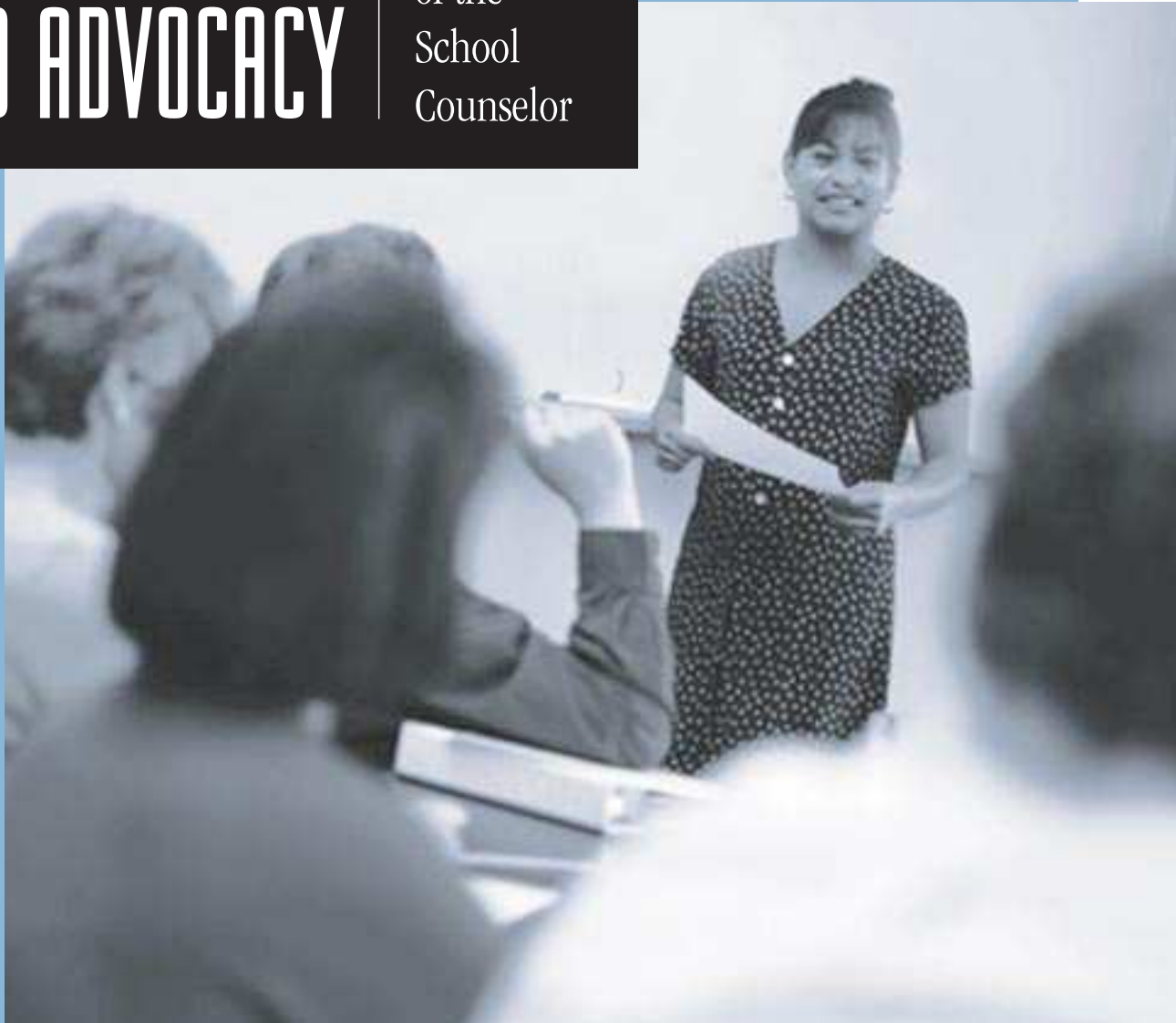


PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Promoting
the Role
of the
School
Counselor



AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 310 • Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 683-2722 • Fax: (703) 683-1619
E-mail: asca@schoolcounselor.org
www.schoolcounselor.org

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American School Counselor Association

Developed in 1995 by Rhonda Z. Williams, Alliances & Partnership Chair

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Promoting
the Role
of the
School
Counselor

ABSTRACT

The school counselor's role remains unclear in many school districts. School counselors' tasks, expectations and demands vary from state to state, district to district and school to school. In many cases, the definition of the school counselor's role is left to the administrator's discretion.

To ensure the individual school counseling program is a comprehensive, data-driven program, school counselors must first educate the public regarding the role of the school counselor in the educational setting. By clarifying the function of a school counseling curriculum, the school counselor promotes a better understanding of the effectiveness of the professional school counselor.

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PRESENTATION FORMAT

Outline

I.	<i>2 Minutes</i>	Introduction
II.	<i>2-3 Minutes</i>	Purpose of Presentation
III.	<i>10 Minutes</i>	Overheads and Oral Information
<i>15 Minutes Approximate Total</i>		
	<i>5-10 Minutes</i>	Q & A

INTRODUCTION

1-2
minutes

Introduce:

- All school counselors attending the presentation (if time allows)
- All presenters, including their professional accomplishments and affiliations

PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION

2-3
minutes

“Traditionally, the school counseling program has been considered an ancillary student service isolated from the instructional program and designed primarily to encourage students to attend college. The contemporary school counseling program focuses on the developmental needs of all students and is an integral component of the school’s instructional program.

This presentation is intended to explain the developmental school counseling program and clarify the role of the school counselor in this district/school.

In schools today, counselors work with all students regardless of cultural or ethnic background, sex, age, affectional orientation, special needs and class. Therefore, it is imperative that counselors understand their students’ needs.” (Cunanan & Maddy-Bernstein, 1994)

What are some needs for students in today’s society? The Children’s Defense Fund estimated in 2003:

- Every day three children are killed by abuse or neglect.
- Every day five children or teens commit suicide.
- Every day eight children or teens are killed by firearms.
- Every day 183 children are arrested for violent crimes.
- Every day 381 children are arrested for drug abuse.
- Every day 2,104 babies are born into poverty.
- Every day 2,402 children are abused or neglected.
- Every day 2,811 high school students drop out.
- Every day 3,697 babies are born to unmarried mothers.
- Every day 4,261 children are arrested.

These statistics are grim reminders of how important it is to reach out to children, to let them know they have a support system, to let them know someone cares.

As we are all aware, not every child enters the school doors each day ready to learn. The school counselor serves as a liaison for administrators, staff and parents to help all children to reach their fullest potential. An effective school counseling program permeates the school environment.

OVERHEADS

10
minutes

How Do School Counselors Help?

School counselors are master's-level licensed professionals trained in the development of children, prevention of children's problems, intervention strategies to correct problems and prevent their escalation, as well as to provide crisis intervention.



OVERHEAD 1: School counselors help students grow personally and socially by...



OVERHEAD 2: School counselors assist students in educational planning by...



OVERHEAD 3: School counselors assist students with career planning and decision-making by...

How Do School Counselors Effectively Address the Needs of So Many Students?

By implementing a comprehensive developmental school counseling program designed to benefit all students in their journey through school and in preparation for the future, counseling programs can effectively meet the needs of the students they serve. The program is designed to address the developmental needs of students from pre-K through post-secondary education.

Developmental guidance curriculum components consist of:



OVERHEAD 4A & B: What is a school counseling program?

How are School Counselors Involved in Preparing Students for the Future?

In 1992, the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) identified a set of competencies, foundation skills and personal qualities needed by students to be successful in the world of work. Over a decade later, this information remains pertinent to a developmental school counseling curriculum.



OVERHEAD 5: SCANS Report

As you see by this information, school reform, workplace demands and the changing economy and workforce demographics dictate new expectations for school counselors in the 21st century. Many believe school counselors can be a key force in helping the nation's diverse student population prepare for the future. School counselors are called on to provide leadership and facilitate schools' efforts to assist the career developmental needs of all their students. To enable school counselors to

meet the expectations of the student, the counselees whom they serve and have an impact upon educational reform, it is important these counselors not be burdened with any non-school-counseling duties. (Hoyt 1990)

This approach represents a coordinated effort to assist students in their career development. Career development initiatives and activities, designed to help individuals make and implement informed educational and occupational choices, are key components of a comprehensive school counseling programs.



**OVERHEAD 6A: School-to-Career Transition
Components: Self-Knowledge**



**OVERHEAD 6B: School-to-Career Transition Components:
Occupational & Educational Exploration**



**OVERHEAD 6C: School-to-Work Transition
Components: Career Planning**

Outline and discuss prevention and intervention programs that exist in your own school and district THAT ARE COUNSELOR IMPLEMENTED AND/OR DRIVEN. Use overheads or visuals as you have with the previous part of the program.

Closure

On behalf of the American School Counselor Association and this district's professional school counselors, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to help clarify the school counselor's role.

We would like to take this time to answer any questions you might have regarding school counseling. Please be aware if your question pertains to a specific situation or the actions of a specific counselor, we would prefer to discuss that issue with you privately after the meeting.

Q&A

5-10
minutes

(Review enclosed pages on "Why Support School Counselors?" to help in answering questions)



School counselors help students grow personally and socially in:

- Developing self-knowledge
- Making effective decisions
- Developing relationship skills
- Learning healthy choices
- Improving responsibility
- Resolving conflicts



School counselors assist students in educational planning by:

- Setting and reaching academic goals
- Developing a positive attitude toward learning
- Developing an educational plan
- Understanding individual learning styles
- Improving test-taking skills
- Recognizing and utilizing academic strengths

Adapted from Colorado School Counselor Association



School counselors assist students' career planning and decision-making by:

- Developing skills in career decision-making
- Analyzing the interrelationships of interests and abilities
- Understanding career stereotypes
- Exploring careers through shadowing experiences
- Utilizing the career planning process



What is a School Counseling Program?

Reaches Every Student

Comprehensive in Scope – ASCA National Standards

(Selects measurable student competencies based on local need)

- Academic Domain
- Career Domain
- Personal/Social Domain

Preventative in Design

Developmental in Nature

Integral Part of the Total Educational Program

Designs a Delivery System

Guidance Curriculum:

- Classroom activities
- Interdisciplinary curriculum development
- Group activities
- Parent workshops

Individual Student Planning:

- Individual or small-group appraisal
- Individual or small-group advisement



What is a School Counseling Program?

Responsive Services

- Consultation
- Individual and small-group counseling
- Crisis counseling
- Referrals
- Peer Facilitation

System Support

- Professional development
- Consultation, collaboration and teaming
- Program management and operation

**Implemented by a
Credentialed School
Counselor**

**Conducted in
Collaboration**

**Monitors Student
Progress**

Driven by Data

Seeks Improvement

Shares Successes

Adapted from The ASCA National Model:
A Framework for School Counseling Programs



SCANS Report

Skills and Competencies Needed by Students to be Successful in the World of Work:

Three-Part Foundation Skills

Basics Skills

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- * Speaking
- * Listening

Thinking Skills

- * Creativeness
- * Decisiveness
- * Problem Solving
- * Reasoning

Personal Qualities

- * Self-esteem
- * Self-management
- * Responsibility
- * Integrity
- * Sociability

*(*Skills are components of the developmental school counseling curriculum)*

Five Competencies

Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans and allocates resources.

Interpersonal: Works well with others.

Information: Acquires and uses information.

Systems: Understands complex inter-relationships.

Technology: Works with a variety of technologies.



School-To-Career Transition Curriculum Components

Self-Knowledge:

- School counselors help students learn about themselves and their individual strengths through a variety of tests, assessments and activities.
- School counselors work with students individually and in groups.
- School counselors help students to develop communication and interpersonal skills needed in the workplace.

Adapted from Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992



School-To-Career Transition Curriculum Components

Occupational & Educational Exploration:

- School counselors help students investigate qualifications for various occupations and learn about requirements for further education and training.
- School counselors collaborate with teachers to incorporate career awareness and explorations activities into the classroom curriculum.
- School counselors arrange or provide opportunities for student experiential learning, mentoring, community service, internships, job shadowing, career seminars and peer teaching.
- School counselors support and coordinate the collaborative effort of administrators, teachers, parents, and business and industry representatives.



School-To-Career Transition Curriculum Components

Career Planning:

- School counselors help students use information gained through self-knowledge and occupational and educational exploration to develop and revise plans to reach their career goals.
- School counselors provide student training in career decision-making and planning.
- School counselors coordinate the development of student career plans and portfolios by collaborating with parents and teachers and by recognizing the important role parents play in their children's career planning and goal setting.

ADVANTAGES OF EMPLOYING A SCHOOL COUNSELOR

School Counselors are:

- Credentialed/licensed professional educators
- Experienced in developmental issues of school-aged children
- Trained to provide relevant, practical recommendations to administration, parents and teaching staff
- Knowledgeable about educational protocol
- Cost-effective, as they provide early intervention and prevention ideas and strategies, which help eliminate the need for more costly evaluations and placements
- Committed to their students, staff, parents and district in which they are employed
- Readily available to school personnel, students and families in a time of crisis
- Able to provide a wide range of services not easily purchased via private contracts, such as consultations with family, administration, teachers; classroom guidance, prevention and crisis intervention programs; career counseling; in-service training; and teaming
- Available to provide support, consultation and intervention for the school's students and staff

PRESENTATION PLANNING

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS

Time allotment

For a school board, administrative or parent presentation, allow 12-15 minutes, not including questions and answers.

Overheads and PowerPoint Presentations

Pages and information may be copied for overheads or used in a presentation you design. Be sure to plan for overhead projector and screen. Powerpoint presentations require the use of a computer, LCD projector and screen. Plan to be prepared to present without overheads (just in case of time constraints).

Questions

Practice questions and answers beforehand. Review “Answers to Tough Questions” included in this packet. Prepare for questions that are pertinent to your public and current issues and concerns in your community. Prepare for specific situational questions, i.e., “My son had a counselor who told him...”

Don't try to answer for someone else's actions. Focus back on curriculum and the role of school counselors.

Participants

Encourage participation and attendance by all counselors in that area, district and school. Student(s) may also provide account of importance of school counselor based on his/her individual experience.

Practice

To minimize anxiety, practice and outline who will say what and when, so all participants understand their roles. Anticipate questions, and practice responses.

Cautions

Be sure you have the involvement and support from the majority of the local school counselors.

RESPONDING TO TOUGH QUESTIONS

How much does it cost to employ a school counselor?

- Most school counselors are paid on a salary schedule similar to or identical to teachers, at an annual salary rather than hourly rates.
- In some districts, school counselors work an extended year and are paid for the additional time.
- Like teachers many school counselors are members of a union and are paid benefits.
- Salaries vary considerably within and between states, but the average starting salaries nationwide are about \$25,000 to \$33,000 per year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the median income for a K-12 counselor in 2000 was \$42,110.
- School districts must also provide necessary equipment and materials to their school counselors as they would classroom teachers.

Why are services of school counselor important?

- School counselors provide prevention and intervention programs, as well as classroom guidance. Through the use of many different intervention strategies school counselors may help eliminate the need for expensive services.
- Intervening earlier is more likely to be effective in reducing or eliminating student learning and behavior problems.
- Staff in-service training through school counselors can result in more effective teaching and behavior management.
- School counselors help students grow personally and interpersonally through individual and group counseling.
- School counselors teach students how career exploration and planning pay off with successful job transitions.

Why do schools need counselors?

- Supporting mental health is not the only function of a school counselor. School counselors address the educational needs of students from perspectives very different from those of teachers, social workers and psychologists.
- School personnel need to address mental health issues because children bring these issues to school. Mental health issues have an affect on learning.
- School counselors understand both social/emotional and educational issues and provide services that are therefore integrated.

Would we need school counselors (or as many) if district money were used to hire more teachers and thus have smaller classes?

- The data are inconsistent relating to class size and student achievement.
- Smaller classes certainly have significant benefits for individualizing instruction to student needs. It also allows for teachers to more quickly identify those social emotional needs that cannot be met in a classroom setting.

Regardless of class size, there are always students who will exhibit difficulty, and there will always be teachers who need support to be more effective. School counselors can affect change in the total environment of the classroom and school regardless of class size.

How would staff reduction impact the delivery of school counseling services?

- Fewer school counselors would mean 1) fewer students' needs would be addressed 2) some services would be eliminated.
- Fewer school counselors might result in inappropriate placements, more placements due to lack of prevention and early intervention services, less staff training and a greater burden on other support personnel. It would also add more of a burden on teachers to deal with difficult social or emotional issues of students.

What is the difference in cost between services provided by school counselors and similar services provided in mental health centers?

- First, services are not likely to be very similar. The psychologist from a mental health center or in private practice may only see the child in the clinic setting and therefore will not have access to information regarding that student's functioning in school.
- Most therapists charge an hourly rate. While this varies by locality, agency costs are approximately \$50-\$100 per hour for therapists. To attend conferences at school, additional charges are often incurred.
- Consultation to school staffs for training or individual student planning can be \$100 per hour or more. Some consultants charge hundreds of dollars for a presentation to a school staff. Full day workshops can cost \$1,000 and more.

With so many new types of support personnel, do we really need so many school counselors too? (Chemical dependency counselors, grief counselors, reading specialist, etc.)

- School counselors are trained as specialists in school operations. They consider the whole child rather than address separate issues in isolation.
- It is essential that someone integrate information in order to ensure the student has a comprehensive rather than fragmented program.

Don't school counselors' services overlap those of other support staff? Why do we need school counselors if we have social workers or school psychologist?

- It's important to note that tasks or duties, activities, etc. of different service providers probably should not overlap but many reach similar ends. Their training and perspectives differ and provide for a team approach to solving problems rather than a unilateral approach.
- School counselors provide a unique perspective in that they have been in the classroom environment and understand the dynamics of the educational system. Social workers and school psychologists have unique training and approaches that complement the school counselor approach. No one service provider can replace another.

Why should school counselors be maintained when there is need for substantial cuts in the school district budget? Should we first cut services that are not directly tied to the classroom?

- School counselors are directly tied to the classroom. School counselors support students and teachers in a variety of ways that directly affect student success and learning in the classroom.
- In financially tough times, districts need to evaluate the impact of all personnel. School counselors offer broad perspectives and services, rather than narrowly focused services addressing only small parts of the total system.
- Through consultation and training, school counselors can have an impact on a large number of students, teachers and parents, rather than only on individual students with whom they have direct contact.

Why not just contract the services we absolutely need?

- In some states, replacing employees with independent contractors is illegal.
- Independent contractors do not have the same level of familiarity with the school system and may be less realistic in terms of recommendations.
- There is no easy way to guarantee that the independent contractor has the same qualifications of the school counselor, is properly supervised or has access to the most up-to-date and appropriate equipment and materials.
- Every minute of professional time is directly billed by an independent contractor, and certain services may not be included (such as classroom observation, meeting with parents, presentations, etc.)
- Because services may be hired out on an as-needed basis, it is less likely that services will be integrated across providers or that the total needs of the child will be addressed.
- Independent contractors will not save money in the long run, as early intervention and prevention activities are not likely to be hired out. Furthermore, most contractors will charge more per hour than districts have to pay to employees.

What can be done to make delivery of counseling services more efficient?

- Staff needs to set priorities with administrators and emphasize services in key areas, rather than try to do everything.
- Travel costs can be cut by regional assignments.
- Staff with special skills can be assigned where the relevant need is greatest.
- Centralization can increase efficiency if the total system is not too large.
- Flexible assignments can allow for deploying services when and where the need is greater
- Word processing equipment saves time and material costs.

Is there evidence that school counseling services are effective?

- Effectiveness is measured in a variety of ways, and many of the variables affecting student outcomes are difficult or impossible to control: quality of instruction, attendance, parental support, community involvement, mobility, consistent implementation of interventions, etc.
- Counselors focus on the development of positive self-concepts in children. There have been numerous studies that show low self-esteem as a critical factor in the development of deviant or potentially destructive behaviors (Leung and Drasgow, 1986; Yanish and Battle, 1985; Love and Wunderlich, 1986, Eskilson et al., 1986; and Kaplan, 1975, 1976).
- Many studies report positive changes in attitudes and behaviors as the result of classroom guidance activities and small-group counseling sessions (Cobb and Richards, 1983; Myrick and Dix, 1985; Myrick, Merhill, and Swanson, 1986; Bleck and Bleck, 1982; Chandler et al., 1984).
- Early intervention with low-achieving elementary school students made a positive difference in their achievement (Jackson, Cleveland, and Meranda, 1975; Esters and Levant, 1983).
- Elementary school counseling has positive effect on academic achievement (Gerler, Kinney, and Anderson, 1985; Downing, 1977; Peck and Jackson, 1976).
- Three years after Florida hired elementary school counselors, students who were underachievers in reading advanced 1.1 years in seven months (Barrientos and Glossbrenner, 1989).
- Groups that received elementary guidance and counseling differed significantly from those that did not, not only in academic achievement but also in making responsible choices of course of study (Adams, 1974; Doyle, 1976).
- Children who participated in counseling groups for children of divorce parents showed better school performance (Freeman and Couchman, 1985; Freeman, 1984).
- The U.S. Office of Education discovered 47 percent fewer dropouts and 50 percent fewer failures in schools that have adequate counselor/student ratios (American School Counselor Association, 1979, 1981).
- Classroom guidance activities significantly influenced improvement in ratings of children's behavior, conduct grades, and school attitude scores (Gerler and Anderson, 1986; Cobb and Richards, 1983; Myrick and Dixon, 1985; Myrick, and Merhill, and Swanson, 1986; Bleck and Bleck, 1982; Chandler, et al., 1984).
- Students participating in an elementary school counseling group for young procrastinators significantly improved their homework completion scores when compared with those of fellow procrastinators waiting to be in the group (Morse, 1987).
- Students who had been referred to small-group counseling by their teachers for exhibiting hostile and aggressive behaviors scored significantly lower on measures of aggression and hostility than a control group at the conclusion of the intervention (Omizo, Hershberger, and Omizo, 1988).

Adapted for school counselors: Advocacy Task Force
for School Psychologists Reprinted with permission

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ASCA POSITION STATEMENT

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1997)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

ASCA endorses comprehensive school counseling programs that promote and enhance student learning. The program's focus is on the three broad and interrelated areas of student development: academic, career and personal/social development. Each encompasses a variety of desired student learning competencies, which forms the foundation of the developmental school counseling program. The professional school counselor uses a variety of activities and resources to promote the desired student development. Professional school counselor responsibilities include program organization, implementation and coordination.

The Rationale

A comprehensive school counseling program is developmental in nature. It is systematic, sequential, clearly defined and accountable. The program's foundation is developmental psychology, educational philosophy and counseling methodology. Proactive and preventive in focus, the school counseling program is integral to the educational program. It assists students in acquiring and using lifelong skills through the development of academic, career, self-awareness and interpersonal communication skills. The goal of the comprehensive school counseling program is to provide all students with life success skills.

The school counseling program has characteristics similar to other educational programs, including a scope and sequence, student competencies or outcomes, activ-

ities and processes to assist students in achieving the outcomes, professionally credentialed personnel, materials and resources and national standards for evaluation.

We recognize that our educational system is being challenged by the increasing needs of today's students and society's rising expectations. Many of our children enter school with emotional, physical and interpersonal barriers to learning. Although comprehensive school counseling programs include necessary crisis-oriented responsive services, the emphasis is on developmental skill building for all students beginning when students enter school and continuing as they progress through the grades.

Effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the counselor and other educators to create an environment promoting school success. Staff and counselors value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in our societies and communities. Comprehensive school counseling programs help ensure equal opportunities for all students to participate fully in the educational process.

This counseling model is compatible with the National Education Goals and the National Standards for School Counseling Programs.

The Professional School Counselor's Role

Within a comprehensive school counseling program, professional school counselors will focus their skills, time and energy on direct service to students, staff and families. ASCA recommends a realistic counselor-student ratio to be 1:250. Professional school counselors will spend 70 percent of their time in direct service to students. Indirect services include counseling program planning, maintenance and evaluation; participation in school site planning and implementation; partnerships and alliances with post-secondary institutions, business-

es and community agencies; and other tasks enhancing the program's mission.

The comprehensive school counseling program balances many components. It requires counselors to deliver individual and small group counseling and large group guidance; to teach skill development in academic, career and personal/social areas; to provide consultation and case management; and to coordinate, manage and evaluate the school counseling program.

As student advocates, professional school counselors participate as members of the educational team. They consult and collaborate with teachers, administrators and families to help students be successful academically, vocationally and personally. Professional school counselors are indispensable partners with the instructional staff in the development of contributing members of society. They ensure, on behalf of students and their families, that all school programs facilitate the educational process and offer the opportunity for school success.

Summary

A written, comprehensive developmental and career K-12 guidance curriculum should be implemented in

every school district. It should include a systematic and planned program delivery that productively involves all students and promotes and enhances the learning process. The comprehensive school counseling program facilitates student development in three areas:

- academic development, which includes the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge contributing to effective learning in school throughout the lifespan.
- career development, which includes the foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge enabling students to make a successful transition from school to careers.
- personal/social development, includes the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge to help students understand and respect self and others, acquire effective interpersonal skills, understand and practice safety and survival skills and develop into contributing members of society.

The comprehensive school counseling program should be supported by appropriate resources and implemented and coordinated by a credentialed professional school counselor.

ROLE STATEMENT: THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The American School Counselor Association recognizes and supports the implementation of comprehensive developmental counseling programs at all educational levels. The programs are designed to help all students develop their educational, social, career, and personal strengths and to become responsible and productive citizens. School counselors help create and organize these programs, as well as provide appropriate counselor interventions.

School counseling programs are developmental by design, focusing on needs, interests, and issues related to the various stages of student growth. There are objectives, activities, special services and expected outcomes, with an emphasis on helping students learn more effectively and efficiently. There is a commitment to individual uniqueness and the maximum development of human potential. A counseling program is an integral part of a school's total educational program.

The School Counselor

The school counselor is a certified professional educator who assists students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Three generally recognized helping processes used by the counselor are counseling, consulting and coordinating: 1) Counseling is a complex helping process in which the counselor establishes a trusting and confidential working relationship. The focus is on problem-solving, decision-making, and discovering personal meaning related to learning and development; 2) Consultation is a cooperative process in which the counselor-consultant assists others to think through problems and to develop skills that make them more effective in working with students; 3) Coordination is a leadership process in

which the counselor helps organize and manage a school's counseling program and related services.

School counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high, senior high, and postsecondary schools. Their work is differentiated by attention to age-specific developmental stages of growth and related interests, tasks, and challenges. School counselors are human behavior and relationship specialists who organize their work around fundamental interventions.

Counselor interventions have sometimes been referred to as functions, services, approaches, tasks, activities, or jobs. They have, at times, been viewed as roles themselves, helping to create the image of the counselor. In a comprehensive developmental counseling program, school counselors organize their work schedules around the following basic interventions:

Individual Counseling. Individual counseling is a personal and private interaction between a counselor and a student in which they work together on a problem or topic of interest. A face to-face, one-to-one meeting with a counselor provides a student maximum privacy in which to freely explore ideas, feelings, and behaviors. School counselors establish trust and build a helping relationship. They respect the privacy of information, always considering actions in terms of rights, integrity, and the welfare of students. Counselors are obligated by law and ethical standards to report and to refer a case when a person's welfare is in jeopardy. It is a counselor's duty to inform an individual of the conditions and limitations under which assistance may be provided.

Small-Group Counseling. Small group counseling involves a counselor working with two or more students together. Group size generally ranges from five to eight members. Group discussions may be relatively unstructured or maybe based on structured learning activities. Group members have an opportunity to learn from each other. They can share ideas, give and receive feedback, increase their awareness, gain new knowledge, practice skills, and think about their goals and actions. Group discussions may be problem-centered, where attention is given to particular concerns or problems. Discussions may be growth-centered, where general topics are related to personal and academic development.

Large-Group Guidance. Large group meetings offer the best opportunity to provide guidance to the largest number of students in a school. Counselors first work with students in large groups wherever appropriate because it is the most efficient use of time. Large group work involves cooperative learning methods, in which the larger group is divided into smaller working groups under the supervision of a counselor or teacher. The guidance and counseling curriculum, composed of organized objectives and activities, is delivered by teachers or counselors in classrooms or advisory groups. School counselors and teachers may co-lead some activities. Counselors develop and present special guidance units which give attention to particular developmental issues or areas of concern in their respective schools and they help prepare teachers to deliver part of the guidance and counseling curriculum.

Consultation. The counselor as a consultant helps people to be more effective in working with others. Consultation helps individuals think through problems and concerns, acquire more knowledge and skill, and become more objective and self-confident. This intervention can take place in individual or group conferences, or through staff-development activities.

Coordination. Coordination as a counselor intervention is the process of managing various indirect services, which benefit students, and being a liaison between school and community agencies. It may include organizing special events, which involve parents or resource people in the community in guidance projects. It often entails collecting data and disseminating information. Counselors might coordinate a student needs assessment, the interpretation of standardized tests, a child

study team, or a guidance related teacher or parent education program.

The Preparation of School Counselors

School counselors are prepared for their work through the study of interpersonal relationships and behavioral sciences in graduate education courses in accredited colleges and universities. Preparation involves special training in counseling theory and skills related to school settings. Particular attention is given to personality and human development theories and research, including career and life-skills development; learning theories; theories and approaches to appraisal, multi-cultural and community awareness; educational environments; curriculum development; professional ethics; and program planning, management, and evaluation.

Counselors are prepared to use the basic interventions in a school setting, with special emphasis on the study of helping relationships, facilitative skills, brief counseling; group dynamics and group learning activities; family systems; peer helper programs, multi-cultural and cross-cultural helping approaches; and educational and community resources for special school populations.

School counselors are aware of their own professional competencies and responsibilities within the school setting. They know when and how to refer or involve other professionals. They are accountable for their actions and participate in appropriate studies and research related to their work.

Responsibility to the Profession

To ensure high-quality practice, counselors are committed to continued professional growth and personal development. They are active members of the American School Counselor Association, as well as state and local professional associations promoting school counseling. They also uphold the ethical and professional standards of these associations.

School counselors meet the state certification standards and abide by the laws in the states where they are working. Counselors work cooperatively with individuals and organizations to promote the overall development of children, youth, and families in their communities.

(Adopted July 1990)