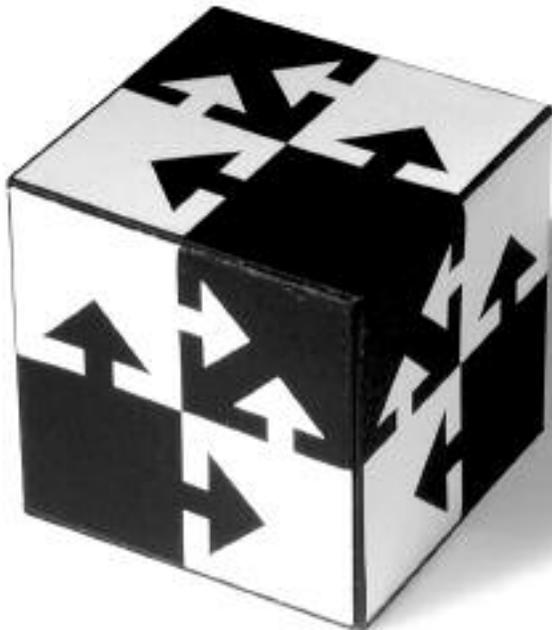


The ASCA National Model

A Framework For School Counseling Programs



Executive Summary



School counseling programs are collaborative efforts benefiting students, parents, teachers, administrators and the overall community. School counseling programs should be an integral part of students' daily educational environment, and school counselors should be partners in student achievement. Unfortunately, school counseling has lacked a consistent identity from state to state, district to district and even school to school. This has led to a misunderstanding of what school counseling is and what it can do for a school. As a result, school counseling programs are often viewed as ancillary programs instead of a crucial component to student achievement, and school counselors have not been used to their fullest.

The question has often been posed, "What do school counselors do?" The more important question is, "How are students different *because* of what school counselors do?"

To help answer this question, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) created The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. By implementing a school counseling program based on the ASCA National Model®, schools and school districts can:

- Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school.
- Ensure every student has equitable access to the school counseling program.
- Identify and deliver the knowledge and skills all students should acquire.
- Ensure that the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and is delivered systematically to all students.

The ASCA National Model supports the school's overall mission by promoting academic achievement, career planning and personal/social development. It serves as a framework to guide states, districts and individual schools in designing, developing, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive, developmental and systematic school counseling program.

The ASCA National Model consists of four interrelated components: foundation, delivery system, management systems and accountability. The first component, foundation, dictates how the program is managed and delivered, which in turn, leads to the accountability of the program. The information gathered through the accountability process should refine and revise the foundation. Infused throughout the program are the qualities of leadership, advocacy and collaboration, which lead to systemic change.

Historically, many school counselors spent much of their time responding to the needs of a small percentage of students, typically those who were high achievers or who were high risk. ASCA's National Model outlines a program allowing school counselors to direct services to every student.

As educators who are specially trained in childhood and adolescent development, school counselors can take a leadership role in effecting systemic change in a school. However, a successful school counseling program is a collaboration of parents, students, school counselors, administrators, teachers, student services personnel and support staff working together for the benefit of every student.

The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs keeps the development of the total student at the forefront of the education movement and forms the needed bridge between counseling and education.

Foundation

Like any solid structure, a school counseling program is built on a strong foundation. Based on the school's goals for student achievement, what every student should know and should be able to do, the foundation determines how every student will benefit from the school counseling program.

Beliefs and Philosophy – The philosophy is a set of principles guiding the program development, implementation and evaluation. All personnel involved in managing and implementing the program should reach consensus on each belief or guiding principal contained in the philosophy.

Mission – A mission statement describes the program's purpose and goals. A school counseling program mission statement aligns with and is a subset of the school and district's mission.

Delivery System

Based on the core beliefs, philosophies and missions identified in the foundation, the delivery system describes the activities, interactions and methods necessary to deliver the program.

Guidance Curriculum – The guidance curriculum consists of structured developmental lessons designed to assist students in achieving the desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The guidance curriculum is infused throughout the school's overall curriculum and is presented systematically through K-12 classroom and group activities.

Individual Student Planning – School counselors coordinate ongoing systematic activities designed to assist students individually in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.

Responsive Services – Responsive services, which are the traditional duties of a school counselor, consist of

activities meeting individual students' immediate needs, usually necessitated by life events or situations and conditions in the students' lives. These needs require counseling, consultation, referral, peer mediation or information.

Systems Support – Like any organized activity, a school counseling program requires administration and management to establish, maintain and enhance the total counseling program.

Management System

Intertwined with the delivery system is the management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure the program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school's needs. This is a relatively new concept for administrators and school counselors who traditionally have not viewed counselors as "managers."

Agreements – Management agreements ensure effective implementation of the delivery system to meet students' needs. These agreements, which address how the school counseling program is organized and what will be accomplished, should be negotiated with and approved by designated administrators at the beginning of each school year.

Advisory Council – An advisory council is a group of people appointed to review counseling program results and to make recommendations. Students, parents, teachers, counselors, administration and community members should be represented on the council.

Use of Data – A comprehensive school counseling program is data driven. The use of data to effect change within the school system is integral to ensuring every student receives the benefits of the school counseling program. School counselors must show that each activity implemented as part of the program

was developed from a careful analysis of students' needs, achievement and/or related data.

Action Plans – For every desired competency and result, there must be a plan outlining how the desired result will be achieved. Each plan contains:

- (1) competencies addressed
- (2) description of the activity
- (3) data driving the decision to address the competency
- (4) timeline in which activity is to be completed
- (5) who is responsible for delivery
- (6) means of evaluating student success
- (7) expected results for students

Use of Time – ASCA's National Model recommends that school counselors spend 80 percent of their time in direct service (contact) with students and provides a guide to school counselors and administrators for determining the amount of time their program should devote to each of the four components of the delivery system. Because resources are limited, school counselors' time should be protected; duties need to be limited to program delivery and direct counseling services, and non-counseling activities should be re-assigned whenever possible.

Use of Calendars – Once school counselors determine the amount of time necessary in each area of the delivery system, they should develop and publish master and weekly calendars to keep students, parents, teachers and administrators informed. This assists in planning and ensures active participation by stakeholders in the program.



Accountability

School counselors and administrators are increasingly challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms. To evaluate the program and to hold it accountable, school counselors must collect and use data that link the program to student achievement.

Results Reports – Results reports, which include process, perception and

results data, ensure programs are carried out, analyzed for effectiveness and modified as needed. Sharing these reports with stakeholders serves to advocate for the students and the program. Immediate, intermediate and long-range results are collected and analyzed for program improvement.

School Counselor Performance Standards – The school counselor's performance evaluation contains basic standards of practice expected of school counselors implementing a school counseling program. These performance standards should serve as both a basis for counselor evaluation and as a means for counselor self-evaluation.

Program Audit – The primary purpose for collecting information is to guide future action within the program and to improve future results for students.

ASCA National Standards for Student Academic, Career and Personal/Social Development

ASCA's National Standards outline competencies that are the foundation for ASCA's National Model. Student competencies define the knowledge, attitudes or skills students should obtain or demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program.

Academic Development

- A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.
- B. Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.
- C. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Career Development

- A. Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Ordering Information

"The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs" is \$29.95 for ASCA members or \$39.95 for non-members. Bulk pricing of \$22.50 is available for 10 copies or more. Order no. 9022. "The ASCA National Model Workbook" is \$24.95 for ASCA members or \$34.95 for nonmembers. Bulk pricing of \$17.50 is available for 10 copies or more. Order no. 9049.

Four easy ways to order:

Online: www.schoolcounselor.org

Phone: (800) 401-2404

Fax: (703) 661-1501

Mail: ASCA Publications,

P.O. Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172

- B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.
- C. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

Personal Social Development

- A. Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
- B. Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.
- C. Students will understand safety and survival skills.

School Counselor Responsibilities

School counselors have many duties and responsibilities related to designing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. Therefore, programs should free school counselors to do what they do best and what only they can do. Most school counselors have a master's degree and have formal training in both mental health and



education. Although school counselors are team players who understand fair-share responsibilities within a school system, they cannot be fully effective when they are taken away from essential counseling tasks to perform noncounseling activities such as:

- **Master schedule duties** – In many schools, the function of building the school’s master schedule is performed by a school counselor instead of an administrator, when this is clearly an administrative role. School counselors need to participate as consultants and experts in the process, but when they are required to carry the bulk of the responsibility in this area, their ability to provide school counseling services for students is diminished.
- **Testing coordinators** – In a world of increased high stakes testing, more and more school counselors are called upon to assist in the preparation for testing. The appropriate role for a school counselor is to interpret the results

of these tests and to analyze them in conjunction with multiple measures of student achievement.

- **Detention room coverage** – In the absence of a teacher or other certificated staff, school counselors often are called upon to cover detention rooms. Their more appropriate role is to assist in appropriate and systemic preventive measures that improve overall behavior and deter attendance in the detention room.
- **Discipline** – School counselors are not disciplinarians and do not possess the appropriate credentials for disciplining students. Their appropriate role is to provide counseling for students before and/or after discipline, to determine the causes of students’ behavior leading to disciplinary action, to develop and deliver schoolwide curriculum for the deterrence of behaviors leading to disciplinary action and to collaborate on school leadership teams to create policies promoting appropriate behavior on campus.

- **Classroom coverage** – School counselors understand the need to assist when emergencies arise and classrooms need coverage. Problems arise when school counselors are regularly first in line to cover classes. This is an inappropriate use of counselors’ time and skills.
- **Clerical responsibilities** – School counseling programs require clerical assistance to perform functions outside the school counselors’ appropriate job description. Many districts employ guidance assistants to provide this service so school counselors can spend their time in direct service to students.

Although school counselors should be involved in many aspects of students’ education, certain non-school-counseling tasks should be eliminated or reassigned, if possible, so school counselors can use their skills and knowledge to focus on students’ needs. A fine line sometimes separates appropriate from inappropriate activities. Following are some examples.

Inappropriate (noncounseling) activities:

- Registering and scheduling all new students
- Administering cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests
- Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
- Performing disciplinary actions
- Sending home students who are not appropriately dressed
- Teaching classes when teachers are absent
- Computing grade-point averages
- Maintaining student records
- Supervising study halls
- Clerical record keeping
- Assisting with duties in the principal’s office
- Working with one student at a time in a therapeutic, clinical mode

Appropriate (counseling) responsibilities:

- Designing individual student academic programs
- Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests
- Counseling students with excessive tardiness or absenteeism
- Counseling students with disciplinary problems
- Counseling students about appropriate school dress
- Collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons
- Analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement
- Interpreting student records
- Providing teachers with suggestions for better study hall management
- Ensuring student records are maintained in accordance with state and federal regulations
- Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems
- Collaborating with teachers to present proactive, prevention-based guidance curriculum lessons