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The School Counselor and Academic Development

(Adopted 2017; revised 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors deliver school counseling programs that enhance student growth in three domain areas: academic, career, and social/emotional development. As a part of that program, school counselors implement strategies and activities to help all students enhance their academic development – the mindsets and behaviors students need to maximize their ability to learn – while recognizing that growth in all three domains is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life.

The Rationale

Federal initiatives such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015) and state education accountability plans have stressed academic achievement as a measure of school success. As certified/licensed educators who improve student success for ALL students, school counselors align their school counseling program with the vision, mission, and goals of the school and district, emphasizing academic achievement. School counselors contribute to the educational and academic outcomes of the school by enhancing student engagement and performance (Akos et al., 2019; Shi & Brown, 2020) through designing, implementing and assessing school counseling programs (ASCA, 2019).

School counseling programs use data and data disaggregation to understand student needs and provide appropriate interventions. School counselors advocate and work to remove systemic barriers to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve their academic goals at all grade levels reflecting their abilities and academic interests (Novakovic et al., 2020). School counselors use data-informed practices to ensure that all students can access appropriate, rigorous, relevant coursework and experiences. Because of their unique position within a school and their unique training, school counselors support students facing academic difficulties, mental health issues, family and social concerns, as well as career exploration and course planning to make school relevant.

School counselors play a critical role in ensuring schools provide a safe, caring environment and that students attain the necessary mindsets and behaviors to advance their academic achievement. School counselors work collaboratively with partners to ensure equity, access and academic success of all students (ASCA, 2019).

The School Counselor's Role

In their efforts to enhance student academic development, school counselors:

- Work collaboratively with school staff to develop a safe, caring and inclusive school culture (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018)
- Design, implement and assess a school counseling program informed by disaggregated data identifying student needs
- Deliver information to students and teachers on best practices to attain mindsets and behaviors (i.e., learning strategies, self-management skills, social skills) for student success
- Provide relevance to students' academic effort and educational pursuits by helping them understand the connection between school and the world of work, assisting them in career planning and career-related goal setting
- Work with administrators, teachers and other school staff to create a school environment encouraging academic success and striving to one's full potential (Oehrtman, 2022; Oehrtman & Dollarhide, 2022)
- Encourage students to engage in challenging coursework and work to address and remove barriers to access the most rigorous coursework appropriate for each student
- Use disaggregated data to identify and address inequitable practices
- Provide opportunities for students to:
 - Enhance their belief in development of whole self and ability to succeed
 - Develop a positive attitude toward work and learning
 - Make decisions informed by evidence, considering others' perspectives and recognizing personal bias
 - Develop long and short-term academic goals
 - Demonstrate self-motivation and self-direction for learning
- Demonstrate positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students and adults (ASCA, 2021)
- Work to establish student opportunities for academic remediation as needed
- Emphasize family/caregiver-community-school relationships in addressing academic needs

Summary

Schools are evaluated on student outcomes, especially academic achievement, and school counselors play a critical role in ensuring schools create an environment conducive to academic success. School counselors provide a school counseling program that helps all students enhance their academic development to achieve and exceed high academic standards while recognizing that growth in all three domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life.

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The School Counselor and Anti-Racist Practices

(Adopted 2021)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors work toward cultural competence and engage in anti-racist actions by advocating to change racist policies, procedures, practices, guidelines and laws contributing to inequities in students' academic, career and social/emotional development.

The Rationale

Racism remains a part of society in the United States and exists throughout all of our institutions. Unfortunately, the education system, as a subset of society, has contributed to the continuation of inequities specific to the school setting (LaForett & De Marco, 2020). The U.S. education system contributes to maintaining systems of oppression through racist policies, practices and guidelines that negatively affect all students but especially students from racially diverse backgrounds, including Black and Indigenous students, who historically have been distinctly affected by white supremacy in the United States (Steward, 2019). By supporting anti-racist policies through their actions and expressed anti-racist ideas, school counselors embrace their roles as social justice advocates and change agents who examine and dismantle systems of oppression (Kendi, 2019). It is essential for school counselors to engage in these leadership roles to address issues within education that promote inequity in achievement, access and opportunity, specifically for students from racially diverse backgrounds.

The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) call for school counselors to be systemic change agents who embrace their roles as advocates, leaders and collaborators by providing "equitable educational access and success" (p.1). All educators, especially school counselors, have an obligation to work toward mitigating and/or ending racism and bias (ASCA, 2020) in an effort to lessen the impact of systemic racism on student development. Kohli et. al (2017) recognized the gaps in research related to the mechanisms (policies and procedures) of racial oppression in education. Still today these gaps exist, underscoring the need for school counselors to be intentional in examining and exploring data that uncovers disproportionality and racial inequities. To actively dismantle racist policies, procedures and practices within education, school counselors must embrace } as \$ M punm dis backgrounds.

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- Engage in personal study of institutional and systemic racism in credible sources of research such as peer-reviewed journal articles and other scholarly literary

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Summary

School counselors understand the positive effects of a safe and caring school environment. Through participation in prevention programs and activities aimed at anti-bullying, anti-harassment and violence prevention, school counselors foster opportunities for students to learn communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills that help them achieve their goals and establish successful relationships. School counselors collaborate with teachers, instructional support personnel, administrators, families 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 Career Development

(Adopted 2017; revised 2023, 2024)

Note: This statement combines The School Counselor and Career Development and The School Counselor and Career and Technical Education statements into one statement.

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors deliver school counseling programs that enhance student growth in three domain areas: academic, career and social/emotional development. As part of that program, school counselors implement strategies and activities to help all students enhance their career development – the mindsets and behaviors students need to understand the connection between school and the world of work, plan for and make a successful transition to postsecondary education, and work across the lifespan – while recognizing that growth in all three domains is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life.

The Rationale

As part of a school counseling program, school counselors provide resources and opportunities that help students explore their strengths and interests as well as career fields aligned with these attributes. These efforts help students plan for and choose postsecondary pathways and create opportunities for students to develop college- and career-readiness skills that help them successfully navigate postsecondary education and the world of work.

School counselors recognize that each student, regardless of background, possesses unique interests, abilities and goals, which will lead to future opportunities. By including culturally responsive practices within career development strategies, school counselors help historically marginalized populations create pathways for their future (Chan, 2019). Collaborating with students, families, educational staff and the community, school counselors work 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.

School counselors recognize career education begins in kindergarten and is exemplified by students who are knowledgeable about options and are prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary experiences without the need for remediation. Best practice indicates that career technical education (CTE) activities should begin at least by middle school to assist with postsecondary planning and academic motivation (Bottoms, 2022). Engagement in hands-on activities increases student motivation in school as students make tangible connections in their classroom learning to the “real world” (Bottoms, 2022).

Middle and high school students fluctuate in their ways of thinking, their respective interests and their wants; hence, exposure

- Advise 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 or with a sufficient wage for sustaining an independent lifestyle)
- Connect students to early-college and career development programs (e.g., dual credit/dual enrollment, AP, IB, CTE)
- Collaborate with administrators, teachers, staff and decision-makers to create a postsecondary-readiness, career-preparedness and college-going culture
- Provide and advocate for all 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
- Identify gaps in college and career access and the implications of such data for addressing both intentional and unintentional biases related to college and career advising and counseling
- Work with teachers to integrate career education learning in classroom lessons, including CTE pathways and relevant courses
- Provide opportunities for all students to develop learning strategies, self-management skills and social skills leading to a positive attitude toward learning, a strong work ethic and an understanding that lifelong learning is necessary for long-term career success
- Engage in professional development addressing career trends
- Practice self-reflection and growth involving traditional career roles and expand equity and access through that growth

Summary

School counselors provide resources and opportunities that help students explore their strengths and interests as well as career fields that might align with these attributes. School counselors provide a school counseling program that helps all students enhance their career development and successfully navigate postsecondary education and the world of work, while recognizing that growth in all three domains of academic, career and social/emotional development is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life. School counselors ensure that students have access to explore all postsecondary options, including CTE pathways.

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The School Counselor and Character Education

(Adopted 1998; Revised 2005, 2011, 2016, 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors cultivate students' character development by integrating character education programs into their school counseling program. The school counselor endorses and promotes the infusion of character education in the school curriculum by fostering participation of the entire school community.

The Rationale

Character education involves “the embodiment of multidimensional virtues as the core component of human moral functioning” (Brunsdon & Walker, 2021, p.3). The school counselor understands that teaching universal virtues 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 (Brunsdon & Walker, 2021, Parker, et. al, 2010).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors, along with teachers, administrators, family and the community, share the responsibility of teaching character education virtues. 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 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 collaborate 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. 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, 2021)

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 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2021) notes that most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: "neglect, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment and sexual abuse" (n.p.) and also points to medical neglect and sex trafficking as other

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The School Counselor and Confidentiality

(Adopted 1974; reviewed and reaffirmed 1980; revised 1986, 1993, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2014, 2018, 2024)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors recognize their primary obligation regarding confidentiality is to the student and balance that obligation with an understanding of legal rights of parents/guardians to be the guiding voice in their children's lives.

The Rationale

Students have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a right to privacy that is honored to the greatest extent possible (ASCA, 2022). The school counselor is responsible for fully respecting a student's right to privacy and for providing an atmosphere of trust and confidence (ASCA, 2022).

Confidentiality is the ethical term ascribed to the information communicated within the counseling of
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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 (Aff 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, 2021)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

Effective school counselor credentialing or licensing laws include a definition of the profession, minimum qualifications for entry into the profession and requirements for continuing professional development. All state education certification or licensure agencies are encouraged to adopt the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies for school counselor credentialing or licensing.

The Rationale

Legislation and/or regulation 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] defined

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The School Counselor and Cultural Diversity

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2015, 2021)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors have a professional and ethical responsibility to expand personal multicultural and social justice advocacy, awareness, knowledge and skills to be an effective, culturally competent school counselor. School counselors work toward cultural competence and cultural humility to provide culturally sustaining school counseling. School counselors demonstrate responsiveness by collaborating with students and stakeholders in support of a school and community climate that embraces cultural diversity and helps to promote all students' academic, career and social/emotional development.

The Rationale

Diversity is a “range of cultures and subcultures that represent attitudes, beliefs, values, rituals, symbols, norms and conventions, customs, behaviors and ideologies” (Stone & Dahir, 2016, p. 294). Culture is a powerful and pervasive influence on the attitudes and behaviors of students, stakeholders and school counselors. In response to cultural diversification in schools and communities, school counselors must be more globally responsive and culturally sustaining in the educational and social environment than ever before.

As a part of this charge, school counselors need to continue to enhance knowledge and awareness of prejudice, power and various forms of oppression and utilize culturally responsive skills to support ever-changing student needs (ASCA Ethical Standards, B.3.i, 2016). In support of students, school counselors implement “equitable academic, career and social/emotional developmental opportunities for all students” (ASCA Ethical Standards, B.3.i, 2016). In support of students, school counselors implement “equitable academic, career and social/emotional developmental opportunities for all students” (ASCA Ethical Standards, B.3.i, 2016). In support of students, school counselors implement “equitable academic, career and social/emotional developmental opportunities for all students” (ASCA Ethical Standards, B.3.i, 2016).

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The School Counselor and Student Safety with Digital Technologies

(Adopted 2000, revised 2006, 2012, 2017, 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

Digital technology (e.g. cell phones/mobile devices, gaming platforms, social media, and the internet) is a useful tool in creating equitable and developmental learning opportunities to enhance student academic, career, and social/emotional development. School counselors educate students and families about responsible use, digital citizenship, cultural, ethical, and legal considerations and collaborate with families, educators and law enforcement officials to alert students to risks technology poses.

The Rationale

To be successful in school and within their relationships and prepared for postsecondary opportunities, students need to be proficient in and aware of the use of interactive digital technology (ASCA, 2021). However, when students access social media, gaming platforms and interactive digital technology, they leave a digital footprint that makes them vulnerable to significant risks that compromise their safety, security and reputation (Gallo et al., 2018; Su et al., 2021). Technology exposes students to behavioral, safety and privacy risks, such as:

- Cyberbullying/harassment
- Invasion of privacy and disclosure of personal information
- Inappropriate online communications
- Access to inappropriate content and media
- Sexual predators and human trafficking
- Addictions to cell phone use, gaming, social media and/or the internet

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors have a responsibility to promote healthy student development and to protect students from digital technology's potential risks. School counselors consider the ethical and legal considerations of technological applications, including confidentiality concerns, student and community safety concerns, security issues, potential benefits and limitations of communication practices using electronic media, and managing appropriate boundaries with students and stakeholders (ASCA, 2022). In addition, school counselors, in collaboration with other stakeholder groups:

- Adhere to legal, ethical, district and school policies and guidelines when using technology with students and stakeholders and/or working in a virtual school counseling setting (ASCA, 2023)
- Provide culturally sustaining instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling to help all students demonstrate technology use that enhances learning strategies, self-management and social skills (ASCA, 2021)
- Provide educators and families with guidelines for the appropriate use of technology by students
- Address individual and systemic repercussions related to the impact of inappropriate student social media/technology use (ASCA, 2021; Gallo, et al., 2018; Tinstman Jones, et al., 2020)
- Take measures to maintain the confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through any electronic technology (ASCA, 2022)
- Keep informed about new academic integrity programs and technological advances that may affect students or education systems (e.g., artificial intelligence (technology))
- Be involved in creating school and district policies to address potential risks and benefits

If a school or district uses an online student safety software (e.g., Gaggle, Securly, GoGuardian) to monitor for potentially harmful behavior, school counselors advocate for school policies that share identified concerns directly to parents/guardians. These notifications should be coupled with resources and/or referrals, as well as procedures for students to follow in emergencies when the school counselor is not available.

In addition, schools or districts should respond to technological reports of threats, harm to self and others in collaboration with multidisciplinary school teams. Inform parents/guardians and school administration when a student poses a serious and foreseeable risk of harm to self or others (Cowen, et al., 2021). This notification is to be done after careful deliberation and

consultation with appropriate professionals, such as other school counselors, school nurse, school psychologist, school social worker

The School Counselor and Students with Disabilities

(Adopted 1999; Revised 2004, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors encourage and support all students' academic, career and social/emotional development through 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.

The 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. Under IDEA, 7.2 million public school students are identified as having a disability and receive special education services (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). IDEA defines a child with a disability to be a child evaluated in accordance with §§300.304 through 300.311 as having any of the following:

- intellectual disability
- hearing impairment (including deafness)
- speech or language impairment
- visual impairment (including blindness)
- serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as “emotional disturbance”)
- orthopedic impairment
- autism
- traumatic brain injury

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The School Counselor and Equity for All Students

(Adopted 2006, revised 2012, 2018, 2024)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors acknowledge and value individual and group differences that exist among students. School counselors are advocates for the equitable treatment of all students and strive to establish inclusive and welcoming learning environments in which all students can thrive and reach their full potential.

The Rationale

Students who are members of marginalized populations within the United States have historically encountered barriers to equitable education. These marginalized populations encompass a range of students, including, but not limited to, students of color, girls, students with disabilities (Education and Human Resources Development, 2017) and LGBTQ+ students (Leung et al., 2022).

The inequitable treatment of students of color is well-documented. There are significant achievement gaps in graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students of color compared with their Asian and white counterparts. In addition, male students of color graduate at lower rates than female students of color, further illustrating that intersecting cultural identities can create additional inequities for students (Reeves & Kalkat, 2023). Similarly, recent statistics also indicate that graduation rates for Black, Hispanic and Indigenous students are below the U.S. average and lower than those of white students (NCES, 2023b).

In 2014, the number of students of color in U.S. public schools surpassed that of white students (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). In 2023, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that white students comprised only 45% of the public school population (NCES, 2023a).

Multiple inequities exist throughout the education system between white students and students of color. More often, Black students are identified as having a learning disability (12% of black children compared with 8.5% of white children). Conversely, 60% of students identified as gifted and talented are white, compared with only 9% of Black students identified as gifted. Similar discrepancies exist within school discipline with Black students experiencing harsher punishments than white students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2022).

Furthermore, The College Board reported achievement gaps between racial groups, with white students consistently scoring higher than their Black and Hispanic peers on AP

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The School Counselor and Students in Foster Care

(Adopted 2018; revised 2024)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors advocate for and implement school counseling programs that meet all students' academic, career and social/emotional needs. School counselors recognize that students who experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as being in the foster care system, are at a much higher risk for negative health and educational outcomes. Students in foster care represent an often-overlooked student population.

The Rationale

Children and youth in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable student subgroups in this country. Approximately

- Support the college and career readiness needs of students in foster care through postsecondary-focused resources and activities (e.g., current scholarships, grants and application-fee waiver programs available to students in foster care in their states)
- Understand the intersections of students' cultural identities and the need for culturally responsive practices

Summary

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

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The School Counselor and Gender Equity

(Adopted 1983; revised 1993, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2014, 2020)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

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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

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The School Counselor and Group Counseling

(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 2002, 2008; reviewed 1999, 2008, 2014, 2020)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

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

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The School Counselor and the Identification, Prevention and Intervention of Harmful or Disadvantageous Behaviors

(Adopted 1989-90; revised 1993, 1999, 2004, 2011, 2017, 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors design and implement comprehensive school counseling programs that include processes for identifying students who may be engaging in harmful or disadvantageous behaviors. As part of that program, school counselors provide developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive interventions and supports to assess the unmet need or lagging skill behind those behaviors and to promote the mindsets and behaviors all students need for success now and in the future.

The Rationale

All schools and communities have students who could potentially drop out of school and/or engage in disadvantageous 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 policy, environmental or resource issues that leave students vulnerable to disadvantageous behavior (Holcomb-McCoy, 2022). These behaviors may have lifelong implications and often stem from social/ emotional concerns, including low self-esteem, identity issues, family and relationship problems, grief, trauma, neglect, abuse and/or substance use.

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors develop school counseling programs designed to prevent harmful behaviors while also taking proactive leadership to identify and intervene with students who demonstrate these behaviors. School counselors advocate for systemic, trauma-informed and culturally inclusive, school-based means of identification, multitiered interventions and, when necessary, behavioral and mental health referrals to school, district and/or community supports.

Using data to develop and assess preventive and responsive services to address these risks is an integral part of a school counseling program. School counselors collaborate with staff, school teams, other students, families, and the community to identify students participating in harmful behaviors and intervene with these students to limit or eliminate the risk of harm or negative consequences.

Taking a leadership role in promoting student success, school counselors:

- Provide preventive schoolwide initiatives and classroom lessons to increase student knowledge and awareness of the dangers of harmful behaviors, as well as to cultivate mindsets and behaviors promoting student success, including learning strategies, self-management skills and social skills
- Provide multitiered intervention services, including Tier 1 classroom lessons and Tier 2 short-term counseling in individual or group settings
- Collaborate and consult with families to increase involvement, including referring students and families to support services and community agencies
- Recognize the limits of confidentiality and the inherent parent/guardian/caregiver's legal and inherent rights to be the guiding force in their child's life as indicated in sections A.2.f & A.2.g of the *ASCA Ethical Standards* (2022)
- Work to reduce the stigma of mental health and reinforce help-seeking behavior
- Implement trauma-informed practices that may help staff utilize appropriate interventions while maintaining sensitivity to students (Haviland, 2017)
- Collaborate with school administration and community members to identify and assist students in crisis
- Enhance social support by using an ecological and multicultural approach to understanding the sociocultural factors at work in their communities
- Conduct staff development for school and district staff on prevention and intervention of harmful behaviors
- Advocate for change in policies and procedures that are not culturally responsive and/or perpetuate inequities
- Advocate for changes in the school and community that promote well-being, success and equitable access to resources

Summary

School counselors design and implement school counseling programs that prevent harmful behaviors, while also taking proactive leadership to identify and intervene with students who demonstrate these behaviors. As a part of this program, school counselors collaborate with other educators and

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The School Counselor and Letters of Recommendation

(Adopted 2020)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors work ethically when writing letters of recommendation for students. To guide their work, school counselors rely on the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; 1974), which is a federal statute protecting parents' and students' rights regarding educational records (Stone, 2014).

The Rationale

In their role as student advocates, school counselors use best practices to help all students achieve their aspirations. They recognize that letters of recommendation play a significant role in admissions decisions; notably, they are the third most-used predictor of college success following the GPA and test scores (Kuncel, Kochevar & Ones, 2014). In addition, it has been found that often “the letters are used not only to determine admissibility, but also to determine eligibility for scholarships and honors invitations” (Akos and Kretchmar, 2016, p. 102).

School counselors help students and their families understand the value of letters of recommendation and the positive impact these letters can provide all students in the postsecondary planning process. School counselors are familiar with inequities in higher education such as wealthier families enrolling their students in college at higher rates than lower-income families, particularly in highly selective institutions (Harris, 2019). Also noted by the National Center for Education Statistics, “The percentage of the lowest SES students who were neither enrolled [in postsecondary education] nor employed was roughly five times as large as the corresponding percentage for the highest SES students” (NCES, 2019, para. 5). In recognition of the disparities that exist in admission to postsecondary institutions and employment opportunities by race, ethnicity and geography (Brainerd, 2017), school counselors work to mitigate the impact of injustice and inequity and support all students in achieving their goals beyond high school.

The School Counselor's Role

When requested by students to write letters of recommendation, school counselors must balance their support for students by using a strengths-based approach (beneficence) while maintaining honest, conscientious communication without harm to students (nonmaleficence). Additionally, as school leaders and advocates, school counselors help school staff, students, and their families understand the legal and ethical practices having an impact on letters of recommendation as well as the role these letters play in admission processes and future employment opportunities.

School counselors understand that offering to provide letters of recommendation cannot be made conditional on waiving ones' rights afforded them under FERPA (Family Policy Compliance Office [FPCO], 2005). They also understand that an educational agency or institution may not require parents or students to waive the protections and rights afforded them under FERPA (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) as a condition for acceptance into an institution or receipt of educational services.

In regard to letters of recommendation, school counselors:

- Maintain familiarity of federal and state laws and local school board policies concerning personal identifiable information
- Include personal identifiable information only with dated, written consent of student and/or parents/guardians
- Educate students and their families on the impact of waiving rights to view recommendations sent to potential postsecondary institutions and/or employers
- Advise students on appropriate content for admissions applications
- Provide teachers and administrators with training, orientation and consultation about considerations in writing letters of recommendation (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2012)
- Promote ethical administration

Summary

There are many legal and ethical implications associated with writing letters of recommendation for students. School counselors are aware of these implications, apply them in their practice and communicate them to students, their families and educators to best support students as they seek employment and postsecondary opportunities.

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The School Counselor and LGBTQ+ Youth

(Adopted 1995; Revised 2000, 2005, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors promote equal opportunity and respect for students 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, 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, gender identity or gender expression and report experiencing homophobic remarks, harassment and bullying (Kosciw et al., 2020). LGBTQ+ individuals often face multiple risk factors that may place them at greater risk for suicidal behavior (Johns et al., 2020).

School counselors realize these issues affect healthy student development and psychological well-being and advocate for conditions protecting LGBTQ+ youth. Students report lower levels of verbal and physical harassment when they have a supportive adult in school, participate in inclusive curriculum and have delineated policies protecting students from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2020).

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, gender identity or gender expression. School counselors recognize the profound harm intrinsic to therapies alleging to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity (Ryan et al., 2020) 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. gender expr

- Support students in addressing possible discrimination by staff members (ASCA, 2019)
- Engage in training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and advocating for their rights in schools (Beck & Wikoff, 2020; Gonzalez, 2017; Kull et al., 2017; Simons et al., 2017)
- Encourage staff training on inclusive

- Advocate, collaborate and coordinate with school and community stakeholders to meet the needs of the whole child and to ensure students and their families have access to mental health services
- Recognize and address barriers to accessing mental health services and the associated stigma, including cultural beliefs and linguistic impediments
- Adhere to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality, the distinction between public and

The School Counselor and Military-Connected Students

(Adopted, 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors recognize military-connected students' unique and diverse needs. To support military-connected students, school counselors design and implement school counseling programs that promote an inclusive school climate, include activities and services supporting their distinct challenges and build school-family-community partnerships that create a sense of connectedness and belonging.

The Rationale

There are approximately four million military-connected students in the United States (Military Child Education Coalition, 2013; Elias, 2016). This number includes students who have parents/guardians who are either active duty, Reserves, National Guard or prior service members. Furthermore, 80% of all military-connected students attend public schools (Elias, 2016). Due to the transient nature of military service, many military families experience frequent changes and transitions, including parental deployment, relocation, familial separation and adjustment to civilian life (Cole, 2016; Ward, 2018). While such transitions can cultivate resilience, strength, and cultural awareness among military-connected students (Cole & Cowan, 2021), they can also produce stress and adversely affect their academic achievement, career readiness, and social/emotional development.

- Consult and collaborate with installation and community partners (e.g., school liaison officer, Exceptional Family Member Program, Family Advocacy Program, etc.) to promote military-connected students' educational success (Quintana, 2021)
- Engage in and promote professional development opportunities to support military-connected students and advocate for their diverse, unique needs in schools (Quintana & Cole, 2021)

Summary

School counselors have an integral role in ensuring military-connected students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness. Effectively meeting military-connected students' needs, school counselors engage in collaborative efforts to establish a comprehensive school counseling program that is an inclusive and culturally responsive and fosters military-connected students' academic, career, and social/emotional development.

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Resources

- Military Kids Connect: <https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/>
- Military One Source: www.militaryonesource.com
- Military Child Education Coalition: www.militarychild.org
- Operation Military Kids: www.operationmilitarykids.org
- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3): www.mic3.net
- Department of Defense Education Activity: www.dodea.edu/index.cfm
- Tutor.com: www.tutor.com
- DoD School Liaison Officer (Local Installation)
- Military and Government Counseling Association (MGCA): <http://mgcaonline.org/about-us>
- National Military Family Association: www.militaryfamily.org/
- Military Families United: www.militaryfamiliesunited.org/
- United Service Organization (USO): www.uso.org/

Additionally, school counselors provide Tier 1 services by emphasizing the use of data and collaboration (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016; Betters-Bubon & Donohue, 2016; Goodman-Scott et al., 2016) and engage in evidence-based prevention work (Goodman-Scott et al., 2014). In Tier 2, school counselors provide direct services such as targeted group counseling (Sherrod et al., 2009) and individualized interventions (e.g., check in, check out; Dart et al., 2012) (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020). In Tier 3, typically school counselors only provide indirect services as supporters through consultation, collaboration and facilitation of referrals as members of the MTSS team (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020).

School counselors collaboratively support the process of MTSS universal screening for mental health (Donohue et al., 2016), academic and behavioral supports. The school counselor may also provide indirect student service by presenting data or serving as a consultant to a student support team. The school counselor engages as part of the leadership team in MTSS but “should not be the sole leader of MTSS in our buildings” (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020, p. 33).

Summary

School counselors implement school counseling programs addressing the needs of all students. Guided by review of student data, school counselors deliver instruction, appraisal and advisement to students in Tier 1 and 2 and collaborate with other specialist instructional support personnel, educators and families to provide appropriate instruction and learning supports for students in Tier 2 within the school’s MTSS program. School counselors also 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 the Use of Non-School-Counseling Credentialed Personnel in Implementing School Counseling Programs

(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012, 2018, 2024)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counseling programs serve a vital role in maximizing student success and positively affect achievement for all students. School counselors are uniquely qualified and solely eligible to meet the requirements of designing and implementing these programs and recognize that personnel who do not hold a certificate/license in school counseling are not qualified to deliver a school counseling program supporting student academic, career and social/emotional development.

The Rationale

School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling or equivalent. According to the Department of Education (2022), a credentialed school counselor is an individual who possesses a valid license or certificate from the state education agency in which they are employed. As a result of their training and licensure, school counselors are able to design, implement and assess a school counseling program that is integral to the school's mission and is created to have a significant positive impact on student achievement.

Research shows students who attend a school with a fully implemented school counseling program earn higher grades and are better prepared for life after high school (ASCA, 2024; Mullen et al., 2019; Savitz-Romer et al., 2022). 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 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
- chaplains/clergy

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 (Griffiths et al., 2021) and encourage non-school-counseling credentialed personnel to accept only positions for which they are

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The School Counselor and Peer Support Programs

(Adopted 1978; Revised 1984, 1993, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2015, 2021)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

Peer support programs help students develop an improved sense of well-being, social confidence and health behaviors (Curren & Wexler, 2016). The informed implementation of peer support programs enhances the effectiveness of school counseling programs and provides increased outreach and expansion of services.

The Rationale

Development of relational peer networks in schools can improve students' academic achievement and social supports (Williams et al., 2018). Specifically, peer support programs can be defined as peer-to-peer interaction 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. Peer support programs include activities such as assistance in one-to-one and group settings, academic/educational help, new student aid and other diverse activities of an interpersonal helping nature.

School counselors are aware that students often communicate more readily to peers than adults. Peer support programs can enhance the effectiveness of school counseling programs by 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 and disabilities (Logsdon, et al., 2018), while promoting protective factors (e.g., developmental assets determined by the Search Institute). Peer support programs can also help create a positive school culture and connectedness to the school community for both mentors and mentees (Voight & Nation, 2016) as well as safer schools (Walker, 2019).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors are responsible for determining the needs of the school population and for implementing interventions designed to meet those needs, such as peer support programs. In collaboration with school staff, school counselors:

- follow the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors as they relate to peer support programs, including safeguarding the welfare of students participating in peer support programs and providing appropriate training and supervision for peer helpers (ASCA, 2016; QPR, 2019)
- use best practices when developing and implementing peer support programs (Berger, et al., 2018)
- 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
- monitor, assess and adjust the program and training on a continual basis to meet the assessed needs of the school population the program serves
- report results to all school stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, parents, community)

Summary

School counselors understand and build upon the positive effects of peer support programs on students, the school climate

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The School Counselor and Appraisal and Advisement for Postsecondary Preparation

(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012, 2013, 2017, 2024)

*Note: This statement was previously titled *The School Counselor and Individual Student Planning for Postsecondary Education*.*

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

The School Counselor and Student Postsecondary Recruitment

(Adopted 2004; revised 2009, 2015, 2021)

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
- ,hA) Position

- families and students to encourage open conversation and communication about interests and goals
- recruiters and families to encourage them to work directly with students

Summary

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

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The School Counselor and Retention, Social Promotion and Age-Appropriate Placement

(Adopted 2006, revised 2012, 2017, 2023)

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 considering multiple factors. School counselors also recognize that retention and social promotion decisions have a disproportionate impact on students from culturally, linguistically and otherwise diverse backgrounds. School counselors oppose laws or policies requiring social promotion or retention and advocate for laws and policies that consider individual student needs regarding age-appropriate placement.

The Rationale

The evidence about the academic benefits of grade retention is mixed, but the effects on the psychosocial outcomes of children who are retained are mostly negative (Cockx et al., 2018; Goos et al., 2021; Hughes et al., 2017; Pipa & Peixoto, 2022; Valbuena et al., 2021). 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 supports, show more academic promise for students who have difficulty learning (ASCA, 2021; Peguero et al., 2021).

Research shows negative, long-term effects from retention with a disproportionate impact on marginalized populations. Students who are retained are more likely to have adverse outcomes, including dropping out of school and having diminished postsecondary aspirations (Cockx et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2018), having lower socioeconomic status and more likely to be eligible for government assistance (Goos et al., 2021), and are even at higher risk for future criminal behavior (Eren et al., 2022). Pipa and Peixoto (2022) found that retained students have lower task orientation, sense of school belonging and valuing, hypothesizing that this could lower motivation, which begins a cascade of negative outcomes. Grade-retention policies have a disproportionate effect on students from marginalized populations (de Brey et al., 2019; Lavy et al., 2012; Peguero et al., 2021; Pipa & Peixoto, 2022; Valbuena et al., 2021; Xiang & Chiu, 2022).

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. While social promotion is seen as the only alternative to grade retention, there are more effective alternatives to both (Jacobs & Mantiri, 2022). Although social promotion is intended to avoid the negative effects of grade retention and promote self-esteem, research on social promotion mostly shows that it is no more effective or less harmful than grade retention (McMahon, 2018). It can also 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 effective in remediation of learning difficulties or in maintaining academic gains (Goos et al., 2021; McMahon, 2018). In cases where students have academic difficulty, early intervention is crucial, as well as is 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 (Peguero et al., 2021).

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 and advocate for preventive, proactive alternatives to such practices (ASCA, 2022a; ASCA, 2023a). 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.

When laws and/or policies require social promotion or retention, school counselors refer to the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2022a) to support students' academic, career and social/emotional development. School counselors advocate for alternate interventions first, before recommending retention of a student.

School counselors promote alternatives to retention, social promotion and age-appropriate placement by supporting and advocating for the following:

- Research-based educational reforms that deliver best teaching and school counseling practice (ASCA, 2022)
- Comprehensive school counseling programs in all schools to address academic, career and social/emotional development (ASCA, 2023b)
- Early identification using available data to identify strengths and deficits to provide appropriate evidenced-based interventions (ASCA, 2023a)
- A team approach to decision-making that includes school counselors, teachers, administrators, student support workers and families to determine appropriate educational interventions (ASCA, 2021)
- Career and technical education opportunities for middle and high school students (ASCA, 2018)
- Literacy strategies to improve reading for all students
- Funding for pre-kindergarten programs taught by credentialed teachers (Bakken et al., 2017)
- Extended school year for remediation and curriculum enhancement for struggling learners and under-challenged learners
- Reduced class size
-

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Internet Resource Links

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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 serve 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,

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, 2020)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors are best prepared through master’s-level and doctoral-level programs that align with the philosophy and vision of the ASCA National Model (2019a), the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies (2019b), the ASCA Standards for School Counseling Program Preparation (2019c), the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success (2014) and the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016). These programs emphasize training in the implementation of a school counseling program that enhances student achievement and success.

The Rationale

School counselors are assuming an increasingly important 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 school counseling program (Cinotti, 2014).

The ASCA National Model (2019a), the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016), the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies (2019b) 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 graduates are well-prepared to design, implement and assess a school counseling program that is proactive, accountable and aligned with the school’s mission.

The Role of School Counselor Preparation Programs

Effective school counseling preparation programs provide coursework and training that teaches school counseling students to design and implement a school counseling program. These programs help school counseling students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to:

- Understand the organizational structure and governance of the educational system, as well as cultural, political and social influences on current educational practices
- Address legal, ethical and professional issues in pre-K–12 schools
- Understand developmental theory, counseling theory, career counseling theory, social justice theory and multiculturalism
- Understand mental health and the continuum of services, including prevention and intervention strategies for addressing academic, career and social/emotional development to enhance student success for all students
- Deliver effective instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling
- Develop interventions aligned to the multitiered system of supports as described in the corresponding position statement, *The School Counselor and Multitiered System of Supports*
- Collaborate and consult with stakeholders (e.g., families/guardians, teachers, administration, community stakeholders) to create learning environments promoting student educational equity and success for all students
- Identify impediments to student learning, developing strategies to enhance learning and collaborating with stakeholders to improve student achievement
- Ensure equitable access to resources promoting academic achievement, social/emotional growth and career development for all students
- Use advocacy and data-informed school counseling practices to close achievement and opportunity gaps
- Understand how the school counseling programs relate to the educational program
- Understand outcome research data and best practices as identified in the school counseling research literature
- Understand 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, attitudes and skills necessary to implement a school counseling program. Field-based experiences are supervised by a licensed or certified school counselor in the pre-K–12 setting and a university supervisor with the appropriate school counselor educator qualifications.

School counseling preparation programs are facilitated by school counselor educators who have the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to prepare school counselors to promote the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. School counselor educators have appropriate preparation, including knowledge of the ASCA National Model, the ASCA School Counseling Professional Standards & Competencies, organization and administration of pre-K–12 schools, counseling children and adolescents, and current issues and trends in school counseling. School counselor educators should hold an earned doctoral degree in counselor education, counseling

Duties that fall outside of the school counselor’s role 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, managing and accessing a 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. The framework of a school counseling program consists of the following four components: define, manage, deliver and assess. See “The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs” for more detailed information.

DEFINE

Three sets of school counseling standards define the school counseling profession. These standards help new and experienced school counselors develop, implement and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes.

Student Standards

- ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success

Professional Standards

- ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

MANAGE

To be delivered effectively, the school counseling program must be efficiently and effectively managed. The ASCA National Model provides school counselors with the following program focus and planning tools to guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results.

Program Focus

- Beliefs
- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement

Program Planning

- School Data Summary
- Annual Student Outcome Goals
- Action Plans
 - Classroom and Group
 - Closing the Gap
- Lesson Plans
- Annual Administrative Conference
- Use of Time
- Calendars
 - Annual
 - Weekly
- Advisory Council

DELIVER

School counselors deliver a school counseling program in collaboration with students, families, school staff, and community stakeholders. The ASCA National Model (2019) and the ASCA National Model Implementation Guide (2019d) 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:

- Instruction
- Appraisal and Advisement
- Counseling

Indirect Services for Students

Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselors' interactions with others including:

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

ASSESS

To achieve the best results for students, school counselors regularly assess their program to:

- Determine its effectiveness
- Inform improvements to their school counseling program design and delivery
- Show how student growth and progress are different as a result of the school counseling program

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The School Counselor and School-Family-Community Partnerships

(Adopted 2010; Revised 2016, 2022)

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 school counseling programs that promote all students' successful academic, career and social/emotional development.

The Rationale

The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2019a) and the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies (ASCA, 2019b) endorse school counselors' roles in facilitating school-family-community partnerships. School counselors are trained in counseling, human relations and collaboration skills (e.g., group dynamics, consultation skills), which makes them well-suited to engage families and community stakeholders, and they enhance the collaboration of school-family-community

The School Counselor and School Resource Officers

(Adopted 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors are leaders, advocates, collaborators, and consultants who create systemic change to ensure equitable educational outcomes through the school counseling program. School counselors collaborate and advocate with school resource officers (SROs) to ensure equal opportunities and safety for all students.

The Rationale

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO, n.d.) defines an SRO as, “a carefully selected, specifically trained and properly equipped law enforcement officer with sworn authority, trained in school-based law enforcement and crisis response, and assigned by an employing law enforcement agency to work collaboratively with one or more schools using community-oriented policing concepts” (para. 2). Despite a lack of evidence on the long-term effect that the presence of SROs has on student outcomes, many school districts continue to utilize SROs with the goal to increase safety in schools.

SROs contribute to safety “by ensuring a safe and secure campus, educating students about law-related topics, and mentoring students as counselors and role models” (NASRO, 2012, p. 21). School counselors are also leaders in safe school initiatives and serve as active participants in fostering safety in schools.

The most prominent concern regarding SROs in schools is a lack of consistency in training and cohesion with program design and implementation. This lack of consistency can lead “to conflict and misunderstanding that can have negative consequences for students and schools” (Fisher et al., 2022 p. 562).

Evidence presented against SRO positions is centered on concerns that the SRO presence contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline. Research shows “the presence of a school resource officer increases the likelihood that students will be disciplined and arrested for offenses that were once resolved through non-legal means by school staff and administration” (Almanza et al., 2022, p. 2). This evidence, however, does not apply only to SROs as, “It is difficult to discern SROs’ impact on or contribution to the school-to-prison link” because “such a pipeline features numerous stakeholders, including administrators, teachers and staff, who might also contribute to this critical issue” (Paez & Colvin, 2021, p. 192).

The School Counselor’s Role

Through the school counseling program, school counselors advocate for school safety and success for all students and collaborate to remove barriers that may impede equitable student outcomes. As systemic change agents, school counselors:

- Advocate that in districts where they are employed, SROs follow the guidelines, training and education recommended by NASRO
- Advocate for uniformity in SRO programming (Almanza et al., 2022) and that school administrators and district leaders follow the memorandum of understanding, which outlines the “tasks to be performed by the SRO when assisting school officials in providing a safe and effective learning environment” (NASRO, 2012, p. 47)
- Collaborate with administrators, teams and school staff, including SROs, to prevent violence on campus
- Work with SROs to educate the school community about collaborative services designed to meet students’ needs
- Engage in a collaborative problem-solving model with SROs to meet student needs to deliver a community approach to problem-solving, as opposed to traditional legal responses (Fisher et al., 2022)
- Consult with SROs to inform school counselor interventions with students in need of support
- Educate the school community on best practices that build positive relationships between SROs and students and families (Fisher et al., 2022)

Summary

While the research regarding the impact of the presence of SROs on student outcomes is divided, in schools where SROs are employed, it is the school counselor’s responsibility to advocate, collaborate, and educate to ensure equal opportunities and safety for all students and partners.

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& DeWeese, 2021; US DoE, 2023). The school counselor is uniquely positioned to advocate for students and families, collaborate with faculty and staff, and work toward creating equitable systems and access to the 504 process. Specifically, school counselors perform the following essential functions as a member of the 504 interdisciplinary team:

- Assist students and families with gaining access to the 504 process and procedural rights (Lewis & Muniz, 2023)
- Help students and families understand the translation of services from assessments to school settings (Milsom & DeWeese, 2021)
- Collaborate and consult with students; parents/guardians; teachers; administration; school psychologists; and other physical, mental and behavioral health care providers to reach a consensus around appropriate and reasonable accommodations, if any (Lewis & Muniz, 2023; Milsom & DeWeese, 2021)
- Support students who receive accommodations with all life transitions, including postsecondary transitions, and teach self-advocacy skills as developmentally appropriate to ensure access to Section 504 supports (Lombardi, et al., 2022; Milsom & DeWeese, 2021)
- Advocate that school counselors are not written into the 504 plan as accommodation providers or facilitators, especially providing long-term therapy since this is outside the scope of practice for a school counselor (ASCA, 2022)
- Engage in training on 504 law and process for school counselors alongside school staff, faculty and administration (Goodman-Scott & Boulden, 2020)
- Use culturally sensitive planning processes and consider how social determinants of mental health are affecting students and their disability when determining needs and accommodations for the 504 plan (Johnson, et al., 2023; Lewis & Muniz, 2023)
- Disaggregate disciplinary actions and advanced coursework enrollment statistics to ensure students with 504 plans are not overrepresented in disciplinary actions and have equitable access and enrollment in advanced course work (U.S. Department of Education, 2024)
- Use extreme care and communication if tasked with taking on an eligibility determination role within the 504 process that could negatively affect the counseling relationship (Goodman-Scott & Boulden, 2020)
- Advocate for the inclusion of the school counselor's role in the 504 process within school counselor preparation programs (Goodman-Scott & Boulden, 2020)

If school counselors are tasked with 504 coordination/case management in their school or district, they should actively advocate against that role. Until that role is removed, school counselors should ensure they are not the sole decision-makers in determining 504 evaluation and identification and whether any accommodations are provided to the student. Inappropriate Section 504 responsibilities/duties for the school counselor include but are not limited to:

- Making singular decisions regarding student placement or retention
- Serving in any supervisory capacity related to Section 504 implementation
- Serving as the school district representative for the team writing the Section 504
- Coordinating, writing or supervising a specific plan under Section 504 of Public Law 93-112 (i.e., no case management)
- Providing long-term therapy to students with disabilities (ASCA, 2022)
- Coordinating and/or facilitating 504 meetings
- Preparing and disseminating student records

Summary

School counselors support all students, including students with disabilities. School counselors serve a vital role on the Section 504 team as an advocate for students. School counselors should not be responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, coordinating/managing 504 plans to avoid conflicts with their role for all students in the building, their role as an advocate for students and their work with staff and teachers. When school counselors serve as Section 504 coordinators/case managers, equitable access to a school counseling program and working relationships with students, families and school staff will be negatively affected.

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The School Counselor and Social/Emotional Development

(Adopted 2017; revised 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors deliver school counseling programs that enhance student growth in three domain areas: academic, career, and social/emotional development. As a part of that program, school counselors implement strategies and activities to help all students enhance their social/emotional development – the mindsets and behaviors students need to manage emotions and learn and apply interpersonal skills - while recognizing that growth in all three domains is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life.

The Rationale

As social/emotional experts, school counselors design and implement school counseling programs using the direct student services of classroom instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling, as well as the indirect student services of referrals, consultation and collaboration with families, teachers and administrators to promote all students' social/emotional development. (ASCA, 2019). School counselors engaging in direct services yield “desirable outcomes in a variety of areas including students' social and emotional development, academic performance, and college or career pursuits” (Lemberger-Truelove et al., 2021, p. 1).

The social/emotional domain is composed of standards to help students manage emotions and learn and apply interpersonal

- Use assessment in the context of appropriate statistics and research methodology, follow-up assessment and measurement methods to implement appropriate program planning for social/emotional development.

The School Counselor and Student Sexual Wellness

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2006, 2012, 2018, 2024)

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American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors promote the health and wellness of all pre-K–12 students through the advocacy and support of comprehensive, developmentally appropriate educational efforts related to sexual wellness. Using culturally competent best practices, school counselors collaborate with key school and community partners (e.g., health and physical education instructors, school nurses, community healthcare specialists) in these efforts, while recognizing the importance of student/family confidentiality. Because of the connection between student sexual wellness and social/emotional well-being, school counselors provide student support, counseling and referral services regarding all aspects of sexual wellness, including consent, disease prevention, contraception, sexual and gender diversity and interpersonal violence.

The Rationale

Sexual wellness is a holistic and positive approach to sexuality and sexual health that embraces the idea that sexuality is a fundamental part of human life. To address sexual wellness comprehensively, the physical, emotional, psychological and social aspects related to human development must be considered. In schools, comprehensive sexual education furthers this approach by maintaining open and healthy communication about sexuality in society, including raising awareness about issues related to consent, disease prevention, contraception, sexual and gender diversity to ct/

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Advocating for Sexual Wellness As systemic change agents, school counselors possess the ability to examine and navigate many systems within a school (Milner & Upton, 2016). Through this role, school counselors collaborate with key school staff and community partners and serve as a voice for developing positive student sexual wellness policies. Advocacy efforts may include:

- Advocating for more equitable school policies around student sexual wellness, especially when such district guidelines create barriers and marginalize students
- Aiding in the identification and addition of appropriate and culturally competent evidence-based sexual wellness curriculum
-

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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-policy-makers>

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 Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention
(Adopted 2018, Revised 2024)

in efforts to protect their child (Stone, 2022). School counselors provide culturally responsive mental health resources to parents/guardians and recommendations for next steps based on perceived student need. School counselors follow state legislation and district policy when responding to suicide risk.

School counselors collaborate with the student to develop a safety plan and explore coping strategies (Stone, 2022). School counselors avoid no-harm contracts because they can provide a false sense of safety, and there is insufficient evidence about their effectiveness. Instead, school counselors discuss with parents/guardians safety proofng of home and all environments that student frequents to secure and remove all access to frearms and other lethal means of suicide.

School counselors engage appropriate emergency response personnel. When a student is actively suicidal and the immediate safety of the student or others is at- risk, school staff should immediately contact appropriate emergency response personnel per federal, state and local laws as well as school district policy (e.g., administrators, 911 dispatcher, child protective services, law enforcement). If parent/guardian abuse or neglect is the expressed reason for the student’s suicidal ideation, it is best practice for the school counselor to contact child protective services rather than the parents/guardians in an effort to protect the student and ensure the student’s safety and well-being (ASCA, 2020).

Postvention Components Following a suicidal crisis and/or a psychiatric hospitalization, school counselors meet with the student’s parents/guardians, other relevant staff and, if appropriate, include the student to discuss re-entry and address next steps needed to ensure the student’s readiness for return to school and plan for the frst day back. Recommended actions include:

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The School Counselor and Suicide Risk Assessment

(Adopted 2020)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors support best practice in suicide prevention to reduce suicide risk in children and adolescents and are part of a collaborative team who respond when students are identified as at-risk for suicide. When becoming aware of a student considering suicide, school counselors assert their ethical and legal responsibility to report suspected suicide risk to parents/guardians and the appropriate authorities.

The Rationale

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data reveals that from 2007 to 2017, suicide was the second-leading cause of death for persons aged 10–19 and that suicide rates have been steadily increasing (Curtin and Heron, 2017). Because school counselors work with all students through the delivery of school counseling programs, school counselors are in a position to raise awareness among students, families and the education community regarding student suicide and assist educators in understanding how to recognize and respond to suicide risk.

The School Counselor's Role

Through their work in classroom, group and individual settings, school counselors work to create supportive relationships with all students and to identify students' social/emotional needs (ASCA, 2019). Through these interactions as well as through consultation with school staff, school counselors may become aware that a student could be at risk for suicide by report from the student, the student's peers or school staff. School counselors are acutely aware that if they are placed on notice by any of these means, they must always notify parents/guardians about this risk. The exception is when the parent/guardian's abuse or neglect is the expressed reason for the student's suicidal ideation. In these cases, the school counselor must contact child protective services.

School counselors support the development of district policy based on best practices in suicide prevention (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American School Counselor Association, National Association of School Psychologists & The Trevor Project, 2019). When district suicide-risk protocols are in place, school counselors must follow them, but they advocate for change when the protocols do not comply with ethical standards (ASCA, 2016). When the school district does not have a written suicide protocol for school personnel or the policy does not comply with ethical standards and school counselor scope of practice, school counselors advocate for the team-based creation of suicide-risk policies and procedures supporting students' mental health needs and aligned with team members' competencies.

If state legislation or school board policy requires a schoolwide screening program, school counselors advocate for ethical use of valid and reliable instruments with concerns for cultural sensitivity and bias (ASCA, 2016). School counselors also advocate as a non-negotiable that parents/guardians are to be notified of any suicidal ideation. Regardless of whether the student is 18 years of age or older, school counselors' ethical imperative is to notify parents/guardians of their child's suicidal ideation (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 2020; Stone, 2017).

If school counselors are required to use assessments, screenings or any type of instrument to determine the suicide risk, they advocate that they are never required to negate any level of risk of harm, as students may tell school counselors what they believe will get them out from under scrutiny. School counselors also advocate that the school district has a policy whereby parents/guardians are always contacted and notified of anything learned through an investigation of potential suicide, or with any instrument, that will guide parents/guardians in efforts to protect their child. Contacting parents/guardians is the school counselor's primary responsibility (Stone, 2017).

- avoid using words or phrases such as “impulse control” or “low risk” in an effort to soften the message
- strongly encourage parents/guardians to seek a medical or mental health provider for a comprehensive assessment of their child
- help the family find resources if needed

As parents/guardians are the people most invested long-term in a child’s life, they must be able to exercise custody and

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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 school counseling program promoting academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. Test-taking skills and strategies include:

WRWR

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The School Counselor and Transgender and Nonbinary Youth

(Adopted 2016; Revised 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors work to safeguard the well-being of transgender and nonbinary youth. 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 gender identity and gender expression.

The Rationale

School counselors are committed to all students' academic, career and social/emotional development, regardless of gender

- **Restrooms and locker rooms:** Students have the right to use restrooms and locker rooms matching their gender identity. Schools should work with transgender and nonbinary students to ensure they feel safe and can use the selected facilities with dignity. Upon request from any student requesting additional privacy, schools should provide alternatives

The School Counselor and Trauma-Informed Practice

(Adopted 2016; Revised 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors understand the impact adverse childhood experiences have on students' academic achievement and social/emotional development. Through the implementation of a school counseling program, school counselors strive to identify, support and promote the success of students who have experienced trauma.

The Rationale

Schools are increasingly recognizing the lasting negative impact on children exposed to traumatic events (Davis, et al., 2022). Children's trauma exposure, either as direct victims or as witnesses, can lead to social/emotional harm that manifests in negative ways in schools, including low academic performance, maladaptive behavior, lack of attention and focus, and an increase in absenteeism and drop-out rates (Rumsey & Milsom, 2019).

A trauma-sensitive school is one in which all students feel safe, welcomed and supported (Cole et al., 2013). Establishing a trauma-informed school counseling program paired with a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) and a preventive focus can decrease the effects of trauma exposure (Davis, et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2020; and Rumsey & Milsom, 2019). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014) 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 in their schools, as they are in a unique position to identify students who are actively resisting students from

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The School Counselor and Universal Screening

(Adopted 2023)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

Universal screening provides invaluable data to multidisciplinary teams, including school counselors, as they identify student needs and match them to interventions within a multitiered, multidisciplinary system of supports (MTSS). Universal screening must be carried out in an ethical manner that complies with federal and state laws and school district policies.

The Rationale

Universal screening in schools is defined as a preventive, systematic method for gathering data about the academic, social/emotional, and behavioral well-being and the mental health indicators of a given population (Donohue et al., 2018). As part of a multidisciplinary team, school counselors use data from universal screeners as a tool to inform interventions as a team.

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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 school counseling program is an integral component of the school’s academic mission. Comprehensive school counseling programs, informed 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

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
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Resources

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- Inform both the student and families of the benefits and limitations of virtual/distance/hybrid school counseling
- Educate students on how to participate in the virtual 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 process and relationship
- Recognize the challenges in virtual/distance/hybrid settings of assisting students considering suicide, including but not identifying their physical location, keeping them engaged on the call or device, contacting their parents/guardians and getting help to their location

Summary

School counselors understand the expectations, benefits, and challenges of providing virtual/distance/hybrid school counseling services to students. This form of program delivery increases students' access to activities and enables school counselors to assist them with a variety of diverse and unique needs outside of the in-person environment.

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