancing student engagement and performance (Carey & Harrington, 2010a; Carey & Harrington, 2010b) through designing, implementing and evaluating comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2012).

School counseling programs use data to understand student needs, provide school counseling core curriculum and closing-the-gap interventions and remove systemic barriers to ensure all students as early as preschool and kindergarten have opportunity to develop academic goals at all grade levels reflecting their abilities and academic interests and can access appropriate rigorous, relevant coursework and experiences. Because of their unique position within a school and their unique training, school counselors can work with students facing mental health issues, family and social problems as well as career exploration and course planning to make school relevant (Howe, 2009).

School counselors play a critical role in ensuring schools provide a safe, caring environment and that students have the necessary mindsets and behaviors to advance academic achievement outcomes. School counselors work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure equity, access and academic success of all students (ASCA, 2012).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors support students' academic success by:
- Leading development of a safe and caring school culture
- Delivering a comprehensive school counseling program based on data identifying student needs
- Delivering information to students and teachers within the school counseling core curriculum on best practices in mindsets and behaviors (i.e., learning strategies, self-management skills, social skills) and metacognition skills (McGuire, 2015) critical in academic success
- Providing relevance to academic effort and educational pursuits by assisting in students' career planning and future career-related goals
- Working with administration, teachers and other school staff to create a school environment encouraging academic success and striving to one's potential (Stone & Clark, 2001)
- Working to remove barriers to access and provide students with the opportunity for academic challenge in the most rigorous coursework possible
- Establishing data analysis methods to identify and target systemic barriers deterring equitable access
- Providing opportunities for students to:
  - Enhance their self-efficacy beliefs and competence
  - Develop attributional beliefs
  - See value in tasks related to achievement
  - Develop mastery/learning goals
  - Develop autonomy
  - Relate to others (Rowell & Hong, 2013)

- Working to establish student opportunities for academic remediation as needed
- Emphasizing family-community-school relationships in addressing academic needs (Brown, 1999)

Summary

Educational institutions are evaluated on student outcomes, especially academic achievement. School counselors working in this educational environment play a critical role in ensuring students have the academic development (in addition to the social/emotional and career development) knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be successful. School counselors can assist schools in providing an environment conducive to and supportive of academic success.

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The School Counselor and Annual Performance Evaluation

(Adopted 1978; reaffirmed 1984; revised 1986, 1993, 2003, 2009, 2015; reviewed 1999)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
The annual performance evaluation of school counselors should accurately reflect the unique professional training and practices of school counselors working within a comprehensive school counseling program. These written evaluations should use forms and tools specifically designed for school counselors, based on documents such as the School Counselor Competencies and the School Counselor Performance Appraisal from the ASCA National Model.

The Rationale
The primary purposes of the annual performance evaluation are to ensure the school counselor's effectiveness, impact, high-level performance and continued professional growth (Dimmitt, 2009). School counselors should be evaluated based on professional standards of practice defined by school, district or state guidelines for school counselor evaluation (ASCA 2012). It is recommended the appraisal include the components of self-evaluation, administrative evaluation and assessment of goal attainment (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). In addition, the "evaluators of school counselors' performance should be trained to understand school support evaluation" (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). ASCA provides the School Counselor Competencies and a sample School Counselor Performance Appraisal as planning tools when developing a sound school counselor assessment tool (ASCA 2012).

The School Counselor's Role
The key purpose of the school counselor performance evaluation is to enhance the positive effect the school counselor and the school counseling program have on students and school stakeholders (VSCA, 2008). The school counselor:
- initiates the annual development of an annual agreement with administrators, to be referenced during annual performance evaluations
- consults with administrators regarding approved standards and competencies for school counselors and school counseling programs
- endorses the use of the ASCA National Model School Counselor Performance Appraisal and ASCA School Counselor Competencies
- educates stakeholders of the importance of appropriate school counselor evaluation tools and advocates for their use if such tools are not being used (VSCA, 2008)
- collaborates with administrators to develop appropriate tools to use in the evaluation of the school counselor and the school counseling program (see examples at *www.schoolcounselor.org/resources*)

Summary
The annual performance evaluation of the school counselor should use criteria reflecting the current competencies and performance appraisals of the school counseling profession. Annual performance forms and tools should also reflect these criteria.

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The School Counselor and Career and Technical Education
(Adopted 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors provide all students with counseling that facilitates academic, career and social/emotional development, helping all students develop plans for choosing a career. School counselors demonstrate their understanding of rigorous career technical education (CTE) programs when they join with other CTE stakeholders to advocate for these programs, which are designed to guide students to success in their chosen careers.

The Rationale
Ferguson and Lamback (2014) noted that increased attention on career-focused education has been the objective of many education reform efforts striving to strengthen educational relevance, improve students' school and career preparation planning and increase student readiness for workplace demands. According to Advance CTE (n.d.), an association of CTE state directors dedicated to linking learning and work, more than 12 million high school and college students are enrolled in CTE programs across the nation. These students are learning academic and technical skills to prepare for the world of work through the introduction of workplace competencies that are most often provided through a hands-on environment.

Employers frequently express frustration that new hires often lack well-developed communication skills, problem-solving skills, motivation, persuasion and critical-thinking skills that define soft skills (MacDermott & Ortiz, 2017). DiBenedetto and Myers (2016) noted that CTE courses provide "contextual real-world learning experiences that have engaged students and exposed them to opportunities to transfer and apply those skills in occupational settings" (p. 31). School counselors agree with DiBenedetto and Myers (2016) that CTE courses help students develop core academic skills; employability skills; and job-specific, technical skills related to career pathways.

In their study on the influence of career-focused education on career planning and development, Mobley, Sharp, Hammond, Withington and Stipanovic (2017) observed that real-world experiences and hands-on projects are generally much more likely to happen in CTE courses. They noted that CTE students are more likely to have a clear understanding about their career goals, and they concluded that non-CTE students would benefit with advising, real-world experiences and hands-on integrated CTE/academic projects like those available to CTE students.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors play an integral role through the context of comprehensive school counseling programs to facilitate students' acquisition of attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to achieve positive postsecondary and career outcomes. School counselors at all levels recognize that employability skills align well with ASCA's Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success (2014). Consequently, they integrate a structure for organizing and delivering information about various careers and corresponding clusters such as The National Career Clusters Framework (Advance CTE, 2018).

This national framework or a similarly developed local framework informs the use of career development interventions for all students to help them navigate their way to postsecondary training intended to foster greater career success. When school counselors provide all students with information about high-quality CTE programs, they help all students consider all of their options following high school completion, including directly entering the world of work.

School counselors are aware that preparing 21st-century students to be career-ready requires collaborative efforts. As concluded by Conneely, Fitzgerald, Cook and Vrbka (2009), "There are advantages for CTE and comprehensive school counseling programs to coordinate their efforts to better serve all students in achieving postsecondary and career readiness" (p. 4). When school counselors demonstrate a shared understanding of CTE programs with other CTE stakeholders (e.g., teachers, administrators, legislators and employers), they are better equipped to encourage all students and their families to consider the advantages of enrolling in rigorous and relevant CTE courses.

A brief, "School Counselors as CTE Stakeholders," prepared as a collaborative effort with ASCA and the National Association of State Directors of CTE, noted that school counselors can explain CTE options to students in the framework of career clusters and programs of study to inform student planning (Conneely et al., 2009). Mobley et al. (2017) added that students are often more motivated to stay in school when enrolled in career-focused education. Additionally, their study provides evidence that "an emphasis on career-focused education for all students can result in less stigmatization of two areas that are often negatively viewed by students: taking CTE or career-focused classes and visiting the school counselor" (p. 70).

The findings by Mobley et al. (2017) underscore the importance of school counselors using their leadership and influencing skills to create awareness of CTE programming options for students and their families. School counselors also advocate for the continued growth, development and expansion of rigorous CTE programs. These efforts provide an increase in awareness of CTE opportunities prior to entering postsecondary endeavors in hopes that students will be more informed and focused, offering students and their families savings of time and money on postsecondary training.

Summary

School counselors improve their service to their students when they understand CTE offers numerous benefits, including rigorous programs of study, academic and CTE curriculum and productive relationships within the business community. These advantages serve as effective means that school counselors can use to help all students make informed career decisions. Comprehensive school counseling programs provide a way for school counselors to help students understand all of their options that lead to the world of work, including CTE courses, through organized and structured individual student planning.

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The School Counselor and Career Development
(Adopted 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors implementing comprehensive programs strive to have an impact on student growth in three domain areas: career development, academic development and social/emotional development (ASCA, 2012). School counselors recognize students should demonstrate growth in these domains equally to be successful. School counselors understand these domains are not considered separate but are intertwined, each affecting the other (Schenck, Anctil, & Smith, 2010). Although this statement focuses on career development it is understood academic development and social/emotional development need to be considered with equal diligence.

The Rationale
Workforce projections call for graduating secondary students to have at the least some postsecondary education to fulfill the demands of work (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). School counselors recognize that each student, regardless of background, possesses unique interests, abilities and goals, which will lead to future opportunities. Collaborating with students, families, educational staff and the community, the school counselor works to ensure all students select a postsecondary path to productive citizenry (e.g. military, career technical certificate or two-/four-year degree program) appropriate for the student.

ASCA recognizes career education begins in kindergarten and is exemplified by students who are knowledgeable about options and are prepared to enroll and succeed in any postsecondary experience without the need for remediation. ASCA recognizes all students possess the skills and knowledge needed to qualify for and succeed in their chosen field (Conley, 2013).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors play a critical role in students' career development by:
- Introducing careers and the world of work beginning in lower elementary grades (pre-K–3)
- Providing opportunities to engage students in "life roles including learner and worker" (Gysbers, 2013)
- Providing learning and experiential opportunities for students to acquire behaviors and skills for career readiness (Gysbers, 2013)
- Working with students to identify their interests, abilities, specific career clusters (Stipanovic, 2010) and postsecondary plans (many states mandate an academic/career action plan as a graduation requirement)
- Helping students understand the connection between school and the world of work
- Helping students plan the transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the world of work (ASCA, 2014)
- Advising students on multiple postsecondary pathways (e.g., college, career-specific credentials and certifications, apprenticeships, military, service-year programs, full-time employment with a family-supporting wage) (Chicago Public Schools Multiple Postsecondary Pathways Framework)
- Connecting students to early college programs (e.g., dual credit/dual enrollment).
- Collaborating with administration, teachers, staff and decision makers to create a postsecondary-readiness and college-going culture
- Providing and advocating for individual pre-K through postsecondary students' college and career awareness through exploration and postsecondary planning and decision making, which supports students' right to choose from the wide array of options after completing secondary education
- Identifying gaps in college and career access and the implications of such data for addressing both intentional and unintentional biases related to college and career counseling
- Working with teachers to integrate career education learning in the curricula
- Providing opportunities for all students to develop the mindsets and behaviors necessary to learn work-related skills, resilience, perseverance, an understanding of lifelong learning as a part of long-term career success, a positive attitude toward learning and a strong work ethic
- Recognizing and supporting essential developmental factors key to future successes, such as self-efficacy and identity, motivation and perseverance (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2013)

Summary

School counseling has seen many evolution changes to initiatives in career development. School counselors understand students should demonstrate growth in the career, academic and social/emotional domains equally to be successful. School counseling programs should strive to implement comprehensive, developmental programming addressing student needs. These programs should seek a balance in delivering core curriculum, individual student planning and responsive services enhancing the three domains.

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The School Counselor and Character Education
(Adopted 1998, revised 2005, 2011, 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors endorse and actively support character education programs and include them in the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. The school counselor also promotes the infusion of character education in the school curriculum by encouraging the participation of the entire school community.

The Rationale
Character education involves "how schools, related social institutions and parents/guardians can support the positive character development of children and adults" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p.1). The school counselor understands that teaching students concepts and skills that help people live and work together promotes healthy student development and academic achievement through reduced problem behavior, lower discipline rates and improvement in student self-concept (Parker, Nelson, & Burns, 2010; Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2008; Watson, 2006).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors, along with teachers, administrators, family and the community, share the responsibility of teaching character education values. School counselors encourage character education activities by means of:
  • developing a school philosophy and mission statement supporting positive character development
  • establishing positive family-school-community partnerships
  • implementing school counseling core curriculum activities that promote positive character development while helping all students develop clear academic, career and social/emotional goals
  • advocating for discipline policies that nurture the development of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes
  • utilizing proactive counseling methods that reinforce character education and lead to an increase in positive school climate
  • encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities that include the involvement of students, school staff, parents/guardians and community members
  • teaching skills in decision-making, conflict resolution, leadership and problem solving
  • teaching communication etiquette in the technological world
  • involving students in the development of school rules
  • integrating multicultural competence and diversity appreciation into curriculum and activities
  • developing student recognition programs focused on character traits
  • involving families and communities in the character education program

School counselors work with teachers, administrators, families and the community to teach and model behaviors that enhance each student's academic, career and social/emotional development essential to making appropriate, healthy decisions.

Summary
Character education helps students achieve academic, career and social/emotional development goals to become positive contributors to society. Effective character education programs require the entire community's participation and must be integrated throughout the entire school curriculum and culture through curriculum development, consensus building, community engagement, technology and professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The school counselor provides leadership and collaborates with teachers, administrators and the school community to promote character education for all students as an integral part of school curriculum and activities.

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The School Counselor and Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
(Adopted 1981; revised 1985, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2015)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
It is the school counselor's legal, ethical and moral responsibility to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the proper authorities. School counselors work to identify the behavioral, academic and social/emotional impact of abuse and neglect on students and ensure the necessary supports for students are in place.

The Rationale
The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) (2014) indicated a significant rise in reported child abuse and neglect incidents in recent years. This increase presents a public issue that must be addressed through advocacy for child protection. A child who is a victim of abuse and neglect may experience consequences including, but not limited to: immediate physical and/or emotional harm, the inability to build healthy relationships, increased likelihood of being abused by another perpetrator or becoming an abuser and lowered self-worth.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2013) has defined maltreatment as: "A particular form of child maltreatment determined by investigation to be substantiated or indicated under state law." Types include:
- physical abuse
- neglect or deprivation of necessities
- medical neglect
- sexual abuse
- psychological or emotional maltreatment
- and other forms included in state law

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors are among those mandated by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 1974, Public Law 93-247 to report suspected abuse and neglect to proper authorities and are critical in early detection and recognition of abuse. It is imperative that school counselors gain essential knowledge of policies and referral procedures by staying current on reporting requirements and state laws. Laws and definitions pertaining to child abuse and neglect vary among states; therefore, school counselors should commit themselves to become familiar with and abide by Child Protective Services (CPS) laws in their respective state (see a summary of state laws pertaining to child abuse and neglect at https://www. schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/legal-ethical).

In addition to mandated reporting, school counselors:
- Understand child abuse and neglect and its impact on children's social/emotional, physical and mental well being
- Provide interventions that promote resiliency, healthy interpersonal and communication skills and self-worth
- Make referrals to outside agencies for child or family support when appropriate
- Engage families in the school community
- Identify barriers and limitations that affect healthy family functioning and may lead to child abuse or neglect
- Identify instances of child abuse and neglect and respond on both individual and systemic levels

ASCA recognizes it is the absolute responsibility of school counselors to serve as child advocates. Responsible action by the school counselor can be achieved through the recognition and understanding of the problem, knowing the reporting procedures and participating in available child abuse information programs. School counselors play an integral role in helping to promote child welfare by providing direct and indirect student services. Those services include advocating for students' needs by addressing issues that could affect their academic, personal and social/emotional well being.

Summary

School counselors are a key link in the child abuse prevention network. It is their responsibility to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. School counselors must be able to guide and assist abused and neglected students by providing appropriate services. School counselors are committed to providing high-quality services to children who are victims of abuse and neglect with research-based intervention techniques.

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The School Counselor and Children Experiencing Homelessness
(Adopted, 2010; revised, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize that homelessness/displacement may greatly affect the whole child, encompassing mental, physical, social/emotional and academic development. School counselors help to identify students who are experiencing homelessness. As social justice advocates, it is school counselors' duty to recognize and work with students around their specific strengths. School counselors collaborate with community stakeholders to connect students and their families who are experiencing homelessness to community supports, work to remove barriers to academic success and implement responsive prevention and intervention programs for children experiencing homelessness.

The Rationale
Homelessness is defined by the McKinney-Vento Act as youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence (for complete definition, see U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Census data from the U.S. Department of Education notes 2,483,539 children or one in every 30 children experienced homelessness in the United States in 2013 (American Institutes for Research, 2014). Students experiencing homelessness have increased concerns for developmental issues pertaining to physical development, mental health and school success (Tobin, 2016) as well as social/emotional development (Haskett, Armstrong, & Tisdale, 2016).

Researchers have found that students experiencing homelessness are more likely to be retained and perform below their peers in grades earned and test scores (Masten, Fiat, Labella, & Strack, 2015). They have a significantly higher prevalence of developmental delays in communication (Tobin, 2016) as well as social/emotional development (Haskett et al., 2016). Homelessness in youth may also affect neurocognitive functioning (e.g., poor decision making, recklessness behaviors, risk taking and emotional outbursts), academic achievement and may lead to an increased likelihood of facing adverse childhood experiences such as trauma and abuse (Edidin, Ganim, Hunter, & Karnik, 2012). Close to 75 percent of homeless students drop out before graduating from high school (Abdul Rahman, Fidel Turner & Elbedour, 2015).

The McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), outlines the rights of homeless students and creates directives for schools to ensure students are able to enroll and succeed in school (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This charge includes removal of institutional barriers within schools, such as transportation, immunization and physical examination requirements, fees, residency and birth certificate requirements and lack of school records impeding homeless families' ability to enroll their children in schools.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors:
- Advocate for students and collaborate with their parents/guardians to reduce barriers related to school enrollment, academic success and appropriate educational placement
- Recognize the strengths of the individual student and all of those who have experienced homelessness
- Attain knowledge for assisting unaccompanied youth per specific state guidelines, following legal and ethical codes
- establish educational and preventive programs for homeless parents and children
- Collaborate with school and community personnel and coordinate appropriate support services specific to basic, academic and social/emotional needs
- Increase stakeholder awareness and understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act, ESSA and the rights of homeless students
- Assess students for common associated concerns such as adverse childhood experiences and refer students for additional support as appropriate.

Summary

School counselors promote awareness and understanding of the issues students face when experiencing homelessness. School counselors recognize the strengths these students bring to school from experiencing homelessness. School counselors collaborate with students, parents/guardians and community stakeholders to overcome the barriers to academic, career and social/emotional success associated with homelessness.

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The School Counselor and College Access Professionals

(Adopted 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors play a critical role in preparing all students for life-long learning and success in a global environment. To ensure students have opportunity to reach their full potential, school counselors collaborate with community-based organizations, including college access organizations and college access professionals, within the framework of a comprehensive school counseling program.

The Rationale
Implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program includes working collaboratively with community-based organizations, including college access organizations and college access professionals, to help meet students' academic and career developmental needs. Community-based organizations often have expertise and time to work with hard-to-serve populations and should be part of the total communitywide approach to postsecondary education. Community-based organizations can provide tremendous value to the work school counselors do in the context of improving school-based programs and student outcomes. College access professionals might include the following: college advisors, professional/trained mentors, career advisors and other specialists trained to serve students in navigating their college and career pathway. Clear agreements between the school and the college access professional or community-based organization should be in place. The agreements should outline:
  • a definition and delineation of functions and responsibilities of the college access professional with particular focus on the limitations college access professionals must have in students' social/emotional developmental needs
  • clear language stating the college access professionals' role is in support of the work of the school counselor rather than a replacement for the role/function of the school counselor
  • which student records or personal information college access professionals are permitted access
  • expectations that college access professionals must maintain the highest level of confidentiality related to student records or personal information
  • the responsible supervisory entity for the college access professional, which includes a statement indicating the need for college access professionals to make referrals to this entity in the event students present issues beyond the scope of their college access training and skills
  • the responsible compensation entity

College access professional can be employed by schools, housed in school facilities or be based in off-campus facilities. School counselors serve as a catalyst in building collaborative partnerships with college access professionals, identifying community needs in college access and assisting in the identification of students/student groups who would benefit from the expertise and time provided by college access professionals (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2012). Benefits from this collaboration may include:
  • increasing students' postsecondary attainment rates, particularly among low-income and underserved student populations (Perna 2002).
  • financial incentives, mentoring opportunities, individualized needs-based services and academic remediation to assist students in accessing postsecondary opportunities
  • opportunities for students to enroll in postsecondary courses or programs to prepare for postsecondary education.
  • partnering with college access programs, scholarship programs, the Department of Education and mentoring services that raise awareness of the importance of postsecondary training

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors define collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations within the framework of a comprehensive program. School counselors actively seek to assist students in preparing for postsecondary success. Through collaboration with college access professionals, school counselors can increase the scope of their work and provide communitywide benefits within a comprehensive school counseling program approach by:
  • beginning conversations regarding community needs with community stakeholders
  • planning a communitywide response to college preparation and access

- setting communitywide goals and action plans for college access
- sharing common data with community stakeholders
- implementing collaborative interventions in college access
- assisting students in completing the steps necessary for participating in college access programs or postsecondary programs, such as registering for tests or applying for financial aid
- referring/nominating students for programs

Summary

College access organizations and professionals can provide beneficial academic and career opportunities for students by extending the reach of comprehensive school counseling programs. Effective collaborations include a clear delineation of function and roles. School counselors are the catalyst for establishing the collaborative partnerships that help students receive these benefits.

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The School Counselor and Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1997, 2005, 2012, 2017)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that improve a range of student learning and behavioral outcomes (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012). These programs are comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and developmental in nature. "The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs" (ASCA, 2012a) outlines the components of a comprehensive school counseling program. The ASCA National Model brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice, which creates unity and focus toward improving student achievement and supporting student development.

The Rationale
A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the school's mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, driven by student data and based on the ASCA National Model:
- ensure equitable access to a rigorous education for all students
- identify the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K–12 comprehensive school counseling program
- are delivered to all students in a systematic fashion
- are based on data-driven decision making
- are provided by a state-credentialed school counselor

Effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the school counselor, families, community stakeholders and other educators to create an environment resulting in a positive impact on student achievement. Education professionals, including school counselors, value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in our societies and communities in culturally sensitive and responsive ways. Comprehensive school counseling programs in both the brick-and-mortar and virtual settings ensure equitable access to opportunities and rigorous curriculum for all students to participate fully in the educational process.

One study found that schools designated as Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) schools had significantly higher schoolwide proficiency rates in English as compared with the control schools (Wilkerson, Perusse, & Hughes, 2013). This same study also found four-year longitudinal results indicating a significant positive difference between RAMP-designated elementary schools and their control schools in math. "Findings provide support for the impact of comprehensive, data-driven, accountable school counseling programs at the elementary level…" (Wilkerson et al., 2013, p. 172).

According to Lapan (2012), "When highly trained, professional school counselors deliver ASCA National Model comprehensive school counseling program services, students receive measurable benefit" (p. 88).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors focus their skills, time and energy on direct and indirect services to students. To achieve maximum program effectiveness, ASCA recommends a student-to-school-counselor ratio of 250:1. Although ratios vary across states, school districts and even grade levels, the growing body of research as summarized by Carey and Martin (2015) supports that implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs positively affects outcome data (e.g., student achievement and discipline referrals) at all grade levels.

ASCA also recommends that school counselors spend 80 percent or more of their time in direct and indirect services to students. These direct and indirect activities should come from the ASCA National Model rather than inappropriate duties assigned to school counselors as listed in the ASCA National Model Executive Summary (2012b). The 20 percent or less of the school counselor's time should be focused on program and management planning including:
- Developing an annual plan
- Results reports and data projects

- School counseling program assessment
- Other activities as determined by the school counselor and administrator when developing the annual plan

Duties that fall outside of the school counselor framework as described in the ASCA National Model should be limited and performed by other school staff to support a school's smooth operation and allow school counselors to continue to focus on students' academic, career and social/emotional needs. Fair-share responsibilities should not preclude implementing and managing a comprehensive school counseling program.

School counselors participate as members of the educational team and use the skills of leadership, advocacy and collaboration to promote systemic change as appropriate. The framework of a comprehensive school counseling program consists of the following four components: foundation, management, delivery and accountability. See "The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs" for more detailed information.

FOUNDATION

School counselors create comprehensive school counseling programs that focus on student outcomes, teach student competencies and are delivered with identified professional competencies (ASCA 2012c).
- Program Focus: Developing personal beliefs, a vision statement and a mission statement with program goals measuring the vision and mission statements.
- Student Standards: Effective school counseling programs look at three developmental domains for students as well as state and district initiatives. These three domains include:
  - Academic
  - Career
  - Social/emotional
- Professional Competencies: The school counselor competencies outline the knowledge, attitudes and skills that ensure school counselors are equipped to meet the profession's rigorous demands. See the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors for specific information to guide school counselors' decision making and standardize professional practices.

MANAGEMENT

School counselors incorporate organizational assessments and tools that are concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school's needs. See the ASCA National Model (2012) for more detailed information. Assessments and tools include:
- School counselor competency and school counseling program assessments
- Use-of-time assessments
- Annual agreements
- Advisory councils
- Use of data to measure the program as well as to promote systemic change
- Curriculum, small group and closing-the-gap action plans
- Annual and weekly calendars

DELIVERY

School counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling program in collaboration with students, families, school staff and community stakeholders. The ASCA National Model (2012) and the ASCA National Model Implementation Guide (2016) have specific details and examples about each of the following areas:

Direct Services With Students
Direct services are face-to-face or virtual interactions between school counselors and students and include the following:
- School counseling core curriculum
- Individual student planning
- Responsive services

Indirect Services for Students
Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others including:
- Referrals for additional assistance
- Consultation and collaboration with families, teachers, other educators and community organizations
- Other activities that fall in line with the appropriate duties of a school counselor as detailed in this statement and in the ASCA National Model (2012)

ACCOUNTABILITY

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms, school counselors:

- Analyze school and school counseling program data to determine if students are different as a result of the school counseling program
- Use data to show the impact of the school counseling program on student achievement, attendance and behavior
- Analyze school counseling program assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students

The school counselor's performance is evaluated on basic standards of practice expected of school counselors implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. There are three sections within this component, and each section has various tools for analysis. These sections and tools as listed in the ASCA National Model (2012) are:

- Data analysis: school data profile analysis and use-of-time analysis
- Program results: curriculum results report, small-group results report, closing-the-gap results report
- Evaluation and improvement: four components
- Self-analysis of the school counselor's strengths
- Self-analysis of the school counseling program's strengths
- Evaluation of the school counselor's performance by administration using the school counselor performance appraisal
- Review of the program goals created at the beginning of the school year

Trish Hatch (2014) discussed intentional guidance as "a deliberate act by a school counselor to guide, lead, direct or provide purposeful interventions for students in need academically, personally or socially" (p. 37). Becoming proficient at using data will help school counselors efficiently serve their students and have intentional guidance or counseling services.

Summary

School counselors in both the brick-and-mortar and virtual/online environments develop and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs supporting and promoting student achievement and standardizing the measurement of program effectiveness. As outlined in the ASCA National Model (2012), these programs include a systematic and planned program delivery involving all students and enhancing the learning process. The comprehensive school counseling program is supported by appropriate resources and implemented by a credentialed school counselor. The ASCA National Model brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice, which creates unity and focus toward improving student achievement and supporting student development.

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The School Counselor and Confidentiality

(Adopted 1974; reviewed and reaffirmed 1980; revised 1986, 1993, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2014, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize their primary obligation regarding confidentiality is to the student but balance that obligation with an understanding of the family or guardians' legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children's lives (ASCA, 2016).

The Rationale
ASCA and its members affirm their belief in the student's right to be treated with respect and dignity (ASCA, 2016, A.1.a). It is the school counselors' responsibility to fully respect the right to privacy of those with whom they enter a counseling relationship and to provide an atmosphere of trust and confidence (Lazovsky, 2008; ASCA, A.2.).

A school counselor, who is in a counseling relationship with a student, has an ethical and legal obligation to keep information contained within that relationship. Confidentiality is the ethical and legal term ascribed to the information communicated within the counseling relationship, and it must be maintained unless keeping that information confidential leads to foreseeable harm. "Serious and foreseeable harm is different for each minor in the school setting and is determined by students' developmental and chronological age, the setting, parental rights and the nature of harm" (ASCA, 2016, A.2.e).

Exceptions to confidentiality exist, and students should be informed when situations arise in which school counselors have a responsibility to disclose information obtained in counseling relationships to others to protect students, themselves or other individuals. Privileged communication between a school counselor and a student is a legal term granting protection to information shared in a counseling relationship only if said privilege is granted by federal or state statue. If privilege applies it can provide additional safeguards to confidential information.

The School Counselor's Role
The role of the school counselor regarding confidentiality is:
- To support the students' right to privacy and protect confidential information received from students, the family, guardians and staff members
- To explain the meaning and limits of confidentiality to students in developmentally appropriate terms
- To provide appropriate disclosure and informed consent regarding the counseling relationship and confidentiality
- To inform students and the family of the limits to confidentiality when:
- the student poses a danger to self or others
- there is a court-ordered disclosure
- consulting with other professionals, such as colleagues, supervisors, treatment teams and other support personnel, in support of the student
- privileged communication is not granted by state laws and local guidelines (e.g., school board policies)
- the student participates in group counseling
- substance use and treatment are concerns (CFR 42, Part 2; 2017)
- To keep personal notes separate from educational records and not disclose their contents except when privacy exceptions exist
- To seek guidance from supervisors and appropriate legal advice when their records are subpoenaed
- To communicate highly sensitive student information via face-to-face contact or phone call and not by e-mail or inserting into the educational record
- To request to a court of law that a student's anonymity be used if records are subpoenaed
- To be aware of federal, state and local security standards related to electronic communication, software programs and stored data
- To advocate for security-level protocols within student information systems allowing only certain staff members access to confidential information

- To assert their belief that information shared by students is confidential and should not be revealed without the student's consent
- To adhere to all school board policy and federal and state laws protecting student records, health information and special services (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA, IDEA)

Summary

The counseling relationship between students and their school counselor requires an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Students must trust the school counselor to be able to enter into a meaningful and honest dialogue with the school counselor (Iyer & Baxter-MacGregor, 2010). However, students should be informed that exceptions to confidentiality exist in which school counselors must inform others of information they obtained in the counseling relationship to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to students themselves or others and if it is legally required.

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The School Counselor and Corporal Punishment
(Adopted 1995, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors oppose the use of corporal punishment and advocate for trauma-sensitive discipline policies and procedures.

The Rationale
Even though corporal punishment has been on a steady decline since the 1970s and has notable negative effects, it is still legal and used in several of the United States (Gershoff & Font, 2016). School counselors recognize the use of corporal punishment is likely to teach children that violence is an acceptable way to resolve differences. Research shows physical punishment to be ineffective in teaching new behaviors, and it is detrimental in teaching problem-solving skills. Corporal punishment is not considered a trauma-sensitive approach to discipline in schools (Afifi et al., 2017) and can have negative effects for students including:
- Increased antisocial behavior such as lying, stealing, cheating, bullying, assaulting a sibling or peers and lack of remorse for wrongdoing
- Increased risk of child abuse
- Erosion of trust between an adult and child
- Adverse effects on cognitive development
- Increased likelihood of suffering from depression and other negative social and mental health outcomes.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors have a responsibility to protect students and to promote healthy student development using multitiered systems of support that incorporate evidence-based practices and strategies in administering discipline and teaching new behaviors promoting positive social/emotional development (Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen & Pollitt, 2013). Recognizing culture influences on views of corporal punishment, the school counselor serves as a resource to school personnel and families for the use of effective intervention and alternative discipline strategies. School counselors encourage public awareness of the consequences of corporal punishment, provide strategies on alternatives to corporal punishment and encourage legislation prohibiting the continued use of corporal punishment.

School counselors collaborate with families and school staff to build positive relationships between students and adults with effective alternatives to corporal punishment including but not limited to:
- using behavioral contracts
- setting realistic expectations
- enforcing rules consistently
- creating appropriate and logical consequences for inappropriate behavior
- conferencing with students and/or families with school personnel for planning and reinforcing acceptable behavior
- emphasizing students' positive behaviors
- teaching pro-social, mediation and resolution skills as methods of problem solving
- providing information on parenting programs
- promoting emotional regulation
- teaching and implementing mindfulness practices

Summary
Research shows corporal punishment increases students' anti-social behavior, adversely affects cognitive development and erodes the trust between children and adults. It is ineffective in teaching new and positive behaviors and is detrimental in teaching appropriate problem-solving methods. School counselors adamantly oppose the use of corporal punishment and advocate for its elimination.

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The School Counselor and Credentialing and Licensure

(Adopted 1990; revised 1993, 1999, 2003, 2009, 2015)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
ASCA strongly supports a school counselor credentialing or licensing law in each state that includes: a definition of the profession, minimum qualifications for entry into the profession and requirements for continuing professional development. ASCA encourages all state education certification or licensure agencies to adopt the ASCA School Counselor Competencies from the ASCA National Model for school counselor credentialing or licensing.

The Rationale
Regulations for school counselor credentialing or licensure ensure students and stakeholders are served by highly qualified and trained professionals. Such legislation should include:
- a description of the role of the school counselor as defined in the ASCA National Model
- standards for entry into the profession that minimally require a master's degree or higher in school counseling or the substantial equivalent and are employed as school counselors, supervisors of school counselors or professors of counseling in a graduate program that prepares school counselors
- requirements for continuing education to further develop skills as a school counselor

In establishing legislation for school counselor certification or licensure, ASCA supports the nationwide use of the School Counselor Competencies from the ASCA National Model, a description of professional roles for school counselors and setting state standards for school counselor preparation programs.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors need to be skilled in meeting the changing needs of students, families, schools and communities. Therefore, school counselors should endorse school counselor preparation programs and credentialing or licensing requirements that require practitioners to:
- be culturally competent (Guzman, Calfa, Kerne, & McCarthy, 2013; Moore-Thomas, 2010)
- have skills in evidence-based educational and school counseling practices (Carey & Dimmitt, 2008; Carey & Martin, 2015)
- focus on the mindsets and behaviors for student success, including K-12 college- and career- readiness standards for every student with specific attention to academic, career and social/emotional needs (ASCA, 2014)
- possess leadership and advocacy skills (Janson, Stone, & Clark, 2009; Mason & McMahon, 2009)
- have consultation skills and the ability to work collaboratively with educational professionals and stakeholders in the school and community (Baker, Robichaud, Dietrich, Wells, & Schreck, 2009; Williams & Wehrman, 2010)
- be able to develop, implement and evaluate school counseling programs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012)

Finally, school counselors should work with district personnel and local or state associations to provide ongoing professional development for the acquisition and updating of necessary skills, which may be identified through the effective use of the ASCA School Counselor Competencies.

Summary
ASCA strongly supports the use of the ASCA School Counselor Competencies in establishing state certification or licensure guidelines for school counselors.

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The School Counselor and Cultural Diversity

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2015)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors demonstrate cultural responsiveness by collaborating with stakeholders to create a school and community climate that embraces cultural diversity and helps to promote the academic, career and social/emotional success for all students.

The Rationale

Culture is a powerful and pervasive influence on students, stakeholders and school counselors' attitudes and behaviors. "Professional school counselors have tremendous challenges and also terrific opportunities presented to them by the increasing diversity in our schools and communities" (Grothaus, 2012, p. 37). The ASCA Ethical Standards (2010) states in its preamble that "school counselors are advocates, leaders, collaborators and consultants who create opportunities for equity in access and success in educational opportunities" (p. 1). School counselors develop competencies in how prejudice, power and various forms of oppression…affect self, students and all stakeholders (ASCA Ethical Standards, E.2.b, 2010). It is essential that school counselors be more globally responsive and culturally competent in the current educational and social environment.

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors are in a position to advocate for students regarding equity and access…to help students and their families navigate systems of oppression and injustice, and act as agents of change within their school settings (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011, p. 59). Portman (2009) stated that a school counselor, in the role of cultural mediator, engages in prevention, intervention and/or remediation activities that facilitate communication and understanding between culturally diverse human systems…that aid the educational progress of all students (p. 23). School counselors are expected to "specifically address the needs of every student, particularly students of culturally diverse, low social-economic status, and other underserved or underperforming populations" (ASCA, 2005, p. 77). Dahir and Stone (2012) stated that school counselors can provide culturally responsive counseling by:

- exploring their personal beliefs, attitudes and knowledge about working with diverse student populations
- ensuring each student has access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for all students in diverse cultural groups
- addressing the impact that poverty and social class has on student achievement
- identifying the impact of family culture upon student performance
- using data to close the gap among diverse student populations
- practicing culturally sensitive advising and counseling
- ensuring all students' rights are respected and all students' needs are met
- consulting and collaborating with stakeholders to create a school climate that welcomes and appreciates the strengths and gifts of culturally diverse students
- enhancing their own cultural competence and facilitating the cultural awareness, knowledge and skills of all school personnel

Summary

School counselors foster increased awareness, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in the school and community through advocacy, networking and resource utilization to ensure a welcoming school environment. Through the curriculum of a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors can teach tolerance and address the issues of nonviolence and social justice on a regular basis. School counselors, collaborating with students and stakeholders, promote the success of all students by supporting "access, equity and educational justice" (Lee, 2001, p. 261).

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The School Counselor and Discipline

(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2013, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors have specialized training and skills in promoting appropriate student behavior and preventing disruptive student behavior. School counselors are not disciplinarians but should be a resource for school personnel in developing individual and schoolwide discipline procedures. School counselors collaborate with school personnel and other stakeholders to establish policies encouraging appropriate behavior and maintaining safe schools where effective teaching and learning can take place.

The Rationale
Disruptive student behavior is one of the most serious, ongoing problems confronting school systems today (Diliberti, Jackson, & Kemp, 2017). Research suggests such behavior negatively affects classroom learning and school climate (Kremer, Flower, Huang & Vaughn, 2018). To establish and maintain safe and respectful learning environments, school systems must employ adequate mental health personnel and seek effective discipline programs with the commitment and input of all school personnel, including school counselors (Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen & Pollitt, 2013). To most effectively promote student achievement and development, school counselors must maintain strength-based relationships with students and, therefore, are not involved in administering discipline. The school counselor should be, by policy, designated as a neutral and resourceful consultant, mediator and student advocate.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors promote positive student behaviors to create a safe, effective learning environment for all students. It is not the school counselor's role to mete out punishment but instead to help create effective behavior change focused on positive, healthy behaviors. Within multitiered systems of support, school counselors:
- Promote wellness and lead prevention efforts to create safe and supportive school environments
- Lead individual and small-group counseling that encourages students to make positive behavior choices and accept responsibility for their actions
- Provide school counselor curriculum and contribute to safe classrooms through appropriate classroom management strategies
- Consult with families, teachers, administrators and other school personnel to understand developmentally appropriate student behavior and promote positive student behavior
- Design and implement positive behavior and intervention support plans for individual students in collaboration with classroom teachers and other school behavior specialists
- Collaborate with school stakeholders to develop, implement and maintain a developmentally appropriate schoolwide discipline program
- Serve as a mediator for student/student, student/teacher and student/family conflicts
- Coordinate and facilitate programs (mentor, peer support, conflict resolution and anger management programs) to assist students in developing pro-social behaviors
- Provide staff development on classroom management, student behavior and discipline strategies such as trauma-sensitive approaches (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018), restorative practices (Smith, 2017) and emotional regulation of adults and students (Bowers, Lemberger-Truelove, & Brigman, 2017)
- Keep informed of school, district and state policies related to student discipline
- Advocate for best practices for schoolwide discipline, including ensuring objective and equitable disciplinary practices

Summary
School counselors have specialized training and skills in promoting appropriate student behavior and preventing disruptive student behavior. School counselors maintain nonthreatening relationships with students to best promote student achievement and development and serve as a resource for school personnel in developing individual and schoolwide discipline procedures. School counselors should be, by policy, designated as neutral and resourceful consultants, mediators and student advocates. It is not the school counselor's role to serve as an enforcement agent for the school but rather be a significant contributor to the development of the prevention and intervention programs through which problem behaviors are managed and positive behaviors are nurtured.

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The School Counselor and Equity for All Students

(Adopted 2006, revised 2012, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize and distinguish individual and group differences and strive to equally value all students and groups. School counselors are advocates for the equitable treatment of all students in school and in the community.

The Rationale
According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2014, the number of students of color in U.S. public schools surpassed that of white students (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). However, white students continue to graduate from high school at higher rates than black and Hispanic students (Kena et al., 2015). In addition, an achievement gap exists along socioeconomic lines.

Many students of color, first-generation and low-income students aspire to college; however, the college application process can present significate obstacles (Page & Scott, 2016). Some students in schools report there is no adult in the school with whom they feel they can discuss these issues, and many of these students come from underrepresented social or cultural groups. These students cannot always rely on their parents for college information and must instead turn to their high schools, where school counselors are in a position proven to increase access for students. School counselors can also play a role in assisting students in identity development contributing to their success (Maxwell & Henriksen, 2012).

Historically, underrepresented populations have faced barriers to participating in a rigorous curriculum and higher-level classes (Vazquex & Altshuler, 2017). School counselors, teachers, administrators and other school staff can be involuntary gatekeepers of access to these classrooms. Research finds that when students and school counselors are able to connect, school counselors have the potential to become empowering agents (Emde, 2015). When students feel like they are being treated in a biased or negative manner, they often exhibit self-destructive behaviors such as truancy, withdrawal, acting out and nonparticipation in class activities. Conversely, when students believe they are treated fairly, they are more likely to be engaged in school, talk about pressing issues and participate in class activities.

Family participation in the college-going decision-making process is critical (Bryan et al., 2011). School counselors are in a position to seek family engagement in the college-going process to ensure students from diverse backgrounds are included. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) supports this concept, stating that all students have the right to a school counselor who acts as a social-justice advocate, supporting students from all backgrounds and circumstances and consulting when the school counselor's competence level requires additional support.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program promoting equity and access for students. School counselors work to help close achievement, opportunity, attainment and funding gaps in their schools, districts and communities. School counselors are mindful of school and community perceptions of the treatment of underrepresented groups and understand the importance of collaborating with school and community groups to help all students succeed. School counselors demonstrate cultural competence.

School counselors promote equitable treatment of all students by:
- Using data to identify gaps in achievement, opportunity and attainment
- Advocating for rigorous course and higher education for underrepresented groups.
- Maintaining professional knowledge of the ever-changing and complex world of students' culture
- Maintaining knowledge and skills for working in a diverse and multicultural work setting
- Informing school staff of changes regarding different groups within the community
- Promoting the development of school policies leading to equitable treatment of all students and opposing school policies hindering equitable treatment of any student

- Promoting access to rigorous standards-based curriculum, academic courses and learning paths for college and career for all students
- Developing plans to address over- or underrepresentation of specific groups in programs such as special education, honors, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate
- Creating an environment that encourages any student or group to feel comfortable to come forward with problems
- Collaborating with families in seeking assistance services for financial literacy, job skills and placement and free services (such as childcare assistance) as well as providing parents educational opportunities to assist them in supporting their students' education
- Acting as a liaison between home and school promoting an understanding and encouraging creative solutions for students handling multiple responsibilities beyond a typical load

Summary

School counselors recognize and distinguish individual and group differences and strive to value all students and groups equally. School counselors promote the equitable treatment of all students in school and the community.

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The School Counselor and Gender Equity
(Adopted 1983; revised 1993, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2014)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors are committed to creating an emotionally, intellectually and physically safe environment for all students and to use inclusive language and positive modeling of gender equity, facilitating and promoting the development of each individual by removing bias and stereotypes for all students in school.

The Rationale
To expand the range of options available to students, it is important that school counselors become acutely aware of ways in which language, organizational structures, leader selection, expectations of individuals and activity implementation affect opportunities based on gender. Many federal and state laws have been passed protecting individuals from gender discrimination in education and work (e.g., the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Vocational Amendments of 1976, the Women's Educational Equity Act of 1974, Affirmative Action and Executive Orders, and Title IX, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967). These important legal mandates ensure equal treatment under the law but do not necessarily change ingrained attitudes and behaviors.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors' knowledge of human development and skills in assisting students in overcoming barriers to learning positions them to teach children healthy interpersonal skills, to make strong connections with educational opportunities in schools and to ensure that every child learns in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. The school counselor uses inclusive language and has equitable expectations of all students, is sensitive to those aspects of interpersonal communication and organization that provide working models of gender equity and equality and promotes gender equity through large- and small-group presentations. School counselors must become vigilant to the negative effects of stereotypical gender-role expectations. As an example, research indicates that young children (ages 3 to 5) demonstrate basic knowledge about occupations and occupational status and have attitudes, often stereotyped, about appropriate occupations (career awareness) (Hartung, 2005). Also, school counselors are aware that as children develop their self-concept they begin to rule out occupations considered incompatible and usually never reconsider them unless they are encouraged to pursue them (Gottfredson, 1996; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997). School counselors proactively seek to counter negative or limiting messages. The school counselor emphasizes a person's competence and models positive gender equity while assisting students in positive gender identity as the student currently identifies. The school counselor becomes sensitive to ways in which interpersonal attitudes and behaviors can have negative effects on others and provides constructive feedback on negative and positive use of inclusive language and organizational structure.

Summary
School counselors are committed to equity and support consciousness-raising within their profession including modeling of inclusive language and equal opportunity for all to break through stereotypical gender-based behaviors and expectations. School counselors actively advocate for equitable policies, procedures, practices and attitudes that embrace equity in opportunities and access to resources for all students and colleagues.

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The School Counselor and Gifted and Talented Student Programs

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2013, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
The school counselor delivers a comprehensive school counseling program to meet students' academic, career and social/emotional needs. Gifted and talented students have unique and diverse developmental needs that are addressed by school counselors within the scope of the comprehensive school counseling program and in collaboration with other educators and stakeholders.

The Rationale
Research suggests gifted and talented students may share common personality characteristics, such as perfectionism, sensitivity and idealism (Mammadov, Cross & Ward, 2018). Within the comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors create an environment in which the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students, including gifted and talented students, is fostered (Kennedy & Farley, 2018).

Purposeful gifted and talented education programs include several benefits: assisting the gifted student in college and career goals, defining postsecondary and career plans and increasing achievement levels. (Colangelo, Assouline & Gross, 2004; Delcourt, 1993; Hébert, 1993; Taylor, 1992). School counselors consider these needs when implementing developmentally appropriate activities as a part of a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012).

Research also suggests that ongoing exposure to micro-aggressions directed at marginalized students creates an environment where students fear the label of gifted and talented (Staumbaugh & Ford, 2014). The issue of overrepresentation of Asian and white students in gifted education programs was described in a data collection from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The data reveals American Indian, Hispanic and African American student groups have been underrepresented in elementary and secondary school gifted education programs since 1978 (US OCR, 2004).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors provide consultation in the identification of gifted and talented students when appropriate through the use of a districtwide, multiple-criterion system (i.e., intellectual ability; academic performance; visual and performing arts ability; practical arts ability; creative-thinking ability; leadership potential; parent, teacher, peer nomination; expert evaluation) when appropriate. The definition of gifted and talented requirements differs by state and district. School counselors are involved in the analysis of data obtained from multi-criterion sources and are not responsible for the coordination, collection, and/or administration of the multi-criterion system or any assessment used in the selection process.

School counselors advocate for the inclusion of, and the participation in, activities that effectively address the academic, career, and social/emotional needs of gifted and talented students at all academic levels. School counselors assist in promoting understanding and awareness of the unique issues that may both positively and negatively affect gifted and talented students including:
- accelerated learning
- advocacy for access to rigorous and appropriately challenging programs
- meeting expectations
- perfectionism
- stress management
- depression
- anxiety
- underachievement
- dropping out
- delinquency
- difficulty in peer relationships
- twice exceptional (e.g., identified as gifted and talented and an identified disability; Foley Nicpon & Cederberg, 2015)

- advanced talent in various fields
- intellectual abilities
- high-achieving outcomes

School counselors provide individual and group counseling for gifted and talented students as needed and serve as a resource for gifted and talented students and their families in meeting the students' needs. School counselors are aware of students who are gifted and culturally diverse. Consequently, school counselors seek to identify marginalized students, students of color, English-language learners and first-generation students in order for them to have the most academically aligned experience (Mitcham-Smith, 2007). School counselors are prepared to address the needs of culturally diverse students in a holistic manner to incorporate effective and relevant strategies for students' success. School counselors also seek to keep current on the latest gifted and talented programming research and recommendations to employ best practices to meet the needs of identified students and collaborate with other school personnel to maximize opportunities for all gifted and talented students.

Summary

School counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling program to meet students' academic, career and social/emotional needs. Students identified as gifted and talented have unique developmental needs and special abilities, which are considered when implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. Specifically planned educational experiences can greatly enhance the continued development of gifted and talented students (Sohailat, Soua'd & Mouhamed, 2013). School counselors work in collaboration with other school personnel to maximize opportunities for gifted and talented students.

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The School Counselor and Group Counseling

(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 2002, 2008; reviewed 1999, 2008, 2014)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
Group counseling is vital in the delivery of the ASCA National Model to students as part of an effective comprehensive school counseling program supported by school administration and school districts.

The Rationale
Group counseling, which involves a number of students working on shared tasks and developing supportive relationships in a group setting, is an efficient, effective and positive way of providing direct service to students with academic, career and social/emotional developmental issues and situational concerns. By allowing individuals to develop insights into themselves and others, group counseling makes it possible for more students to achieve healthier personal adjustment, cope with the stress of a rapidly changing and complex environment and learn to communicate and cooperate with others. Research on group counseling suggests that this intervention is rather robust for a variety of academic, career and social/emotional concerns (Gerrity & DeLucia-Waack, 2007; McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005; Paisley & Milsom, 2007; Whiston & Sexton, 1998).

The School Counselor's Role
The school counselor's training in group facilitation is unique to the school setting. School counselors provide group services to students and families and may utilize their specialized training to educate and inform school staff and administration on relevant professional issues or topics. Group services offered to students and families are based on individual student, school and community needs, which are assessed through survey data, a referral process or other relevant data. School counselors prioritize group offerings based on analysis of school data. Group counseling should be offered to all students in a PK-12 setting. School counselors have a responsibility to screen potential group members and address informed consent, purpose of the group, goals, limits to confidentiality and voluntary participation. Best practice will include parental consent and student agreement to participate (Falco 2011).

School counselors provide counseling sessions in individual or small-group settings that:
  • help students overcome issues impeding achievement or success
  • help students identify problems, causes, alternatives and possible consequences so they can make decisions and take appropriate action
  • are planned and goal-focused and are short-termed in nature

School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders. However, school counselors are prepared to recognize and respond to student mental health crises and needs. School counselors address those barriers to student success by offering education, prevention and crisis and short-term intervention to include group counseling until the student is connected with available community resources. When students require long-term counseling or therapy, school counselors make referrals to appropriate community resources (ASCA, 2012).

Summary
Group counseling is an efficient and effective way to meet students' academic, career, social/emotional developmental and situational needs. Group counseling makes it possible for students to achieve healthier academic and personal growth in a rapidly changing global society. Group counseling is an integral part of a comprehensive school counseling program and should be included in comprehensive school counseling programs and supported by school administrators and school districts. The school counselor's training in group process benefits students, families, school staff and administration. Group counseling has a positive effect on academic achievement and personal growth.

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The School Counselor and High-Stakes Testing

(Adopted 2002, Revised 2007, 2014, 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize that standardized test results are one of many measures that can be used to assess student learning and performance across standards. School counselors advocate for the use of multiple criteria when educational decisions such as course enrollment and admissions are made about student performance and oppose the use of a single test to make important educational decisions affecting students, teachers and schools.

The Rationale
High-stakes testing, which refers to the use of standardized test scores to make important decisions about students, schools and districts, was a prominent part of the No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001 (NCLB, 2002). High-stakes test results have been used as a method to determine a student's: academic placement, promotion and retention, graduation and intervention services. Other decisions made using standardized test results for schools and districts include:
- increased or reduced funding at the state or local level
- revision of curriculum
- revision of teacher certification standards
- appropriate accommodations for students with exceptional learning needs and English-language learners
- decisions about school closings
- evaluation of instructional personnel

When high-stakes assessments are used in this manner, they have a direct and significant effect on the academic future of the student being assessed and, increasingly, on the teacher's career and reputation and the school's status in the community, as well as access to local, state and federal school funding (Duffy, Giordano, Farrell, Paneque, & Crump, 2008). When results from standardized tests are the only factors used to make educational decisions, these decisions may not be fully informed and could lead to biased decision-making. It is important to consider all factors that can provide additional information related to student achievement.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted in 2015, represents a legislative move toward identifying multiple measures to assess student success. The act encourages an approach to testing that moves away from a sole focus on standardized tests to drive decisions around the quality of schools to multiple measures of student learning and progress, including other indicators of student success to make school accountability decisions (White House, 2015). School counselors continue to advocate for reasonable use of multiple measures to assess student achievement and determine need for school improvement at the local and state levels.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors recognize that standardized test results provide valuable information related to student achievement. However, school counselors also understand that some students struggle with standardized test practices that prevent these tests from providing an accurate reflection of their capabilities. Additionally, school counselors recognize that standardized tests only provide a partial picture of student learning. When important educational decisions are made, school counselors advocate for the use of multiple criteria in the decision-making process. These criteria may include but are not limited to:
- Standardized tests results
- Teacher input
- Portfolios
- Projects
- Work samples
- Classroom performance
- Recommendation letters
- Personal statement
- Student access to curriculum and courses

School counselors support the school's educational initiatives by organizing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program aligned with the school's academic mission and providing support to students, teachers and administrators by:
- Monitoring student achievement data and achievement-related data (e.g., grades, attendance, school engagement, discipline referrals, retention rates, SAT/ACT)
- Disaggregating data to inform instruction and strengthen curriculum
- Providing support to teachers through collaboration and teaming
- Providing direct student services in the areas of study skills, test-taking skills, stress reduction and test anxiety among other topics
- Working with administrators on home-school communication to aid in maintaining a healthy school and classroom assessment environment (Cizek & Burg, 2006)
- Advocating to postsecondary institutions that students should be considered holistically throughout the admissions process

School counselors recognize some of the unintended consequences as a result of mandated, high-stakes assessments include: a redirection of time and resources away from innovative, creative learning programs and comprehensive school counseling programs toward strict emphasis on basic skills (McReynolds, 2006); the belief that student achievement is best measured by a standardized assessment as compared with multiple and culturally contextual criteria; and student and family anxiety and stress, as well as educator stress and burnout (Duffy et al., 2008). In collaboration with other educators, school counselors also advocate for:
- appropriate testing conditions and administration of standardized tests with solid psychometric properties
- opportunities to retake a test when a student is unsuccessful in one administration
- opportunities to take comparable tests when a student is unsuccessful in one administration
- the use of standardized tests norm-referenced with representative student populations
- discontinuation of standardized tests that show socioeconomic or cultural bias

The school counselor's role should not include clerical or administrative activities that take the school counselor away from implementing a comprehensive school counseling program (i.e., test coordination or monitoring make-up tests). Research has shown that serving in these capacities is not compatible with the school counselor's role and prevents the school counselor from having a positive impact on student achievement, school climate and the school's academic mission directly (Mullen & Lambie, 2016). When these roles are inappropriately assigned, school counselors should employ advocacy skills (e.g., outlining the distribution of time in the school counselor/administrator annual agreement) to respectfully help administrators understand that school counselors' time should be invested in working with students and staff on issues such as test-taking skills, time-management skills and stress management within the framework of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Summary

School counselors work with staff and students in implementing strategies that support students in the test-taking process. School counselors recognize the use of standardized test results as one of many measures of student achievement and success. School counselors reject the use of high-stakes tests or the use of any other single measurement instrument as the only indicator of student success. The school counselor encourages multiple measures when life-influencing decisions are being made.

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The Professional School Counselor and the Identification, Prevention and Intervention of Behaviors That Are Harmful and Place Students At-Risk
(Adopted 1989-90; revised 1993, 1999, 2004, 2011, 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors work collaboratively with students, families, school administration and community members to implement a preventive, comprehensive school counseling program, which includes early warning systems for identifying students who may be engaging in harmful or risky behaviors, as well as developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive interventions and supports addressing those behaviors and promoting student resilience and success.

The Rationale
All schools and communities have students who could potentially drop out of school and/or engage in destructive behaviors such as absenteeism, performing below their potential academically, substance abuse, bullying, cyberbullying, suicidal ideation, physical violence or engaging in self-harm and other destructive or dangerous behaviors. Additionally, schools and communities may have environmental, resource or policy issues inadvertently contributing to student failure and harmful behaviors (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). These behaviors can have devastating lifelong implications and often stem from social/emotional concerns including: low self-esteem, family and relationship problems, grief, trauma, neglect, abuse and/or substance use. Implementing trauma-informed practices may help staff with interventions while maintaining sensitivity to students (Haviland, 2017).

The School Counselor's Role
The school counselor advocates for school-based interventions and mental health referrals before moving toward expulsion or other disciplinary measures and provides proactive leadership in identifying, preventing and intervening with student at-risk behaviors. Using data to develop and evaluate preventive and responsive services to address these risks is an integral part of a comprehensive school counseling program. The school counselor collaborates with staff, schoolwide teams, parents/guardians and the community to identify students who are participating in harmful behaviors and intervenes with these students to limit or eliminate the risk of harm or negative consequences. White and Kelly (2010) delineated many evidence-based practices school counselors can use to address protective and risk factors. School counselors take a leadership role in enhancing students' strengths and reducing their risk factors by:
- enhancing social support through a peer mentoring or buddy system
- assigning adults as monitors or mentors for students, clearly delineating roles that specify how to address any mental health issues or concerns
- providing school counseling core curriculum lessons to increase student knowledge and awareness of the dangers of harmful behaviors as well as cultivating attitudes and skills that promote success such as resiliency, grit and a growth mindset
- providing responsive services, including short-term individual and group counseling
- referring students and families to appropriate support services and community agencies
- collaborating with school staff to identify and assist students in crisis
- conducting staff development for school and district staff
- providing information, consultation and support to parents/guardians to increase familial involvement
- advocating for changes in the school and community to promote resilience, success and equitable access to needed resources

Summary
By implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors collaborate with other educators and stakeholders to provide prevention, early identification and trauma-informed interventions for all students to minimize or eliminate harmful behaviors placing students at risk.

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Internet Resource Links

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https://www.pbis.org/school/mtss

http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/

https://acestoohigh.com/2015/05/31/resilience-practices-overcome-students-aces-in-trauma-informed-high-school-say-the-data/

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/

http://www.nhstudentwellness.org/uploads/5/3/9/0/53900547/fact-sheet-adverse-childhood-experiences_final.pdf

The School Counselor and Individual Student Planning
for Postsecondary Preparation

(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012, 2013, 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize that each student possesses unique interests, abilities and goals, which will lead to various future life and career opportunities. Collaborating with students, families, educational staff and the community, the school counselor works to ensure all students develop an academic and career plan reflecting their interests, abilities and goals and including rigorous, relevant coursework and experiences appropriate for the student.

Rationale
Academic and college/career planning provides all students with the opportunity to identify strengths, areas in need of improvement and areas of interest early in their education, so students and their families can set postsecondary goals and make informed choices to support students in achieving their desired goals (Conley, 2013; Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014). The focus of academic and career planning is threefold: to help students acquire the skills to achieve academic success, to make connections between school and life experiences and to acquire knowledge and skills to be college and/or career ready upon high school graduation. According to Savitz-Romer and Bouffary (2013), academic and career planning includes supporting a variety of developmental processes (e.g., self-concept, motivation, goal setting, self-regulation, identity development and relationship development).

ASCA recognizes college and career readiness begins as early as preschool or kindergarten, is exemplified by students who are prepared for any postsecondary experience without the need for remediation and ensures all students possess the attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to qualify for and succeed in their chosen field.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors understand national, state and local requirements and programs that may affect future opportunities for college and career readiness and therefore play a critical role in academic and career planning. The school counselor takes a proactive role in assisting students, families and staff as they assess student strengths and interests and encourage the selection of a rigorous and relevant educational program supporting all students' college and career goals. School counselors provide all students the opportunity to:
- Demonstrate skills needed for school success
- Demonstrate the connection between coursework and life experiences
- Make course selections that allow them the opportunity to choose from a wide range of postsecondary options
- Explore interests and abilities in relation to knowledge of self and the world of work
- Identify and apply strategies to achieve future academic and career success
- Demonstrate the skills for successful goal setting and attainment
- Develop a portfolio to highlight strengths and interests

Summary
School counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers, staff, families and the communities to ensure all students have the opportunity to design a rigorous and relevant academic and career program preparing them to be college and career ready. School counselors design and implement a comprehensive school counseling program that includes educational and career planning activities for all students designed to assist students in reaching academic, career and social/emotional goals.

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The School Counselor and LGBTQ Youth

(Adopted 1995, Revised 2000, 2005, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors promote equal opportunity and respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. School counselors recognize the school experience can be significantly more difficult for students with marginalized identities. School counselors work to eliminate barriers impeding LGBTQ student development and achievement.

The Rationale
Despite widespread efforts, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) students continue to face challenges that threaten their academic and social/emotional development in schools. Students report feeling unsafe in school due to their sexual orientation, perceived orientation, gender identity or gender expression and report experiencing homophobic remarks, harassment and bullying (GLSEN, 2012). LGBTQ individuals often face multiple risk factors that may place them at greater risk for suicidal behavior (CDC, 2011). School counselors realize these issues affect healthy student development and psychological well-being.

The School Counselor's Role
The school counselor works with all students through the stages of identity development and understands this may be more difficult for LGBTQ youth. It is not the school counselor's role to attempt to change a student's sexual orientation or gender identity. School counselors recognize the profound harm intrinsic to therapies alleging to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity (SAMHSA, 2015) and advocate to protect LGBTQ students from this harm. School counselors provide support to LGBTQ students to promote academic achievement and social/emotional development. School counselors are committed to the affirmation of all youth regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression and work to create safe and affirming schools. School counselors:
- counsel students with feelings about their sexual orientation and gender identity as well as students' feelings about the identity of others in an accepting and nonjudgmental manner
- advocate for equitable educational and extracurricular opportunities for all students regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression
- advocate for gender-nonconforming students in regard to access of building facilities (e.g., ensuring a safe environment for restroom use and changing) and gender presentation (e.g., wearing a dress or pants for an orchestra or vocal performance)
- promote policies that effectively reduce the use of offensive language, harassment and bullying and improves climate
- address absenteeism, lowered educational aspirations and academic achievement and low psychological well-being as a result of victimization and feeling unsafe at school (GLSEN, 2012)
- provide a safe space for LGBTQ students and allies such as Gay and Straight Alliance Clubs
- promote sensitivity and acceptance of diversity among all students and staff to include LGBTQ students and diverse family systems
- advocate for the rights of families to access and participate in their student's education and school activities without discrimination (GLSEN, 2009)
- support an inclusive curriculum at all grade levels
- model language that is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity
- advocate for adoption of school policies addressing discrimination and promoting violence-prevention programs to create a safe and supportive school environment (Robinson & Espelage, 2012)
- support students in addressing possible discrimination by staff members
- encourage staff training on inclusive practices, creating an affirming school environment, accurate information and risk factors for LGBTQ students (Russell et al. 2010)
- know the impact of family acceptance on student well-being and ability to thrive (Ryan, 2014)
- support families whose children are coming out by helping them navigate these important developmental milestones in ways that protect LGBTQ students from harm and help families stay together (Ryan, 2014)
- identify LGBTQ community resources for students and families and assess the quality and inclusiveness of these resources before referring to such resources

Summary
School counselors promote affirmation, respect and equal opportunity for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. School counselors promote awareness of and education on issues related to LGBTQ students and encourage a safe and affirming school environment. School counselors work to eliminate barriers impeding student development and achievement and are committed to the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students.

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The School Counselor and Multitiered System of Supports

(Adopted 2008, revised 2014, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors are stakeholders in the development and implementation of a Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS), including but not limited to response to intervention (RTI) and responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). School counselors align their work with MTSS through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program designed to affect student development in the academic domain (achievement), the career domain (career exploration and development) and the social/emotional domain (behavior).

The Rationale
MTSS is a culturally responsive, evidence-based framework implemented in K–12 schools using data-based problem solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention at tiered intensities to improve the learning and social/emotional functioning of all students (Sink, 2016). Guided by student-centered data, MTSS teams engage in cyclical data-based problem solving; make informed decisions about general, compensatory and special education; and assist in the creation of a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention (Ehren, Montgomery, Rudebush, & Whitmire, 2006).

Within the framework of a data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program school counselors augment their collaboration, coordination and leadership skills (Shepard et al., 2013) to meet the needs of all students and identify students who are at risk for not meeting academic and behavioral expectations. School counselors collaborate across student service disciplines with teachers, administrators and families to design and implement plans to address student needs and to promote students' academic, career social/emotional success (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012). Data are collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the learning supports for continual improvement efforts over time.

MTSS offers school counselors opportunities to have a lasting impact on student academic success and behavior development while integrating the framework within a comprehensive school counseling program (Ziomek-Daigle, Goodman-Scott & Donohue, 2016). The application of MTSS aligns with the role of school counseling at any grade level and can be used across multiple domains (Hatch, 2018; Hatch, Duarte, & Degregorio, 2017), such as academic, college/career and/or social/emotional development, based on the ASCA National Model.

The School Counselor's Role
The ASCA National Model serves as the foundation that assists school counselors in the academic, career and social/emotional development of students through the implementation of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program by:
  • Providing all students with a standards-based school counseling core curriculum to address universal academic, career and social/emotional development
  • Analyzing academic, career and social/emotional development data to identify struggling students
  • Identifying and collaborating on research-based intervention strategies implemented by school staff
  • Evaluating academic and behavioral progress after interventions
  • Revising interventions as appropriate
  • Referring to school and community services as appropriate
  • Collaborating with administrators, other school professionals, community agencies and families in the design and implementation of MTSS
  • Advocating for equitable education for all students and working to remove systemic barriers

Where MTSS interacts with school counseling programs the school counselor can serve in roles of supporter and/or intervener (Ockerman, Mason, & Feiker-Hollenbeck, 2012). In the supporting role, the school counselor may provide indirect student service by presenting data or serving as a consultant to a student support team. In intervener role, the school counselor may provide direct student service through the delivery component of the ASCA National Model.

Summary

School counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program addressing the needs of all students. Through the review of data, school counselors identify struggling students and collaborate with other student services professionals, educators and families to provide appropriate instruction and learning supports within an MTSS. School counselors work collaboratively with other educators to remove systemic barriers for all students and implement specific learning supports that assist in academic and behavioral success.

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The School Counselor and Peer Support Programs

(Adopted 1978; Revised 1984, 1993, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2015)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
ASCA believes peer support programs are a means of helping students develop social/emotional competencies, define positive values including personal responsibility and learn pro-social behaviors (Varenhorst, 2004). Furthermore ASCA believes the effectiveness of school counseling programs is enhanced by the informed implementation of a peer support program, which can provide increased outreach and expansion of services.

The Rationale
Research indicates students often communicate their problems to their peers rather than to parents, administrators or school counselors (Tanaka & Reid, 1997). School counselors facilitate this type of peer-to-peer interaction by implementing peer support programs in which individuals who are of approximately the same age take on a helping role assisting students who may share related values, experiences and lifestyles. Activities in peer support programs can include: one-to-one assistance, assistance in group settings, academic/educational assistance, assisting new students and other diverse activities of an interpersonal helping nature. In such programs school counselors select and train peer helpers in the areas of communication and helping skills.

Peer support programs enhance the effectiveness of the school counseling program while increasing outreach and raising student awareness of services. Through proper selection, training and supervision, peer support can be a positive influence within the school and community. Research indicates peer-support programs are helpful when focused on assisting students with social/emotional or academic problems (McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005; Whiston & Sexton, 1998), and "… provide growth and learning opportunities for both mentors and mentees, resulting in a 'double impact…'" (Garringer & MacRae, 2008), (McGannon et al., 2005). Peer support programs can also help create a positive school culture and a connectedness to the school community to both mentors and mentees (Karcher, 2009 and Battistich, 2003).

The School Counselor's Role
The school counselor is responsible for determining the needs of the school population and for implementing a peer support program designed to meet those needs. School counselors:
- Have unique responsibilities when working with peer helper or student assistance programs and safeguard the welfare of students participating in peer-to-peer programs under their direction
- Are ultimately responsible for appropriate training and supervision for students serving as peer support individuals in their school counseling programs (ASCA, 2010) (Latham, 1997)
- Create a selection plan for peer helpers reflecting the diversity of the population to be served
- Develop a support system for the program that communicates the program's goals and purpose through positive public relations
- Monitors, evaluates and adjusts the program and training on a continual basis to meet the assessed needs of the school population the program serves
- Reports results to all school stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, parents, community)

Summary
School counselors are aware that students often communicate to peers more readily than adults. School counselors are aware of their unique responsibilities when peer support programs are implemented in addressing students' preferred communication and when working with peer support students and ensure these students are properly trained, supervised and supported in their role. School counselors are aware of and build upon the positive effects peer support programs have on students, the school climate and culture and the connectedness of the students involved.

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The School Counselor and Prevention of School-Related Gun Violence
(Adopted 2018; revised 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors collaborate with school staff and the community to ensure students attend schools where the environment is conducive to teaching and learning. To support the work of school counselors and school staff, schools and communities should be free from gun violence and threats. School counselors support safe schools and are responsive in crises as emphasized in the *Safe Schools and Crisis Response* (2019) position statement.

The Rationale
Gun violence is the leading cause of premature death in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) reported that an average of seven children and teens are killed with guns in the United States every day. The Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence in a Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America (2018) outlined three levels of prevention. Those recommendations related to school counseling include:
- **Level 1.** Universal approaches promoting safety and well-being, including requirement for all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault (e.g., Donohue, Goodman-Scott, & Betters-Bubon, 2015).
- **Level 2.** Practices for reducing risk and promoting protective factors for persons experiencing difficulties, including adequate staffing of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers to provide coordinated school- and community-based mental health services for individuals with risk factors for violence, recognizing violence is not intrinsically a product of mental illness (e.g., Levine & Tamburrino, 2014); and reformation of school discipline policies to reduce exclusionary practices and foster positive social, behavioral, emotional and academic success for students (e.g., Goodman-Scott, Betters-Bubon & Donohue, 2015).
- **Level 3.** Interventions for individuals where violence is present or appears imminent, including training and maintaining school- and community-based threat assessment teams that include mental health and law enforcement partners with channels of communication for persons to report potential threats as well as interventions to resolve conflicts and assist troubled individuals (e.g., Helgeson & Schneider, 2015).

Research has shown that positive school climate is tied to high or improving attendance rates, test scores, promotion rates and graduation rates. Conversely, negative school climate can harm students and raise liability issues for schools and districts. Negative school climate is linked to lower student achievement and graduation rates, and it creates opportunities for violence, bullying and even suicide (NCSSL, 2018). Research on the increasing trend calling for armed school personnel has demonstrated that armed personnel may create a negative school climate (Rajan & Branas, 2018; Swartz, Osborne, Dawson-Edwards, & Higgins, 2016; Weiler & Armenta, 2014).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors are educational leaders and advocates of safe-school initiatives and are a vital resource in the creation, development and implementation of best-practice strategies designed to improve school climate fostering engagement, support, and acceptance of all students (MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009). Consequently, school counselors should advocate for comprehensive school counseling programs fostering all students' social/emotional and academic well-being. According to Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen and Pollitt (2013), school counselors support a comprehensive approach to safe schools by:
- supporting proactive principal leadership
- allowing school leaders to deploy human and financial resources in a manner that best meets school and community needs
- providing a team-based framework to facilitate effective coordination of services and interventions
- balancing the needs for physical and psychological safety
- employing the necessary and appropriately trained school-employed mental health and safety personnel
- providing relevant and ongoing professional development for all staff
- integrating a continuum of mental health supports within a multitiered systems of support
- engaging families and community providers as meaningful partners
- remaining grounded in teaching and learning (the mission and purpose of schools)

ASCA joins more than 75 national education, medical, health, public health and research organizations in a call to action to address the epidemic of gun violence in our communities. All school counselors are encouraged to advocate for recommendations adopted by other national organizations representing education stakeholders and the safety of all students. Additionally, school counselors are encouraged to advocate for implementation of the following recommendations at the federal level rather than state-by-state in an effort to prevent interstate gun sales and transport:

- Support a ban on military-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms
- Support closing loopholes for gun purchases at gun shows and online
- Support requirements for thorough background checks for all gun purchases and strengthen background check criteria to prevent purchases by high-risk individuals
- Oppose any efforts to arm educators (including teachers, school counselors and administrators)

Summary

Through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors promote school safety through advocacy efforts. Advocating for schools that are free from gun violence and threats can assist school counselors in supporting safe schools.

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The School Counselor and Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections
(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2006, 2012, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
The school counselor supports educational efforts related to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), through engagement with students, families, school staff and the community to prevent infection and the spread of these infections. The school counselor collaborates with other school health personnel in these efforts, while recognizing the importance of student/family confidentiality. The school counselor provides support, counseling and referral services to students and their families affected by these infections.

The Rationale
Current research suggests that formal sex education addressing topics such as the prevention of STIs has been in decline since 2011 (Lindberg, Maddow-Zimet, & Boonstra, 2016); yet, we know that lack of information about STIs may put adolescents' health at risk as they explore multiple facets of their identities. As a part of a student support services team, school counselors have the opportunity and responsibility to provide students with developmentally appropriate, accurate and current health information regarding STIs and to help them develop healthy attitudes and habits. Risk can be reduced when adolescents understand the causes and potential consequences of sexual behaviors and experimentation and learn multiple ways to prevent acquiring and spreading of STIs (Chin et al., 2012). School counselors are poised within the schools to provide this education and prevention information to students and their families. Students and families affected by STIs have a right to confidentiality and equitable treatment in schools (ASCA, 2016).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors collaborate with school health personnel (e.g., school nurse, health instructors, physical education instructors and life science instructors) to provide counseling, support and educational programs for students, staff and families. As a part of the comprehensive school counseling program, the school counselor addresses STIs not as a moral issue but through prevention and nonbiased support efforts. The school counselor strives through professional development to maintain a current understanding of the recommendations and resources regarding the nature of STIs and appropriate means of prevention.

The school counselor is familiar with and complies with school policy and federal, state and local laws as well as the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) regarding STIs. The school counselor understands and upholds HIPAA and FERPA laws protecting confidentiality of students and families affected by STIs. The school counselor is alert to any form of discrimination on the basis of a student's STI status. The school counselor advocates on behalf of students and families affected by STIs for equity and access to educational opportunities and health care, maintenance of confidentiality and referrals to available resources to assist them.

As a part of the comprehensive school counseling program, the school counselor is an advocate and direct service provider for the implementation of an STI education curriculum in collaboration with the school's other health curriculum providers. The STI education curriculum includes instruction for students, families and staff promoting healthy living and responsibility to self, family and society. Preventive education is recommended for populations currently less likely to receive adequate STI education: males (Donaldson, Lindberg, Ellen, & Marcell, 2013), rural students (Lindberg et al., 2016) and LGBTQ groups (Gowen & Winges-Yanez, 2014).

Specific elements may include general information about STIs, including knowledge of:
- behaviors that put people at risk
- methods of transmission
- health risks to self and others
- related nondiscrimination and confidentiality policies
- prevention efforts
- accurate information dispelling myths and stereotypes
- referral information for health clinics providing testing and treatment

Summary
The school counselor promotes educational efforts related to STIs while providing support and counseling to students and families affected by these infections. The school counselor's approach to STI-related issues is through education and prevention efforts, by keeping abreast of current recommendations and resources in collaboration with health care professionals in the school and community.

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Resources
Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH)
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/about/hivstd_prevention.htm

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA):
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN):
https://www.glsen.org/article/call-action-youth-parents-community-members-educators-and-policymakers

Guttmacher Institute State Laws and Policies: https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/laws-policies

Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule:
http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/privacyrule/index.html

National Coalition of STD Directors Promoting Sex Healthy through STD Prevention Adolescent Sexual Health:
http://www.ncsddc.org/resources/

Sexually Transmitted Diseases – Prevention https://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/default.htm

The School Counselor and the Promotion of Safe Schools through Conflict Resolution and Bullying/Harassment Prevention

(Adopted 1994/2000, Revised 2005, 2011, 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize the impact a safe, orderly and caring environment has on student achievement and social/emotional development. To promote this type of environment, comprehensive school counseling programs promote the inclusion of anti-bullying/harassment and violence-prevention programs, schoolwide positive behavior interventions and support, along with comprehensive conflict-resolution programs to foster a positive school climate.

The Rationale
Research shows promoting a positive school climate and developing positive relationships with caring adults is key to improving school success and reducing bullying, harassment and excessive disciplinary problems (Davis, 2005). Academic success and test scores go up, and discipline problems go down when there is a positive school environment (Doll, 2010). Incidents involving bullying, harassment, violence, weapons or gang behavior threaten student and staff safety (Van Velsor, 2009). Students, parents/guardians, staff and policy makers recognize the need to provide a safe school environment.

Prevention activities are integral to creating a safe school environment that is free of fear, bullying, harassment and violence. Delivered by school counselors, teachers, administrators and qualified community experts, prevention programs increase the opportunity for improved academic achievement, appropriate behavior, positive relationships, successful resolution of conflicts, safe school climate and increased attendance. Participating in prevention activities empowers and encourages students to take responsibility for their behavior and for the climate of their school and community.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors collaborate with others in the school and community to promote safe schools and confront issues threatening school safety. School counselors encourage the development of local policies supporting a safe school environment, and they provide leadership to the school by assisting in the design and implementation of schoolwide prevention activities and programs. School counselors also advocate for state and national policies supporting these efforts. Additionally school counselors recognize differentiated interventions are needed for bullying and resolving a conflict. Comprehensive anti-bullying/anti-harassment/violence-prevention and conflict-resolution programs require data-driven decision making, coordination, instruction and program evaluation. These programs are most effective when incorporated into the academic curriculum by all members of the school community (Young, Hardy, Hamilton, Biernesser, Sun, & Niebergall, 2009). The school counselor includes prevention programs as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program and ensures these programs include training in key skills in peacefully resolving issues such as:
   • communication skills
   • conflict-resolution skills
   • decision-making skills
   • development of cultural competence
   • acceptance of differences
   • intervention strategies for bullying/harassment
   • recognition of early warning signs of violence
   • prevention/intervention services
   • crisis response
   • appropriate use of technology and social media
   • community involvement
   • parent/guardian and faculty/staff education
   • evaluation of program effectiveness
   • building positive staff and student relationships
   • mental health awareness training
   • bystander training (e.g., QPR, SOS)

Summary

School counselors understand positive effects of a safe, orderly and caring school environment. Through participation in prevention programs and activities aimed at anti-bullying, anti-harassment and violence prevention, students learn communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills that help them achieve their goals and also establish successful relationships. School counselors collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents/guardians and the community to deliver prevention programs encouraging student growth and achievement and ensuring a safe school climate.

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The School Counselor and Retention, Social Promotion and Age-Appropriate Placement
(Adopted 2006, revised 2012, 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize that decisions on student retention, promotion and placement are best made when the student's needs are at the forefront of the decision and after multiple factors have been considered. School counselors oppose laws or policies requiring social promotion or retention and advocate for laws and policies that consider individual student needs with regard to age-appropriate placement. When laws and/or policies require social promotion or retention, school counselors refer to the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) to support students' academic, career and social/emotional development.

The Rationale
Research has demonstrated that student educational success is hindered through the use of retention, and no evidence supports retention for struggling learners (Reschly & Christenson, 2013). Even though some states and school districts have instituted laws or policies requiring mandatory retention or promotion of students who do not achieve academic standards, other interventions such as transitional classes, frequent progress monitoring, peer tutoring and individualized interventions delivered through a multitiered system of support show more academic promise for students who have difficulty learning. School counselors advocate for alternate interventions first, before recommending retention of a student.

Research shows negative effects from retention as the student grows older (Vandecandelaere, Vansteelandt, De Fraine, & Van Damme, 2016). If a student is retained, he or she is likely to experience increased feelings of shame and stress as well as negative feelings toward self and school. These negative feelings toward school are often expressed as acts of aggression or despair and may lead to the student dropping out of school. These students tend to continue to have negative life issues. Math and reading scores, which initially rise after retention, decline over time with retained students demonstrating lower achievement scores compared with their grade-level peers. Research indicates students most often retained fall into one or more of these groups:
- racial or ethnic minority status, especially black or Hispanic
- male
- late birthday
- delayed development, particularly fine and gross motor development
- behavioral issues, such as attention difficulties
- limited English proficiency
- in an impoverished home
- in a single-parent household
- chronic absenteeism
- low parental educational attainment
- low parental educational involvement
- social/emotional issues
- highly mobile or transient family

Social promotion is defined as the practice of passing students along from grade to grade with peers even if the students have not satisfied academic requirements or met performance standards at designated grade levels. Although social promotion is intended to promote self-esteem, research on social promotion indicates it can lower the student's or others' expected standards of student achievement and/or can give students and their parents a false sense of accomplishment.

Neither retention nor social promotion has been proven to be effective in remediation of learning difficulties or in maintaining academic gains. In cases where students have academic difficulty, early intervention is crucial, as well as differentiating instruction to help students reach their potential. Additionally, improved teaching strategies, curriculum enhancements and focused, evidenced-based interventions have been demonstrated to be effective for student success and are less costly.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors have a professional and ethical obligation to protect students from practices hindering academic, career and social/emotional development. School counselors are aware of the detrimental effects of grade retentions and social promotions on students, schools and the community and advocate for the repeal of laws or policies promoting mandatory retentions or social promotion. School counselors share educational and social research with students, families, the community and decision makers so the decisions related to promotion and retention are made in the students' best interest.

School counselors promote alternatives to retention, social promotion and age-appropriate placement by supporting and advocating for:
- Research-based educational reforms that deliver best teaching and school counseling practice
- Comprehensive school counseling programs in all schools to address academic and social/emotional competence and behavioral obstacles to learning
- Early identification using available data to identify strengths and deficits to provide appropriate evidenced-based interventions
- A team approach to decision making that includes school counselors, teachers, administrators, student support workers and families to determine appropriate educational interventions
- Career and technical education opportunities for middle and high school students
- Literacy strategies to improve reading for all students
- Funding for prekindergarten programs taught by credentialed teachers
- Extended school year for remediation and curriculum enhancement for struggling learners and under-challenged learners
- Reduced class size
- Increased parent engagement and volunteer involvement in schools
- Education of families on research-based reading strategies to assist their children in developing academic skills

Summary
Research shows the negative impact retention and social promotion can have on student success. School counselors collaborate with students, families and educational leaders to consider the individual student's needs when making decisions on retention and social promotion and advocate to change laws or policies promoting mandatory retentions or social promotion.

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Resources

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Internet Resource Links

Assessment Reform Network. http://fairtest.org

National Association of School Psychologists-Position Paper on Student Grade Retention and Social Promotion. Retrieved from https://www.nasponline.org/x26820.xml

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The School Counselor and Safe Schools and Crisis Response

(Adopted 2000; revised 2007, 2013, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors serves as leaders (ASCA, 2016; Oliver, Fleck, & Money-Brady, 2016) in safe-school initiatives. ASCA seeks to promote safe schools as can be noted in its many position statements, including Gun Safety, Promotion of Safe Schools through Conflict Resolution and Bullying/Harassment Prevention, Safe Schools and Crisis Response, and School Safety and the Use of Technology. Positive perceptions, school climate and overall school health are increased with schoolwide safety programming (Goodman-Scott & Grothaus, 2018).

The Rationale

All students need a safe, violence-free environment for learning. School counselors present themselves as a familiar, approachable resource to students, families and staff as they lead in schools, and they bridge communication between parties (Bray, 2016). Lapan, Wells, Petersen and McCann (2014) confirmed that the most positive protection for youth, both in and out of schools, is a connected school environment with responsive counseling services. Lapan et al. (2014) noted that this also helps to negate adverse effects of situations that could lead to risks. In their research of secondary students, Lapan et al. (2014) reported that those who felt their school counselor personally knew and responded to their concerns reported feeling safer and more connected in school.

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors are vital resources in preventing violent incidents, intervening when concerns arise about potential violence and responding when violence occurs (Jonson, 2017). Through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors promote school safety, avail themselves for disclosure of threats, redirect students engaging in unhealthy or unsafe behaviors and make mental health referrals as needed (Duplechian & Morris, 2014; Nijs, Bun, Tempelaar, de Wit, Burger, Plevier & Boks, 2014; Kingston, Mattson, Dymnicki, Spier, Fitzgerald, Shipman & Elliott, 2018). School counselors are familiar with the school community and knowledgeable about the roles of community mental health providers and first responders such as law enforcement officials and emergency medical responders (Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen & Pollitt, 2013).

Safe school and crisis response literature (Garran & Rasmussen, 2014; Rajan & Branas, 2018; Swartz, Osborne, Dawson-Edwards & Higgins, 2016) suggests several important crisis prevention and response preparedness practices in which school counselors should engage, including:
- providing individual and group counseling
- advocating for student safety by recommending school personnel put consistent procedures, communication and policies in place
- providing interventions for students at risk of dropping out or harming self or others
- offering peer mediation training, conflict resolution programs and anti-bullying programs
- supporting student-initiated programs such as Students Against Violence Everywhere
- providing family, faculty and staff education programs
- facilitating open communication between students and caring adults
- defusing critical incidents and providing related stress debriefing
- participating in district and school response team planning and practices and helping ensure students and staff are able to process/understand crisis response drills
- promoting trauma-informed practices
- advocating for restorative justice programs
- partnering with community resources

School counselors engage in roles congruent with their training. When school counselors are screening students for mental health conditions as part of a student support services team, they should use caution as noted in the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors in the section discussing risk assessments (A.9.b.). School counselors should avoid engaging in roles during drills that are incompatible with the school counseling role, such as acting as the school shooter/invader and trying to get into locked rooms to test that teachers/students are following protocol.

Summary
School counselors are leaders in safe school initiatives and actively engage themselves in fostering safety and in responding to critical response situations in schools. School counselors are a vital resource in preventing, intervening, and responding to crisis situations.

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The School Counselor and School Counseling Preparation Programs
(Adopted 2008, Revised 2014)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors are best prepared through master's- and doctoral-level programs that align with the philosophy and vision of the ASCA National Model (2012), the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012), The ASCAMindsets & Behaviors for Student Success (2015) and the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2010). These programs emphasize training in the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program promoting leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change to enhance student achievement and success.

The Rationale
School counselors are assuming an increasingly important leadership role in education, and school counseling preparation programs are vital to the appropriate development of that role. School counselors significantly contribute to outcomes used to measure the success of students and schools; therefore students in school counselor preparation programs need direct training and supervision in leadership and the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program (House & Sears, 2002).

The ASCA National Model (2012), the ASCA Ethical Standards (2010), the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012), and the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (2014) have significantly influenced school counselor preparation and practice. These initiatives have placed significant attention on the preparation of school counselors, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to design, implement and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program that is proactive, accountable, and aligned with the mission of the school.

The Role of Counselor Preparation Programs
Effective school counseling preparation programs provide coursework and training to help school counseling students learn to design and implement a comprehensive school counseling program. These programs help school counseling students develop knowledge, skills and attitudes including:
- Understanding of the organizational structure and governance of the educational system, as well as cultural, political and social influences on current educational practices
- Addressing legal, ethical and professional issues in PK–12 schools
- Understanding of developmental theory, counseling theory, career counseling theory, social justice theory and multiculturalism
- Understanding of the continuum of mental health services, including prevention and intervention strategies for addressing academic, personal/social and career development to enhance student success for all students
- Facilitating individual student planning, school counseling core curriculum, and crisis response and counseling programs ensuring equitable access to resources promoting academic achievement, personal/social growth and career development for all students
- Collaborating and consulting with stakeholders (e.g., families/guardians, teachers, administration, community stakeholders) to create learning environments promoting student educational equity and success for all students
- Identifying impediments to student learning, developing strategies to enhance learning and collaborating with stakeholders to improve student achievement
- Using advocacy and data-driven school counseling practices to close the achievement/ opportunity gap
- Understanding of current models of school counseling programs and how they relate to the educational program
- Understanding of outcome research data and best practices as identified in the school counseling research literature
- Understanding the importance of serving on school leadership teams and acting as educational leaders

Field-based experiences are essential to the preparation of school counselors. These experiences should provide training that aligns with the school counselor preparation program and further develops the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to implement a comprehensive school counseling program. Field-based experiences are ideally supervised by a certified school counselor in the PK-12 setting and a university supervisor with the appropriate school counselor educator qualifications.

School counseling preparation programs are facilitated by counselor educators who have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to prepare school counselors to promote the academic, career and personal/social development of all school counseling students. Counselor educators have appropriate preparation including knowledge of school counseling models and school counselor competencies, organization and administration of PK-12 schools, counseling children and adolescents, and current issues and trends in school counseling. Counselor educators should hold an earned doctoral degree in counselor education, counseling psychology, educational leadership or closely related field.

Adjunct faculty/instructors will minimally have an earned master's degree in school counseling and have school counseling experience.

Summary
School counselor preparation programs emphasize development of the attitudes, knowledge and skills essential for the implementation of effective comprehensive school counseling programs. These programs align with the philosophy and vision of the ASCA National Model (2012), the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012), the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (2014) and the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2010) creating a program empowering every student to succeed and achieve in his/her PK-12 experiences. Counselor educators have the appropriate background, experience and commitment to prepare school counselors who are able to respond to the changing expectations and dynamics of students, families, schools and communities.

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The School Counselor and School-Family-Community Partnerships
(Adopted 2010, Revised 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors have an essential and unique role in promoting, facilitating and advocating for collaboration with parents/guardians and community stakeholders. These collaborations are an important aspect of implementing equitable, data-driven, comprehensive school counseling programs promoting all students' successful academic, career and social/emotional development .

The Rationale
Research indicates the school counselor investment in the partnership of school-family-community collaboration enhances student achievement (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Emde, 2015; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Griffin & Farris, 2010). Student achievement is defined by greater investment in academics, social/emotional well-being and college preparedness (Hann Morrison, 2011). School counselors enhance the collaboration of school-family-community stakeholders by being the catalyst through which these collaborations occur (Bryan & Henry, 2012). Family involvement benefits both the student and the school as it increases student achievement and attendance, promotes career development, enhances school climate and fosters student resilience (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). School-family-community partnerships can support the effective and efficient delivery of school counseling program services to promote student success (Taylor & Adelman, 2000).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors work with students, their families, school staff and community members in the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program in establishing school and community partnerships that:
   • promote student academic, career and social/emotional development
   • inform the school community about relevant community resources
   • actively pursue collaboration with family members and community stakeholders
   • remove barriers to the successful implementation of school-family-community partnerships (e.g., mistrust and miscommunication between parties, resistance to the concept and practice, transportation and childcare issues, accessible meeting times)

School counselors serve as an advocate, leader, facilitator, initiator, evaluator and collaborator to create, enrich and evaluate the effect of these partnerships on student success within the comprehensive school counseling program.

Summary
School-family-community partnerships have increased the successful academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. School counselors are called on to create, lead, facilitate and evaluate these partnerships and work to remove barriers to these helpful collaborative relationships.

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The School Counselor and Social/Emotional Development
(Adopted 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors implementing comprehensive programs strive to have an impact on student growth in three domain areas: academic, career and social/emotional development (ASCA, 2012). School counselors recognize students should demonstrate growth in these domains equally to be successful. School counselors understand these domains are not considered separate but are intertwined, each affecting the other (Schenck, Anctil, & Smith, 2010). Although this statement focuses on social/emotional development it is understood academic and career development need to be considered with equal diligence.

The Rationale
School counselors serve as a first line of defense in identifying and addressing student social/emotional needs within the school setting. School counselors have unique training in helping students with social/emotional issues that may become barriers to academic success. Within the context of a comprehensive school counseling program school counselors develop school counseling core curriculum, deliver small-group counseling and provide individual student planning directed at improving students' social/emotional well being.

The social/emotional domain is composed of standards to help students manage emotions and learn and apply interpersonal skills as early as preschool and kindergarten (ASCA, 2014). School counselors promote mindsets and behaviors in all grade levels that enhance the learning process and create a culture of college and career readiness for all students in the area of social/emotional development.

According to a meta-analysis by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011), students who participated in social/emotional learning programs demonstrated significantly improved social/emotional skills, attitudes, behavior and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in academic achievement when compared with control groups. The American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution (2015) concluded that social/emotional competencies are critically important for the long-term success of all students in today's economy.

The school counselor is key to identifying students' social/emotional needs (VanVelsor, 2009). Educational systems as a whole, including school counselors, should graduate students who are not only proficient in core academic subjects but demonstrate an ability to socially and emotionally practice healthy behaviors and behave respectfully when working with others from diverse backgrounds (ASCD, 2007).

School counselors play a role in creating an environment that produces engagement vital to students' social/emotional development. When students enter high school there is a 40 percent–60 percent chance they will disengage from school (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Klem & Connell, 2004). School performance can be negatively affected when students demonstrate high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, sex, violence, depression and attempted suicide (Eaton et al., 2008). School counselors address the potential of disengagement by addressing students' social/emotional development.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors play a critical role in supporting social/emotional development as they:
- Collaborate with classroom teachers to provide the school counseling core curriculum to all students through direct instruction, team-teaching or providing lesson plans for learning activities or units in classrooms aimed at social/emotional development (ASCA, 2012)
- Understand the nature and range of human characteristics specific to child and adolescent development
- Identify and employ appropriate appraisal methods for individual and group interventions that support K–12 students' social/emotional development
- Know and utilize counseling theories to inform both direct and indirect services providing support to K–12 students' social/emotional development

- Use evaluation in the context of appropriate statistics and research methodology, follow-up evaluation and measurement methods to implement appropriate program planning for social/emotional development
- Select and implement technology in a comprehensive school counseling program to facilitate K–12 students' social/emotional development
- Serve as a referral source for students when social/emotional issues become too great to be dealt with solely by the school counselor, including crisis interventions

Summary

School counselors are committed to supporting students' social/emotional needs. As advocates for students, school counselors promote a positive environment that enhances students' ability to properly manage the social/emotional demands of their lives. School counselors use appropriate appraisal methods to promote a school environment designed to propel students toward positive mindsets and behaviors supporting social/emotional development through direct (e.g., classroom curriculum, group counseling and individual counseling) and indirect (e.g., collaborating or consulting with staff, families or communities) services.

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The School Counselor and Student Mental Health
(Adopted 2009, Revised 2015)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize and respond to the need for mental health and behavioral prevention, early intervention and crisis services that promote psychosocial wellness and development for all students. School counselors are prepared to address barriers and to assess ways to maximize students' success in schools, communities and their family structure by offering education, prevention, and crisis and short-term intervention until the student is connected with available community resources.

The Rationale
Students' unmet mental health needs can be a significant obstacle to student academic, career and social/emotional development and even compromise school safety. Schools are often one of the first places where mental health crises and needs of students are recognized and initially addressed (Froeschle & Meyers, 2004). Most students in need do not receive adequate mental health supports (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013). Research indicates 20 percent of students are in need of mental health services, yet only one out of five of these students receive the necessary services (Kaffenberger & Seligman, 2007).

Furthermore, students of color and those from families with low income are at greater risk for mental health needs but are even less likely to receive the appropriate services (Panigua, 2005; Vera, Buhin, & Shin, 2006) despite increased national attention to these inequities (Alegria, Vallas, & Pumariega, 2010). Of school-age children who receive any behavioral and mental health services, 70 percent–80 percent receive them at school (Atkins et al., 2010). Preventive school-based mental health and behavioral services are essential. Without planned intervention for students exhibiting early-warning signs setbacks in educational, social and career development during later school years and adulthood can result. The ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (ASCA 2014) identify and prioritize the specific attitudes, knowledge and skills students should be able to demonstrate as a result of a school counseling program. School counselors use the standards to assess student growth and development, guide the development of strategies and activities and create a program that helps students achieve their highest potential. This includes offering education, prevention and short-term intervention services designed to promote positive mental health and to remove any barriers.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors focus their efforts on designing and implementing comprehensive programs that promote academic, career and social/emotional success for all students. School counselors acknowledge they may be the only counseling professional available to students and their families. While implementing a comprehensive program school counselors:
- Deliver the school counseling core curriculum that proactively enhances awareness of mental health; promotes positive, healthy behaviors; and seeks to remove the stigma associated with mental health issues
- Provide responsive services including internal and external referral procedures, short-term counseling or crisis intervention focused on mental health or situational (e.g. grief, difficult transitions) concerns with the intent of helping the student return to the classroom and removing barriers to learning
- Recognize warning signs: changes in school performance (changes in grades, attendance), mood changes, complaining of illness before school, increased disciplinary problems at school, experiencing problems at home or family situation (stress, trauma, divorce, substance abuse, exposure to poverty conditions domestic violence), communication from teachers about problems at school, and dealing with existing mental health concerns
- Provide school-based prevention and universal interventions and targeted interventions for students with mental health and behavioral health concerns
- Provide students with individual planning addressing their academic, career and social/emotional (including mental health) needs
- Educate teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and community stakeholders about the mental health concerns of students, including recognition of the role environmental factors have in causing or exacerbating mental health issues and provide resources and information
- Advocate, collaborate and coordinate with school and community stakeholders to ensure that students and their families have access to mental health services

- Recognize and address barriers to access mental health services and the associated stigma, including cultural and linguistic impediments
- Adhere to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality, the distinction between public and private information and consultation
- Direct students and parents to school and/or community resources for additional assistance through referrals that treat mental health issues (suicidal ideation, violence, abuse and depression)
- Help identify and address students' mental health issues while working within the ASCA's Ethical Standards; Competencies for School Counselors; and national, state and local legislation (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), which guide school counselors' informed decision-making and standardize professional practice to protect both the student and school counselor
- Seek to continually update their professional knowledge regarding the students' social/emotional needs

Summary

Students' unmet mental health needs pose barriers to learning and development. Because of school counselors' training and position, they are uniquely qualified to provide education, prevention, intervention and referral services to students and their families. Although school counselors do not provide long-term mental health therapy in schools, they provide a comprehensive school counseling program designed to meet the developmental needs of all students. As a component of this program, school counselors collaborate with other educational professionals and community service providers.

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The School Counselor and Student Postsecondary Recruitment
(Adopted 2004; revised 2009, 2015)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors encourage and promote positive and equitable reception of career and postsecondary educational institution recruiters into the school setting. These recruiters may include individuals from organizations such as but not limited to:
- apprenticeship programs
- athletic programs
- branches of the military
- career and technical education institutions
- colleges and universities

The Rationale
Comprehensive and accurate information is essential for students as they explore postsecondary career and educational options (National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, 2001). Although federal law requires the distribution of student directory information, the school counselor also recognizes the importance of student and family choices in the recruitment process and assists them as they make informed postsecondary choices (Dahir & Stone, 2012). ASCA believes in the right of every student to have access to counseling and advisement for postsecondary (career and education) preparation, access and success. In implementing a comprehensive school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model, the school counselor delivers information on postsecondary career and college options and collaborates with other student service professionals in service to students (SDSU White House Convening 2014).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors are advocates for students in the recruitment process and ensure students and their families are informed of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and in accordance with ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors. School counselors provide and advocate for individual students' career awareness, exploration and postsecondary plans supporting students' right to choose from the wide array of options when they leave secondary education. The school counselor develops strategies and implements activities for individual student planning, goal-setting, decision-making, transition and/or postsecondary planning. The school counselor collaborates with students, their families, other student service professionals and recruiters to provide information about postsecondary options and assists students as they make choices about their future.

Collaborating with school administrators, school counselors develop written information and/or hold informational meetings to inform all concerned parties about the policies and procedures for obtaining student information as well as students' and parents'/guardians' right to withhold their information. Once the student reaches the age of 18, FERPA prohibits parents from accessing student records without the student's permission. The school counselor can play a critical role in bridging the communication gap between parents and recruitment entities. In addition to the above activities, school counselors can encourage parents to sign waivers to release information, deal directly with the students, encourage conversation between students and parents and encourage recruiters to create informational sessions and activities for parents.

Summary
The school counselor assists students and their families as they make informed decisions about postsecondary options. The school counselor collaborates with individuals involved in the student recruitment process to ensure the delivery of comprehensive and accurate information while protecting student rights as specified by state/federal law, school district policies and procedures and ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors.

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The School Counselor and Student Safety and the Use of Technology
(Adopted 2000, revised 2006, 2012, 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors encourage students to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities, information and resources available through technology usage. However, because students are vulnerable to the risks technology poses, school counselors, in collaboration with families, educators and law enforcement officials, alert students to these risks and encourage them to use technology responsibly.

The Rationale
School counselors recognize technology underpins the fastest-growing industries and high-wage jobs, provides the tools needed to compete in every business and drives growth in every industrialized nation. The ability to harness the power and promise of leading-edge technology often determines national prosperity, security and global influence as well as the standard of living and quality of life for all (National Science and Technology Council, 1996).

To be successful in school and prepared for postsecondary opportunities, students need to be proficient in the use of technology. However, when students access web-based and mobile technology, they leave a digital footprint that makes them vulnerable to privacy invasion. They are also exposed to negative content and significant risks that compromise their safety, security and reputation. Technology exposes students to behavioral, safety and privacy risks such as:
   • addictions (e.g., gaming, social networking)
   • invasion of privacy and disclosure of personal information
   • inappropriate online communications
   • easy access to inappropriate content and media
   • cheating and copyright infringement
   • cyberbullying/harassment
   • sexual predators

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors have a responsibility to protect students from potential risks and to promote healthy student development. School counselors collaborate with families and school personnel to advance the responsible and appropriate use of technology and software applications to facilitate academic, career and social/emotional achievement. School counselors consider the ethical and legal considerations of technological applications, including confidentiality concerns, security issues, potential limitations and benefits of communication practices in electronic media. School counselors use established and approved means of communication with students, while maintaining appropriate boundaries. In addition, school counselors help educate students about appropriate communication and boundaries (ASCA, 2016). School counselors may take the following actions to promote the safe, responsible use of technology (ASCA and iKeepSafe, 2012):
   • help develop school policies
   • appropriately respond to online incidents affecting conditions for learning
   • assist the community in detecting at-risk behavior and risk-reduction approaches
   • address digital citizenship, including technology literacy, privacy, online reputation and social awareness, among students and their families
   • develop peer-helper programs encouraging students to help each other understand technological risks, practice responsible use and support other students who are vulnerable
   • confront myths surrounding cyberbullying that are perpetuated by media headlines and unsubstantiated public statements like "cyberbullying is occurring at epidemic levels" and "cyberbullying causes suicide" (Sabella, Patchin, & Hinduja, 2013, p. 2703)

School counselors engage in professional development to improve and maintain digital literacy, which, coupled with expertise in human development, allows them to provide educators and families with guidelines for the appropriate use of technology by students.

Summary

Technology provides global opportunities for student learning, exploration, communication, networking and collaboration. School counselors promote the responsible use of technology in collaboration with families and educators to increase student safety.

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The School Counselor and Students with Disabilities
(Adopted 1999; Revised 2004, 2010, 2013, 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors encourage and support the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students through comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors are committed to helping all students realize their potential and meet or exceed academic standards with consideration for both the strengths and challenges resulting from disabilities and other special needs.

Rationale
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public schools to provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for all students. However, research suggests "students with disabilities have not always received adequate educational services and supports" (Rock & Leff, 2007, p. 314). In addition, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects qualified individuals with disabilities defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. (For a complete list of major life activities refer to ADA Amendments Act of 2008.) School counselors strive to assist all students in achieving their full potential, including students with disabilities, within the scope of the comprehensive school counseling program.

School counselors recognize their strengths and limitations in working with students with disabilities. School counselors also are aware of current research and seek to implement best practices in working with students presenting with any disability category and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services. IDEA defined disabilities include:
- autism
- deaf-blind
- developmental delay
- emotional disturbance
- hearing impairments (including deafness)
- intellectual disability (formerly mental retardation)
- multiple disabilities
- orthopedic impairments
- other health impairments
- specific learning disabilities
- speech or language impairments
- traumatic brain injury
- visual impairments (including blindness)

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors provide direct and indirect services to students in the least restrictive environment (as determined by each student's individualized education plan [IEP]) and in inclusive settings when possible (Tarver-Behring, Spagna & Sullivan, 1998). School counselor responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:
- providing school counseling curriculum lessons, individual and/or group counseling to students with special needs within the scope of the comprehensive school counseling program
- providing short-term, goal-focused counseling in instances where it is appropriate to include these strategies as a part of the IEP or 504 plan
- encouraging family involvement in the educational process
- consulting and collaborating with staff and families to understand the special needs of a student and understanding the adaptations and modifications needed to assist the student
- advocating for students with special needs in the school and in the community
- contributing to the school's multidisciplinary team within the scope and practice of the comprehensive school counseling program to identify students who may need to be assessed to determine special education or 504 plan eligibility

- collaborating with other related student support professionals (e.g., school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, special education staff, speech and language pathologists) in the delivery of services
- providing assistance with developing academic, transition and postsecondary plans for students with IEP's and 504 plans as appropriate

Inappropriate administrative or supervisory responsibilities for the school counselor include but are not limited to:
- making singular decisions regarding placement or retention
- serving in any supervisory capacity related to the implementation of the IDEA
- serving as the school district representative for the team writing the IEP
- coordinating, writing or supervising a specific plan under Section 504 of Public Law 93-112
- coordinating, writing or supervising the implementation of the IEP
- providing long-term therapy

Summary
The school counselor takes an active role in student achievement and postsecondary planning by providing a comprehensive school counseling program for all students. As a part of this program, school counselors advocate for students with special needs, encourage family involvement in their child's education and collaborate with other educational professionals to promote academic achievement, social/emotional wellness and college/career readiness for all.

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The School Counselor and Suicide Prevention/Awareness
(Adopted 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors work to identify behavioral and social/emotional signs of suicide risk among their students and ensure prevention methods are in place. It is the school counselor's ethical and moral responsibility to report suspected suicide risk to legal guardians and the appropriate authorities. In acknowledging suspected suicide risk, school counselors exercise reasonable care to protect students from unforeseeable harm (ASCA, 2016).

The Rationale
According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC, 2015), suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 35 and the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10 to 14. Overall the nation has seen a 24 percent increase in suicide completions over the past 15 years (CDC, 2015). Data from the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) showed that 29.9 percent or three out of 10 U.S. high school students expressed feeling sad or hopeless almost daily for two or more weeks (CDC, 2015). In addition, CDC (2015) reported that 17.7 percent of students expressed suicide ideation, and 14.6 percent of students had completed plans for their suicide. These statistics are alarming and reveal that students in significant numbers experience feelings and thoughts that isolate and lead to suicidal ideation and plans. Raising awareness around suicide and implementing suicide prevention initiatives is important in reinforcing student support and safety measures.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors recognize the threat of suicide among children and adolescents and strive to create a supportive environment. School counselors do not wait for certainty but rather the notion of a potential suicide places school counselors in a position to immediately notify parents/guardians (ASCA 2017). School counselors contact parents/guardians when placed on notice that a suicide is possible through student self-report, peer report, rumors, hearsay or any other means. It is a well-known fact that students will often deny suicidal ideation to escape the gaze of adults while confiding their true intentions to their peers. School counselors provide parents/guardians with referral resources for students (Stone, 2018). In the case that the parents/guardians do not take seriously the potential threat, the school counselor makes a report to child protective service (Stone, 2018). School counselors work to raise awareness of suicide and suicide ideation, train school personnel and create opportunities to identify resources available for school personnel (Desrochers & Houck, 2013).

To achieve their ethical obligation to protect students, school counselors must maintain current training in:
• Being informed about signs of suicidal thoughts
• Being knowledgeable about the resources available
• Preparing students, staff, colleagues and parents to recognize warning symptoms for suicidal behavior
• Referring students who demonstrate signs of suicidal thoughts to local community agencies

Summary
Through the implementation of comprehensive suicide prevention/awareness, school counselors ensure students and faculty are well-prepared to address and identify the negative thoughts and experiences that could potentially lead a student to suicide ideation.

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The School Counselor and Supporting Students in Foster Care
(Adopted 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors implement comprehensive school counseling programs to meet the academic, career and social/emotional needs of all students. School counselors recognize that some students cope with situations that place them at higher risk. Youth in foster care represent an underserved and often-overlooked student population.

The Rationale
Children and youth in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable student subgroups in this country. Of the approximately 437,465 children in foster care in 2016, nearly 275,407 were in elementary and secondary schools (Children's Bureau, n.d.). Children in foster care experience much higher-levels of residential and school instability than their peers. Children experiencing this type of instability, including many students in foster care, are more likely to face a variety of academic difficulties (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

Research suggests that strong collaborative relationships between public schools and child welfare agencies improve the educational outcomes of students in the foster care system (Weinberg, Zetlin, & Shea, 2009; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2005; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Shea, 2006). It is imperative that professionals work together, along with the students' families when possible, to support each individual student and their unique needs.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors should inform themselves of the proper policies that apply to their states and local school districts regarding foster youth students' rights to school placements. School counselors should be knowledgeable about special circumstances and rights students may have in qualifying states and districts in which youth in foster care are able to receive their high school diploma with fewer credits or may qualify for a fifth year of high school if they changed school after their sophomore year. School counselors serve as the liaison between their school and child welfare agencies to promote communication and collaboration to address students' educational needs in their specific communities and improve students' educational outcomes.

In addition, school counselors:
- Help foster students with a stable school environment
- Bridge the communication between schools during times of transitions
- Promote resilience and identify protective factors
- Collaborate with foster/biological family and community stakeholders (e.g., social workers, therapists, attorneys and case managers)
- Display awareness of the challenges students face
- Inform themselves of resources available to help students access postsecondary training opportunities (e.g., current scholarships, grants and application fee waiver programs available to foster youth in their states)

Summary
School counselors recognize students in the foster care system are resilient, have many strengths and may require additional support in obtaining resources, social/emotional care, academic planning and college/career guidance. School counselors recognize it is their duty to be knowledgeable about legislation, resources and needs for students in foster care.

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The School Counselor and Test Preparation Programs

(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2006, 2012, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors understand the impact of testing and test scores on college admissions, industry credentialing and other areas pertaining to students' postsecondary plans and goals. School counselors assist students in preparing for standardized tests by promoting opportunities designed to increase knowledge and improve test-taking skills. School counselors help students and their families become knowledgeable about test preparation programs and assist them as they decide which programs best meet their needs.

The Rationale
Students are often apprehensive about standardized tests and sometimes view tests as intimidating or threatening. Compounding these feelings is the fact that, since 1990, average increases in first-time college applications has increased yearly, while the number of students being accepted to college has remained relatively stable (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2015). Research has demonstrated that markers predicting college success occur across a student's development and include reading proficiency by third grade, sound school attendance, positive social skills, rigorous course-taking pathways and maintenance of a 3.0 GPA or higher (College and Career Readiness & Success Center, 2013).

Although many postsecondary institutions require applicants to take a college entrance test to be considered for admission and/or placement, not all schools do. School counselors recognize that test-taking strategies for standardized tests are test-specific and will not necessarily be applicable to all standardized tests or other assessments students would take during their academic career. Even so, school counselors are often asked for advice on test preparation programs to increase scores and opportunities.

Research on test-taking and test-wise strategies, such as time-use and guessing strategies, revealed that such preparation can improve scores. These gains are even larger when a student participates in a longer test preparation program that allows the student to practice and develop broader cognitive skills (Plakans & Gebril, 2015). Many students benefit from becoming familiar with the test format and test-taking strategies before taking a standardized test. Content area review and repeated test-based practice have shown to be beneficial for students as they prepare for exams (Turner, 2009).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors provide test-taking strategies as a part of a comprehensive school counseling program promoting academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. Test-taking skills and strategies include:
- Time use
- Error avoidance and guessing
- Memory and recall techniques
- Deductive reasoning
- Test-wiseness (including scoring rubrics, test format and item formats)
- Stress management and anxiety reduction (Selend, 2012)

School counselors collaborate with teachers and other school staff to coordinate and provide information on integrating test-taking strategies, content and practice tests into regular classroom instruction. Examples include providing students and families with research and information on a variety of test preparation options to enable them to make informed decisions about commercial test preparation programs, free programs, tutoring and other options. The school counselor collaborates with staff to encourage integration of test-taking strategies and content across the curriculum.

Summary
Research shows test preparation can help students improve test scores (What Works Clearinghouse, 2016). School counselors collaborate with school staff to assist students as they prepare for tests by providing instruction on test-taking skills and research and information about test preparation programs to students and their families.

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The School Counselor and Transgender/Gender-nonconforming Youth
(Adopted 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize all students have the right to be treated equally and fairly with dignity and respect as unique individuals, free from discrimination, harassment and bullying based on their real or perceived gender identity and gender expression. School counselors work to safeguard the well-being of transgender and gender-nonconforming youth.

The Rationale
School counselors are committed to the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. Transgender and gender-nonconforming students and their families face increased risks as well as unique circumstances that often require additional guidance and recommendations to help ensure these students receive the same educational opportunities as their peers (Greytak, Ksciw, & Diaz, 2009). According to Greytak et al. (2009), 26 percent of transgender students were physically assaulted, (e.g., punched, kicked or injured with a weapon) in school in the past year because of their gender expression. Greytak et al. (2009) noted that the adverse health and educational consequences for transgender and gender-nonconforming students are even greater than those for lesbian, gay and bisexual students. School counselors recognize the overall goal is to ensure the safety, comfort and healthy development of all students, maximizing inclusion and social integration while minimizing exclusion and stigmatization.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors recognize that the responsibility for determining a student's gender identity rests with the student rather than outside confirmation from medical practitioners, mental health professionals or documentation of legal changes. School counselors collaborate with other school personnel to address district operations, programs, policies and activities that may put the well-being of transgender and gender-nonconforming youth at risk. Although the guidelines within this statement provide important suggestions, they cannot anticipate every situation that might occur.

Each student's unique situation should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, using a student-centered approach that includes ongoing student and parent/guardian engagement (as appropriate) and school personnel with a legitimate educational interest per the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Title IX guidance and legal briefs issued by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) have defined fair and equal treatment for transgender and gender-nonconforming students in relation to rights in areas such as student names and pronouns, student records, privacy, restrooms, student safety and dress codes (OCR, 2014). School counselors promote the use of best practices to inform their support of transgender and gender-nonconforming students such as the following recommendations offered by MSBE (2016):
   • **Names and Pronouns.** School staff should address students by their chosen name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, regardless of whether there has been a legal name change.
   • **Student Records.** When requested, schools should engage in reasonable and good-faith efforts to change current unofficial student records (e.g., class and team rosters, yearbooks, school newspapers and newsletters) with the chosen name and appropriate gender markers to promote consistency among teachers, substitute teachers, school administrators and other staff. School districts should comply if transgender students ask the district to amend their secondary educational records, including diplomas and transcripts after graduation, to ensure those requesting records (e.g., college admissions offices or potential employers) will only see the name and gender marker corresponding to the student's gender identity (Lambda Legal, 2014).
   • **Privacy and Confidentiality Regarding Disclosures.** Transgender and gender-nonconforming students have the right to decide when, with whom and to what extent to share private information. When contacting the parent/guardian of a transgender or gender-nonconforming student, school staff should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's assigned sex at birth, unless the student or parent/guardian has specified otherwise.
   • **Restrooms.** Students should be allowed to use the restroom in accordance with their gender identity. Alternative and nonstigmatizing options, such as an all-gender or single-user restroom (e.g., staff bathroom or nurse's office), should be made available to students who request them but not presented as the only option. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of underlying reasons, has the right to access a single-user restroom.

- **Locker Rooms or Changing Facilities.** Students should not be required to use a locker room that is incongruent with their gender identity. Locker-room usage should be determined using the guiding principles of safety and honoring the student's gender identity and expression. Some options include: 1) an adjusted changing schedule, 2) use of a private area in the facility (e.g., nearby restroom stall with a door, an area separated by a curtain, a physical education instructor's office in the locker room) and 3) use of a nearby private area (e.g., restroom, nurse's office). Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reasons, may request the options listed above.
- **Physical Education Classes and Intramural Sports.** Students should be allowed to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports in accordance with their gender identity.
- **Interscholastic Sports.** Students should be allowed to participate in interscholastic sports in accordance with their gender identity, subject to state and federal civil rights laws.
- **Dress Code.** Students should have the right to express their gender at school, within the parameters of the school's dress code, without discrimination or harassment. The school's dress code should be gender-neutral and not restrict a student's clothing choices on the basis of gender. In the event the dress code has differing expectations or practices based on gender, students should be permitted to dress in accordance with their gender identity.
- **Gender-Based Activities or Practices.** Districts should evaluate all gender-based programs and practices and maintain only those that have a clear and sound educational purpose. When students are separated by gender in school activities, students should be allowed to participate in accordance with their gender identity. When considering overnight accommodations, solutions should be sought that are inclusive, respectful and acceptable to the student and, to the extent possible, do not impose an additional expense or burden on the student.

Summary

School counselors promote affirmation, respect and equal opportunity for all individuals regardless of gender identity or gender expression. School counselors encourage a safe and affirming school environment and promote awareness of and education on issues related to transgender and gender-nonconforming students.

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The School Counselor and Trauma-Informed Practice
(Adopted, 2016)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors understand the impact adverse childhood experiences have on students' academic achievement and social/emotional development. School counselors strive to identify, support and promote the success of students who have experienced trauma through the implementation of a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program.

The Rationale
Forty-six million children witness violence, crime, physical and psychological abuse every year in the United States (Listenbee et al., 2012). Research has shown trauma significantly increases the risk of mental health problems, difficulties with social relationships and behavior, physical illness and poor school performance (Gerrity & Folcarelli, 2008). Student academic performance can be compromised by lack of attention, focus, processing new material and an increase in absenteeism, all of which can result from trauma. Establishing a supportive, positive school environment decreases these effects (Doll, 2010). Positive school environments have been linked to increased academic achievement and improved social/emotional coping skills, such as reducing bullying, harassment and excessive disciplinary problems. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration describes four characteristics of a trauma-informed program or system:
- realizes the impact of trauma and understands the potential for recovery
- recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in system members
- responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices
- actively resists re-traumatization

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors can be key players in promoting a trauma-sensitive environment at their schools. They are in a unique position to identify students affected by traumatic events and can provide the support and resources these students need. Certified school counselors implementing a data-driven comprehensive school counseling program addressing academic, career and social/emotional development can have a positive impact at all levels of education. In an effort to promote student's physical, emotional and mental health and to create conditions allowing students to thrive and succeed, school counselors:
- recognize the signs of trauma in students
- understand traumas need not predict individual failure if sufficient focus on resilience and strengths is present
- avoid practices that may re-traumatize students
- create connected communities and positive school climates that are trauma-sensitive to keep students healthy and in school and involved in positive social networks
- implement effective academic and behavioral practices, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports and social and emotional learning
- promote safe, stable and nurturing relationships. Research shows this is critical in helping students succeed even in the face of deprivation and adversity (The Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2015).
- provide community resource information to students and families dealing with trauma
- educate staff on the effects of trauma and how to refer students to the school counselor
- collaborate with community resources to provide support for students
- promote a trauma-sensitive framework for policies, procedures and behaviors to entire staff
- recognize the role technology can play in magnifying trauma incidents for students

Summary
A trauma-sensitive school is one in which all students feel safe, welcomed and supported (Cole, Eisner, Gregory, & Ristuccia, 2013). School counselors, collaborating with school staff and community partners, can help transform the school into a safe, supportive, trauma-sensitive learning environment for all students. School counselors advocate for policies and procedures focused on the trauma-sensitive framework and the establishment of a safe school climate for all students.

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The School Counselor and the Use of Non-School-Counseling Credentialed Personnel in Implementing Comprehensive School Counseling Programs
(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors and the comprehensive school counseling programs they design and implement serve a vital role in maximizing student success (Dimmit & Wilkerson, 2012; Olsen, Parikh-Foxx, Flowers, & Algozzine, 2017; Wilkerson, Perusse, & Hughes, 2013). School counselors are uniquely qualified and solely eligible to meet the requirements of designing and implementing these programs. School counselors recognize that personnel who do not hold a master's degree in school counseling are not qualified to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program that supports academic, career and social/emotional development and positively affects achievement for all students.

The Rationale
Research shows students who attend a school with a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program earn higher grades and are better prepared for life after high school (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012; Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stephenson, 2012; Dimmit & Wilkerson, 2012; Stone & Dahir, 2015; Wood, Wilkerson, Perusse, & Hughes, 2013). School counselors recognize students face many challenges that may place them at risk for school failure. Communities and school districts across the country are seeking solutions to these complex challenges and may establish a variety of positions to address student needs.

School districts work diligently to employ the most highly trained personnel for dealing with these issues and may employ non-school-counseling credentialed staff for specific functions. Although non-school-counseling credentialed staff members provide valuable services to students, they do not have the training or skills to design or implement a comprehensive school counseling program nor are they qualified to be placed in the role of school counselor. Non-school-counseling credentialed staff may include, but are not limited to, the following jobs:
  • paraprofessionals
  • peer helpers
  • volunteers
  • clerical support staff
  • student assistance team members
  • social workers, psychologists
  • nurses
  • mentors
  • mental health counselors including marriage and family counselors, social emotional coaches, and day treatment workers
  • college or graduation coaches/academic advisors
  • behavior support specialists
  • deans/assistant deans of students

The services non-school-counseling credentialed personnel provide must be clearly defined based on the individual's training and skills. Without appropriate training and skills, individuals with the best of intentions may provide inappropriate responses or interventions to students that could jeopardize students' development and well-being.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors recognize student needs can best be met through the collaborative efforts of all school personnel (Auger, 2013; Bardhoshi, Duncan, & Erford, 2017). In situations in which non-school-counseling credentialed personnel are performing interventions or prevention activities, school counselors advocate these activities be limited to the scope of the individual's training and capabilities. The school counselor collaborates with administrators, teachers and staff to establish appropriate guidelines, responsibilities and supervision for non-school-counseling credentialed staff as well as the activities provided. To ensure integrity, school counselors and non-school-counseling credentialed personnel should be aware of who is claiming credit for services to avoid duplicated reports of service.

When referring students to non-school-counseling credential staff, school counselors inform students and families of these staff members' role within the school. The school counselor may also provide information related to the individual's education level and scope of practice.

Summary
School counselors play an important role in the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. Non-school-counseling credentialed individuals do not have the training or skills to design or implement a comprehensive school counseling program nor are they qualified to be placed in the role of the school counselor. School counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers and staff to establish appropriate guidelines and supervision of services provided by non-school-counseling credentialed personnel and make referrals to these individuals as appropriate for the student.

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ASCA Empirical Research Studies Supporting the Value of School Counseling:
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California Department of Education: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/rh/counseffective.asp

Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation:
https://www.counseling.org/PublicPolicy/PDF/Research_Support_School_Counseling-ACA-CSCORE_02-11.pdf

The Professional Counselor and Use of Support Staff in School Counseling Programs

(Adopted 1974; reviewed and reaffirmed 1980; revised 1986, 1993, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2013, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors understand the value added to a comprehensive school counseling program through the effective use of support staff. Assistance from school counseling program support staff members allows school counselors to use their time more efficiently and use their professional expertise and leadership skills more effectively to meet student needs.

The Rationale
To achieve maximum effectiveness, the ASCA National Model recommends a student-to-school-counselor ratio of 250:1 and that 80 percent or more of a school counselor's time be spent providing direct and indirect services to students (ASCA, 2012). However, even though recent studies have demonstrated significant correlations between student achievement and student-to-school-counselor ratios (e.g., Gewertz, 2018), the national average ratio is 455-to-1 for the 2016–2017 school year. In addition, the ASCA National Model offers a framework for a comprehensive school counseling program that includes testing coordination and clerical duties on its list of "inappropriate activities for school counselors" (ASCA, 2012).

According to Heitin (2013), school counseling program support staff provide a means to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school counseling program by relieving school counselors of many inappropriate, although necessary, tasks such as maintaining clerical records and coordinating paperwork. Heitin added that school counseling program support staff members allow the school counselor to spend more time planning and delivering programs and activities requiring specialized skills and training.

The Role of Support Staff in School Counseling Programs
School counseling program support staff members may assist in a variety of areas, including: collecting and maintaining current student files, record keeping, clerical support, data entry, new student registration and many other activities, allowing the school counselor to concentrate on delivering the comprehensive school counseling program.

The school counseling program support staff members should be sensitive to students' problems and needs and be knowledgeable of the role of the school counselor and the total school counseling program. School counseling program support staff members should maintain the highest level of confidentiality of student records and personal information. They should not involve themselves in situations that are more appropriately handled by the school counselor.

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors may assist in the selection and professional development of school counseling program support staff, collaborate to outline processes and activities that best support the school counseling program and ensure the support staff understand the ethical standards required for the office (Atici, 2014). These activities may include providing appropriate, ongoing supervision of school counseling program support staff members and ensuring the support staff has initial training as well as the opportunity for ongoing professional development in areas of clerical training, human relations and multicultural competence, ethics, community resources and confidentiality with regard to student records. When the school counselor works effectively through collaboration with support staff, the efficacy of the school counselor is enhanced (Atici, 2014).

Summary
School counselors understand the value support staff members add to a school counseling program. School counseling support staff members provide a means to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of the comprehensive school counseling program and allow the school counselors to spend more time planning and delivering a program that requires specialized skills and training. School counselors may be involved with the selection of support staff and collaborate with them to outline processes and activities that best support the school counseling program.

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The School Counselor and Virtual School Counseling
(Adopted 2017)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors working in a virtual setting provide a comprehensive school counseling program through the use of technology and distance (virtual/online/e-learning) counseling with the same standards and adherence to ethics as school counselors working in traditional school settings. School counselors work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure equity, access and success of all students whether virtual school counseling is offered synchronously or asynchronously.

The Rationale
Online learning is becoming increasingly relied upon in the United States (Setzer & Lewis, 2005) as students ranging from kindergarten to the postsecondary level are enrolling in virtual schools and online distance-education programs (Holmes & Kozlowski, 2016). Clark (2001) defined a virtual school as "an educational organization that offers K–12 courses through Internet or web-based methods" (p. 1). Students can be involved in online programs, ranging from a part-time, hybrid model in which they take some components of their education in a face-to-face environment and some in a fully digital environment, to fully online programs and degrees (Holmes & Kozlowski, 2016).

Many states have approved virtual academies or virtual charter public schools to serve as state-funded educational environments; data have shown that enrollment in online or virtual learning is rapidly increasing. Within this new environment, school counselors provide programming to promote engagement in the virtual school counseling platform to ensure students can gain access to the tools required to reach their potential. "Counselors understand the additional concerns related to the use of distance counseling, technology and social media and make every attempt to protect confidentiality and meet any legal and ethical requirements for the use of such resources" (Corey, Schneider Corey, Corey & Callanan, 2015, p. 545).

School counselors should ensure they continue to follow ethical standards in their virtual school counseling program (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2006). Osborn, Peterson and Hale (2014) found that the experiences of school counselors can provide new frames of reference to unique experiences of those who service as virtual school counselors.

The School Counselor's Role
Within this new environment, school counselors provide programming to encourage engagement in the virtual school counseling platform to ensure students can gain access to the tools required to reach their potential. Students enroll in virtual schools for myriad reasons and come from diverse backgrounds. These students have unique reasons for choosing to attend a virtual school to remove barriers that keep them from achieving success in school. These unique reasons include but are not limited to:
   • Dealing with mental health issues that lead to them needing to be in a smaller environment
   • Being medically unable to attend a physical school
   • Preferring a smaller environment, smaller class size or being able to be on their own
   • Dealing with bullying in a traditional school setting
   • Wanting a more rigorous school curriculum
   • Wanting more individualized instructional support
   • Requiring gifted and/or accelerated courses
   • Developing asynchronously, such as being gifted in some courses and behind in others
   • Participating in athletics or performing arts at the professional level

School counselors working with students in a virtual setting should:
   • Adhere to the same ethical guidelines in a virtual setting as school counselors in a face-to-face setting
   • Recognize and acknowledge the challenges and limitations of virtual school counseling
   • Implement procedures for students to follow in both emergency and nonemergency situations when the school counselor is not available
   • Recognize and mitigate the limitation of virtual school counselor confidentiality, which may include unintended viewers or recipients

- Inform both the student and parent/guardian of the benefits and limitations of virtual counseling
- Educate students on how to participate in the electronic school counseling relationship to minimize and prevent potential misunderstandings that could occur due to lack of verbal cues and inability to read body language or other visual cues that provide contextual meaning to the school counseling process and school counseling relationship
- Educate students about appropriate conduct in the online setting and using digital literacy as a tool to have an impact on students
- Incorporate lessons that align with academic, career and social/emotional domains

Summary

School counselors understand the expectations and limitations of providing virtual school counseling. School counselors have the responsibility to provide a comprehensive school counseling program and develop programs to support all students in academic, career and social/emotional development that would emulate school counseling that would take place in a face-to-face environment. Virtual school counseling is a way to reach a diverse student set, to help students meet their potential and have an impact on their learning in a way they may not receive in a traditional face-to-face school environment.

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The School Counselor and Working with Students Experiencing Issues Surrounding Undocumented Status

(Adopted 2017; revised 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors promote equal opportunity, a safe and nurturing environment and respect for all individuals regardless of citizenship status, including undocumented students and students with undocumented family members, understanding that this population faces a unique set of stressors. School counselors work to eliminate barriers that impede student development and achievement and are committed to the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. "School counselors demonstrate their belief that all students have the ability to learn by advocating for an education system that provides optimal learning environments for all students" (ASCA, 2016, p. 1).

The Rationale

The 1982 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Plyler v. Doe (1982) prohibits states from denying undocumented children a public K–12 education. In ruling the court stated that to deny these students an education would create a "lifetime of hardship" for the student, and it would create a "permanent underclass" (Eusebio & Mendoza, 2015).

Educators are on the front lines of implementing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Because of their unique position within a school, school counselors are able to support undocumented students by assisting these students in gathering documentation for DACA requests, advising them on the many academic, career and social/emotional opportunities made possible by DACA (Avila & Zellner, 2015).

A comprehensive school counseling program is an integral component of the school's academic mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, driven by student data and based on standards in academic, career and social/emotional development, promote and enhance the learning process for all students. The ASCA National Model ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students. Undocumented students and students with undocumented family members deserve the same services as all other students but face social, financial and legal barriers. These students need support to feel safe, in addition to needing assistance to find funding for any postsecondary educational goals, due to lack of Title IV federal financial aid that is not available to undocumented student in the form of grants, student loans or work-study.

Many students experience stressors due to:
- separation from family
- cultural differences
- language barriers and interpretation for families
- anxiety, fear, grief and loss regarding family members' detention and deportation
- caretaker roles for family members
- concerns about their futures
- understanding how to navigate college access and availability to them
- marginalization due to mixed cultures
- PTSD due to traumatic immigration events
- re-traumatization

Connecting with a school counselor will alleviate many of these stressors and fears, especially when individual counseling addresses the students' concerns. Having access to a qualified school counselor builds a support system needed at any age and will enable students to develop goals for their futures and feel safe and connected to their communities. School counselors recognize these stressors can be alleviated by intervention from a school counselor.

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors focus their skills, time and energy on direct and indirect services to all students, regardless of their citizenship, national origin, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or any other demographics. School counselors participate as members of the educational team and use the skills of leadership, advocacy and collaboration to

promote systemic change as appropriate. Supporting all students with a variety of needs may include a diverse skill set, including knowledge about many legal factors affecting students.

"Undocumented youth, in particular, can experience high levels of acculturative stress from immigration-related issues such as separation from family and academic difficulties. The psychological costs of family separation, associated with the migration process and with U.S. immigration procedures such as detention and deportation, are well documented and, among children, may include symptoms of depression and anxiety" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

The role of the school counselor includes:
- Advocating for the rights of all students, including undocumented students, by ensuring students are not barred from education based on foreign birth certificates, lack of a Social Security number or a home language other than English
- Working with other district personnel so any information collected is uniformly applied to all students and not used to discriminate or bar certain students' access to education
- Supporting undocumented students by helping them gain access to an equitable education that meets their needs and prepares them for postsecondary access, if necessary (e.g., referrals for ELL services, special education services and medical treatment)
- Working with school and district personnel to promote awareness and to educate school counselors and school and district personnel, students, parents and the community on policy, procedures and rights of the students and their families and to eliminate discriminatory language and actions regarding these students and their families
- Supporting the family with information about educational access and rights
- Assisting students with seeking postsecondary goals, navigating college access and finding funding for their goals
- Working with community partners and leveraging resources to provide support in keeping families intact, if possible, while supporting students who are separated from a parent due to deportation
- Ensuring schools are a safe haven for undocumented students and will not divulge confidential information to any outside agencies without proper legal documentation
- Providing counseling intervention and social/emotional support for students affected by immigration stressors, including assessment of possible trauma that they may have experienced
- Keeping abreast of current policies and practices of postsecondary institutions regarding access for undocumented students
- Advocating against the practice of separating children from their families at U.S. borders (ASCA, 2018)
- Maintaining a database of community resources to support referrals in assisting families with various challenges related to issues surrounding undocumented status, including recovery associated with trauma resulting from separation

Summary
School counselors understand undocumented students face additional legal, financial and social stressors and need additional support with these barriers as well as assistance with postsecondary goals. School counselors have a responsibility to provide services to all students regardless of their citizenship status, to advocate for their access to services and to prevent discrimination against students by removing barriers impeding student development and achievement.

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