Preamble

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a professional organization whose members have a unique and distinctive preparation, grounded in the behavioral sciences, with training in clinical skills adapted to the school setting. The school counselor assists in the growth and development of each individual and uses his or her highly specialized skills to protect the interests of the counselee within the structure of the school system. School counselors subscribe to the following basic tenets of the counseling process from which professional responsibilities are derived:

- Each person has the right to respect and dignity as a human being and to counseling services without prejudice as to person, character, belief, or practice regardless of age, color, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.

- Each person has the right to self-direction and self-development.

- Each person has the right of choice and the responsibility for goals reached.

- Each person has the right to privacy and thereby the right to expect the counselor-counselee relationship to comply with all laws, policies, and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality.

In this document, ASCA specifies the principles of ethical behavior necessary to regulate and maintain the high standards of integrity, leadership, and professionalism among its members. The Ethical Standards for School Counselors were developed to clarify the nature of ethical responsibilities held in common by school counseling professionals. The purposes of this document are to:

- Serve as a guide for the ethical practices of all professional school counselors regardless of level, area, population served, or membership in this professional association;

- Provide benchmarks for both self-appraisal and peer evaluations regarding counselor responsibilities to counselees, parents, colleagues and professional associates, schools, and communities, as well as to one's self and the counseling profession; and

- Inform those served by the school counselor of acceptable counselor practices and expected professional behavior.

A.1. Responsibilities to Students

The professional school counselor:

a. Has a primary obligation to the counselee who is to be treated with respect as a unique individual.

b. Is concerned with the educational, career, emotional, and behavioral needs and encourages the maximum development of each counselee.

c. Refrains from consciously encouraging the counselee's acceptance of values, lifestyles, plans, decisions, and beliefs that represent the counselor's personal orientation.

d. Is responsible for keeping informed of laws, regulations, and policies relating to counselees and strives to ensure that the rights of counselees are adequately provided for and protected.

A.2. Confidentiality

The professional school counselor:

a. Informs the counselee of the purposes, goals, techniques, and rules of procedure under which she/he may receive counseling at or before the time when the counseling relationship is entered. Disclosure notice includes confidentiality issues such as the possible necessity for consulting with other professionals, privileged communication, and legal or authoritative restraints. The meaning and limits of confidentiality are clearly defined to counselees through a written and shared disclosure statement.

b. Keeps information confidential unless disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to the counselee or others or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed. Counselors will consult with other professionals when in doubt as to the validity of an exception.

c. Discloses information to an identified third party who, by her or his relationship with the counselee, is at a high risk of contracting a disease that is commonly known to be communicable and fatal. Prior to disclosure, the counselor will ascertain that the counselee has not already informed the third party about his or her disease and he/she is not intending to inform the third party in the immediate future.

d. Requests of the court that disclosure not be required when the release of confidential information without a counselee's permission may lead to potential harm to the counselee.

e. Protects the confidentiality of counselee's records and releases personal data only according to prescribed laws and school policies. Student information maintained in computers is treated with the same care as traditional student records.

f. Protects the confidentiality of information received in the counseling relationship as specified by federal and state laws, written policies, and applicable ethical standards. Such information is only to be revealed to others with the informed consent of the counselee, consistent with the counselor's ethical obligation. In a group setting, the counselor sets a high norm of confidentiality and stresses its importance, yet clearly states that confidentiality in group counseling cannot be guaranteed.

A.3. Counseling Plans

The professional school counselor:

works jointly with the counselee in developing integrated and effective counseling plans, consistent with both the abilities and circumstances of the counselee and counselor. Such plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure continued viability and effectiveness, respecting the counselee's freedom of choice.
A.4. Dual Relationships

The professional school counselor:
Avoids dual relationships which might impair her or his objectivity and increase the risk of harm to the client (e.g., counseling one's family members, close friends, or associates). If a dual relationship is unavoidable, the counselor is responsible for taking action to eliminate or reduce the potential for harm. Such safeguards might include informed consent, consultation, supervision, and documentation.

A.5. Appropriate Referrals

The professional school counselor:
Makes referrals when necessary or appropriate to outside resources. Appropriate referral necessitates knowledge of available resources and making proper plans for transitions with minimal interruption of services. Counselees retain the right to discontinue the counseling relationship at any time.

A.6. Group Work

The professional school counselor:
Screens prospective group members and maintains an awareness of participants' needs and goals in relation to the goals of the group. The counselor takes reasonable precautions to protect members from physical and psychological harm resulting from interaction within the group.

A 7. Danger to Self or Others

The professional school counselor:
Inform appropriate authorities when the counselee's condition indicates a clear and imminent danger to the counselee or others. This is to be done after careful deliberation and, where possible, after consultation with other counseling professionals. The counselor informs the counselee of actions to be taken so as to minimize his or her confusion and to clarify counselee and counselor expectations.

A.8. Student Records

The professional school counselor:
Maintains and secures records necessary for rendering professional services to the counselee as required by laws, regulations, institutional procedures, and confidentiality guidelines.

A.9. Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation

The professional school counselor:
A. Adheres to all professional standards regarding selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment measures. The counselor recognizes that computer-based testing programs require specific training in administration, scoring, and interpretation which may differ from that required in more traditional assessments.

B. Provides explanations of the nature, purposes, and results of assessment/evaluation measures in language the counselee(s) can understand.

c. Does not misuse assessment results and interpretations and takes reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information.

d. Uses caution when utilizing assessment techniques, making evaluations, and interpreting the performance of populations not represented in the norm group on which an instrument is standardized.

A.10. Computer Technology

The professional school counselor:
A. Promotes the benefits of appropriate computer applications and clarifies the limitations of computer technology. The counselor ensures that: (1) computer applications are appropriate for the individual needs of the counselee; (2) the counselee understands how to use the application; and (3) follow-up counseling assistance is provided. Members of under-represented groups are assured equal access to computer technologies and are assured the absence of discriminatory information and values in computer applications.

b. Counselors who communicate with counselees via internet should follow the NBCC Standards for WebCounseling.

A.11. Peer Helper Programs

The professional school counselor:
Has unique responsibilities when working with peer helper programs. The school counselor is responsible for the welfare of counselees participating in peer programs under her or his direction. School counselors who function in training and supervisory capacities are referred to the preparation and supervision standards of professional counselor associations.

B. Responsibilities to Parents

B.1. Parent Rights and Responsibilities

The professional school counselor:
A. Respects the inherent rights and responsibilities of parents for their children and endeavors to establish, as appropriate, a collaborative relationship with parents to facilitate the counselee's maximum development.

b. Adheres to laws and local guidelines when assisting parents experiencing family difficulties that interfere with the counselee's effectiveness and welfare.

c. Is sensitive to cultural and social diversity among families and recognizes that all parents, custodial and noncustodial, are vested with certain rights and responsibilities for the welfare of their children by virtue of their role and according to law.

B.2. Parents and Confidentiality

The professional school counselor:
A. Informs parents of the counselee's condition as soon as possible without violating confidentiality. Counselee participation is required in more traditional assessments.

b. Provides parents with accurate, comprehensive, and relevant information in an objective and caring manner, as is appropriate and consistent with ethical responsibilities to the counselee.

c. Makes reasonable efforts to honor the wishes of parents and guardians concerning information that he/she may share regarding the counselee.

C. Responsibilities to Colleagues and Professional Associates
C.1. Professional Relationships

The professional school counselor:

a. Establishes and maintains professional relationships with faculty, staff, and administration to facilitate the provision of optimal counseling services. The relationship is based on the counselor's definition and description of the parameter and levels of his or her professional roles.

b. Treats colleagues with professional respect, courtesy, and fairness. The qualifications, views, and findings of colleagues are represented to accurately reflect the image of competent professionals.

c. Is aware of and optimally utilizes related professions and organizations to whom the counselee may be referred.

C.2. Sharing Information with Other Professionals

The professional school counselor:

a. Promotes awareness and adherence to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality; the distinction between public and private information; and staff consultation.

b. Provides professional personnel with accurate, objective, concise, and meaningful data necessary to adequately evaluate, counsel, and assist the counselee.

c. If a counselee is receiving services from another counselor or other mental health professional, the counselor, with client consent, will inform the other professional and develop clear agreements to avoid confusion and conflict for the counselee.

D. Responsibilities to the School and Community

D.1. Responsibilities to the School

The professional school counselor:

a. Supports and protects the educational program against any infringement not in the best interest of counselees.

b. Informs appropriate officials of conditions that may be potentially disruptive or damaging to the school's mission, personnel, and property while honoring the confidentiality between the counselee and counselor.

c. Delineates and promotes the counselor's role and function in meeting the needs of those served. The counselor will notify appropriate officials of conditions which may limit or curtail her or his effectiveness in providing programs and services.

d. Accepts employment only for positions for which he/she is qualified by education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Counselors recommend that administrators hire only qualified and competent individuals for professional counseling positions.

e. Assists in developing: (1) curricular and environmental conditions appropriate for the school and community; (2) educational procedures and programs to meet the counselee's developmental needs; and (3) a systematic evaluation process for comprehensive school counseling programs, services, and personnel. The counselor is guided by the findings of the evaluation data in planning programs and services.

D.2. Responsibility to the Community

The professional school counselor: collaborates with agencies, organizations, and individuals in the school and community in the best interest of counselees and without regard to personal reward or remuneration.

E. Responsibilities to Self

E.1. Professional Competence

The professional school counselor:

a. Functions within the boundaries of individual professional competence and accepts responsibility for the consequences of his or her actions.

b. Monitors personal functioning and effectiveness and does not participate in any activity which may lead to inadequate professional services or harm to a client.

c. Strives through personal initiative to maintain professional competence and to keep abreast of professional information. Professional and personal growth are ongoing throughout the counselor's career.

E.2. Multicultural Skills

The professional school counselor:
understands the diverse cultural backgrounds of the counselees with whom he/she works. This includes, but is not limited to, learning how the school counselor's own cultural/ethnic/racial identity impacts her or his values and beliefs about the counseling process.

F. Responsibilities to the Profession

F.1. Professionalism

The professional school counselor:

a. Accepts the policies and processes for handling ethical violations as a result of maintaining membership in the American School Counselor Association.

b. Conducts herself/himself in such a manner as to advance individual ethical practice and the profession.

c. Conducts appropriate research and reports findings in a manner consistent with acceptable educational and psychological research practices. When using client data for research or for statistical or program planning purposes, the counselor ensures protection of the individual counselee's identity.

d. Adheres to ethical standards of the profession, other official policy statements pertaining to counseling, and relevant statutes established by federal, state, and local governments.

e. Clearly distinguishes between statements and actions made as a private individual and those made as a representative of the school counseling profession.

f. Does not use his or her professional position to recruit or gain clients, consultees for her or his private practice, seek and receive unjustified personal gains, unfair advantage, sexual favors, or unearned goods or services.
**F.2. Contribution to the Profession**

The professional school counselor:

a. Actively participates in local, state, and national associations which foster the development and improvement of school counseling.

b. Contributes to the development of the profession through sharing skills, ideas, and expertise with colleagues.

**G. Maintenance of Standards**

Ethical behavior among professional school counselors, Association members and nonmembers, is expected at all times. When there exists serious doubt as to the ethical behavior of colleagues, or if counselors are forced to work in situations or abide by policies which do not reflect the standards as outlined in these Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the counselor is obligated to take appropriate action to rectify the condition. The following procedure may serve as a guide:

1. The counselor should consult confidentially with a professional colleague to discuss the nature of a complaint to see if she/he views the situation as an ethical violation.

2. When feasible, the counselor should directly approach the colleague whose behavior is in question to discuss the complaint and seek resolution.

3. If resolution is not forthcoming at the personal level, the counselor shall utilize the channels established within the school, school district, the state SCA, and ASCA Ethics Committee.

4. If the matter still remains unresolved, referral for review and appropriate action should be made to the Ethics Committees in the following sequence:
   - state school counselor association
   - ASCA Ethics Committee

5. The ASCA Ethics Committee is responsible for educating— and consulting with — the membership regarding ethical standards. The Committee periodically reviews an recommends changes in code. The Committee will also receive and process questions to clarify the application of such standards. Questions must be submitted in writing to the ASCA Ethics Chair. Finally, the Committee will handle complaints of alleged violations of our ethical standards. Therefore, at the national level, complaints should be submitted in writing to the ASCA Ethics Committee, c/o the Executive Director, American School Counselor Association, 801 North Fairfax, Suite 310, Alexandria, VA 22314.

**H. Resources**

School counselors are responsible for being aware of, and acting in accord with, standards and positions of the counseling profession as represented in official documents such as those listed below:


Ethical Standards for School Counselors was adopted by the ASCA Delegate Assembly, March 19, 1984. The first revision was approved by the ASCA Delegate Assembly, March 27, 1992. The second revision was approved by the ASCA Governing Board on March 30, 1998 and adopted on June 25, 1998.

6/25/98
What are the Effects of Comprehensive Developmental Guidance Programs on Early Elementary Students’ Academic Achievement?


School reform is in full swing around the country and with it comes the clarion call for ongoing and systematic measurement of relevant student outcomes. Both state reform initiatives and No Child Left Behind have focused attention on the need for systematic measurement of student achievement via standardized test scores in core academic areas. Public school educators are becoming increasingly more accountable for producing demonstrable gains in student achievement. Accountability has been a major concern in the school counseling literature for over thirty years. Recently, Isaacs (2003) reemphasized the need for increased school counselor accountability and documentation of the efficacy of school counseling services.

In addition to evaluating specific school counseling interventions, it is important to know whether the nature of the school counseling program is related to student outcomes. Over the past 30 years, Comprehensive Developmental Guidance (CDG) (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000), has emerged as the most widespread organizational approach for school counseling programs and is the foundation for many district and state guidance models (MacDonald & Sink, 1999; Sink, 2005; Sink & MacDonald, 1998; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). The American School Counselor Association’s (2003) National Model for School Counseling Programs builds upon the CDG philosophy and delivery system—adding more standards-based approaches to program management and evaluation. Despite its popularity, there have been relatively few studies of the outcomes of CDG programs. It is important to know whether CDG-based school counseling programs are of demonstrable benefit to students in terms of enhanced academic achievement.

Previous CDG evaluation research reviewed in Lapan (2001, 2005) has produced largely positive findings. Initial research has suggested that CDG programs are useful in furthering secondary students’ development in a variety of important school-related areas. Despite these encouraging findings, there is minimal empirical evidence that academic achievement is improving in elementary-age students due to the implementation of CDG. Sink and Stroh’s study (2003a, 2003b) conducted in Washington State's elementary schools aimed at filling this hole in the research base.

Method

Sink and Stroh used a causal comparative design to answer this overarching research question: Does school counselors' interventions in elementary schools with CDG programs foster higher academic achievement test scores in students?
Participants. At the school level, 150 public elementary schools from Washington State were randomly drawn to participate in the study. The schools selected represented small (enrollment from 1 to 365 students, \(n = 49\), or 33%), medium (enrollment from 366 to 499 students, \(n = 57\), 38%), and large (enrollment of 500 or more students, \(n = 44\), 29%) schools, and were spread out across the state in rural \((n = 59, 39\%)\), suburban \((n = 57, 38\%)\), and urban \((n = 34, 23\%)\) areas. Of the 150 schools, 119 school personnel (83% were certified school counselors; mean age = 45.5 years; female, 79%; and White, 93%) were given a telephone survey that addressed the usage of a CSCP in their particular school. Since the remaining 31 schools had no counselor in the building, personnel in these schools were not questioned. Of the original 150 schools selected for the study, 67 schools were classified as CSCP schools (research group) and 83 were labeled as non-CSCP schools (comparison group).

At the student level, data on students \((N = 20,131)\) in Grades 3 \((n = 9,863, 49\%)\) and 4 \((n = 10,268, 51\%)\) within each of the 150 participating elementary schools were also collected. The students reflected the ethnic diversity of the state (European American/White, 72%; Hispanic, 12%; Asian American, 6%; African American, 5%; Native American, 3%; other, 2%) and the gender breakdown was approximately equal (51% males and 49% female). There were about 10,000 student participants in the research (CSCP, \(n = 9,816\)) and comparison (non-CSCP, \(n = 10,315\)) groups. Finally, the research group was further divided into a subgroup of "high" implementation CSCP schools (i.e., five or more years experience with a CSCP), representing 3,027 third- and fourth-graders.

Instruments. The following three measures were used:

(1) The Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs and Student Success in Washington State Elementary Schools Telephone Survey developed by the researchers asked for the respondents’ background information (e.g., current educational position, full time equivalent, age, gender, ethnicity, years as a school counselor) and school data (e.g., location, grade levels served, total caseload). Those respondents who stated that their schools or districts had instituted a “standard” CSCP or some facsimile (see e.g., Gysbers & Henderson, 2000) were queried further about the details of their comprehensive program.

(2) The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills-Form M (ITBS), a widely used standardized achievement battery of tests (Vocabulary, Comprehension, Reading, and Mathematics), was administered to the Grade 3 students.

(3) The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), a criterion-referenced test, was group-administered to the fourth grade participants. The possible scale score range for the Mathematics, Reading, Listening, and Writing tests was 150 to 600. At the time of the study, the criterion for passing each test was 400.
**Data analyses and variables.** Multivariate analyses of covariances (MANCOVAs) were run to examine the research hypotheses (see Sink & Stroh, 2003). The key independent variables were Group (participants in CSCP vs. non-CSCP schools), Length of Enrollment (length of time students were continuously enrolled in their particular schools), and Gender. The dependent measures included ITBS or WASL achievement test scores. The covariate was each school’s percentage of students receiving a free or reduced cost lunch. Partial eta squares, as estimates of the effect size, were calculated as well.

**Results**

What were Sink and Stroh’s (2003) principal findings?

- **CSCP students in their first few years of school enrollment generally received significantly lower achievement test scores than those students in non-CSCP schools.** This group achievement difference was largely erased as students remained for at least three years in their CSCP schools.

- **A significant interaction was found for both third- and fourth-graders between Group and Length of Enrollment in high implementation CSCP versus non-CSCP schools.** That is to say, the longer the participants stayed enrolled in high implementation CSCP schools, the more likely they would have significantly higher test scores (as measured by the Grade 3 ITBS Vocabulary, Comprehension, Reading, and Mathematics, and Grade 4 WASL Listening, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics tests) than those students in the non-CSCP comparison schools.

- Significant gender differences were also reported, but these are less important to the focus of this research brief.

**Implications for Professional School Counseling and Closing Remarks**

What are the key things school counselors can take away from this research?

First, we now know that early elementary-age children who attend the same schools for three or more years, with a CDG program in place, will benefit academically, even if the CDG program is not fully implemented. Second, children from all socioeconomic levels who remain in the same school for multiple years with a well implemented CDG program will generate higher achievement test scores than students who attend schools without such whole-school counseling programs. Third, these results are consistent the general school counseling efficacy research conducted in elementary schools which indicates that elementary-age pupils are assisted both academically and interpersonally by going to schools with trained counselors in the buildings (e.g., Whiston, 2003; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). Finally, Sink and Stroh’s investigation extends earlier CDG evaluation studies (see e.g., Gysbers, 2001; Lapan, 2001, 2005, for reviews) carried out with middle or junior and senior high school students and suggest that CDG programs are really making a difference in students’ educational lives at all levels.
Given these findings it would be prudent for school districts to support the implementation of CDG school counseling programs. A comprehensive, developmental approach to school counseling is associated with gains in academic achievement. In CDG programs school counselors should be involved in implementing classroom guidance and small groups targeting student mastery of academic/educational competencies. Elementary students will profit from a "how to get ahead in school" guidance curriculum, including such topics as listening, study, and test-taking skills, building positive school attitudes and behaviors, effective writing and reading skills, and homework completion skills. School counselors can facilitate cross- and same-age peer tutoring for students needing a bit more academic support. Naturally, conducting workshops and in-services for parents, teachers, and staff on ways to foster student learning are useful activities as well.

Closing Remarks

Elementary school counselors can take comfort that all the years of hard work in planning, implementing, and evaluating their CDG program has not been in vain. These school counselors need to celebrate and publicize their good work with youngsters. This does not mean school counselors can become complacent and rest on their laurels. Instead, they must continue to refine their CDG programs so that all students in every grade academically achieve to the best of their abilities. Coupled with the previous research with secondary students, Sink and Stroh’s recent study suggests that the CDG programs (a) can be very effective organizational frameworks to enhance student learning, and (b) should be fully funded and widely implemented. For those school counselors who are developing or refining their CDG program, ASCA’s (2003) National Model is excellent resource to consult.

References


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The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research is dedicated to enhancing school counseling by grounding practice in research. The Center publishes periodic Research Briefs that review research that is especially relevant to improving practice. The complete collection of briefs is available on the Center’s website [http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/](http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/)

To subscribe to the Research Brief Distribution List, send an Email to listproc@lists.umass.edu. In the body of the message, include the words: subscribe research-brief (followed by your email address). To unsubscribe, follow the same procedure using the words: unsubscribe research-brief (followed by your email address).
The Professional School Counselor and Discipline

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
The professional school counselor works with school system personnel and other stakeholders to establish and maintain policies that encourage appropriate behavior so that schools can be a safe place where teaching and learning can be effectively accomplished. Such policies promote the use of the school counselor as a resource person with expertise in the area of discipline plan development for prevention and intervention not as a disciplinarian.

THE RATIONALE
School discipline is one of the most serious, ongoing problems confronting school systems today. Contemporary discipline plans take a developmental approach in stressing that students are responsible for controlling their own behavior. All professional staff members need to be actively committed and involved in the development, implementation and maintenance of an effective school wide discipline plan, which has as its primary goal, making schools safe and respectful learning environment.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
The professional school counselor is increasingly being called upon to act as mediator in teacher-student conflicts and in student-student conflict situations. The professional school counselor is also called upon as a support and resource for parents.

The professional school counselor plays a participatory role in the developmental aspects of discipline programs, within state regulations. It is not the role of the professional school counselor to mete out punishment but to help create effective behavior change. The professional school counselor acts as a liaison, representative and mediator to help create effective learning environment, keeping in mind students’ the diverse cultural, developmental and emotional needs individual needs.

SUMMARY
The professional school counselor’s role in the disciplinary referral process must be clearly delineated by district administrative policy. Such policy needs to describe the ability and limits of the professional school counselor’s involvement in disciplinary action. The professional school counselor should be, by policy, perceived by all as a neutral and resourceful mediator of those involved in conflict resolution. It is not the professional school counselor’s role to serve as an enforcement agent but rather a significant contributor to the development of the prevention and intervention plans through which problem student behaviors are managed and positive student behaviors are nurtured.
The Professional School Counselor and Dropout Prevention/Students-At-Risk
(Adopted 1989-90; revised 1993, 1999)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors at all levels make a significant, vital and indispensable contribution toward the mental wellness of “at-risk” students. School counselors work as a member of a team with other student service professionals including social workers, psychologists and nurses, in liaison with staff and parents, to provide comprehensive developmental counseling programs for all students including those identified as being potential dropouts or at-risk.

RATIONALE
There are probably as many definitions of the “at-risk” student as there are school districts. Any student may at any time be at risk with respect to dropping out of school, becoming truant, performing below academic potential, contemplating suicide or using drugs. The underlying reasons for these behaviors often deal with personal and social concerns such as poor self-esteem, family problems, unresolved grief, neglect or abuse. Students experiencing these concerns can be helped by professional school counselors. The decision to drop out of school can carry with it devastating lifelong implications. The school counselor, in conjunction with other school staff members, identifies potential dropouts and other students considered at risk and works closely with them to help them stay in school or find alternative means of completing their education.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
The professional school counselor provides consultation in defining and identifying at-risk students. The goal is to identify and intervene before they move through a continuum of self-destructive behavior. The school counselor provides responsive programs, including short-term individual, group, family and crisis counseling; provides programs for individual planning to meet academic, educational and career counseling needs; provides curriculum programs to strengthen personal/interpersonal skills (choice, self-acceptance, feelings, beliefs and behaviors, problem-solving, decision-making); identifies suicidal students, counsels them and refers them to appropriate outside agencies; provides in-service support presentations to staff; provides referrals for additional specialized support services within the district and from other community resources; and provides consultation with and support for parents/guardians of at-risk students. The school counselor works as a member of a team with other student service professionals.

SUMMARY
Professional school counselors work with other educators and community resources to provide early identification and intervention for potential dropouts and other students who may be considered at-risk through a comprehensive, developmental, K-12 counseling program.
The Professional School Counselor and Educational Planning
(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
The professional school counselor works with administrative, curricular and instructional staff to ensure all students have the opportunity to design academically challenging programs of studies.

RATIONALE
Specialization within a student’s program of studies should lead to successful completion of requirements for the chosen post-secondary option, while permitting opportunities for the development of other competencies. A systematic educational planning program promotes a student’s opportunity to make individual choices geared to his or her unique profile of abilities, interests and goals. Lack of educational planning leads to inequities based on gender, stereotypical attitudes and students’ special needs.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
Professional school counselors play a critical role in assisting students in the development of a comprehensive plan allowing for exploration of their educational and career opportunities. The professional school counselor possesses knowledge of national, state and local goals and programs identifying how students can best achieve success in their post-secondary plans.

The professional school counselor advocates for developmental guidance programs involving individual and group activities stressing educational planning (i.e. decision-making, career awareness and exploration). The professional school counselor educates parents to become active members of the decision-making team.

Collaboration within the education community is necessary to provide all students with better choices and opportunities for quality educational programs. The professional school counselor takes a proactive role in facilitating changes that afford students, parents and staff the opportunity to accurately assess student strengths, interests and preferences and encourages the selection of challenging educational programs.

SUMMARY
The professional school counselor advocates for equal educational planning opportunities for all students. Decisions that a student makes about a chosen course of study must be based upon information unique to the individual and his or her profile of skills and knowledge.
The Professional School Counselor and Evaluation
(Adopted 1978; reaffirmed 1984; revised 1986, 1993; reviewed 1999)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Each school counselor should have an annual evaluation. This evaluation must be based upon criteria recognizing the differences between evaluating counselors and classroom personnel and conforming to local and state regulations.

THE RATIONALE
Since the primary purpose of the evaluation process is to ensure the continued professional growth of school counselors, ASCA is committed to the continued improvement of the process. It is the association’s position that evaluation must be based upon criteria that recognize the differences between evaluating professional school counselors and classroom personnel and that conform to local and state regulations. It is recommended that each professional school counselor be evaluated with regard to the implementation of the district’s written counseling program and school counselor job description. Both the district’s plans on evaluating professional school counselors and the professional school counselor need to be evaluated and reviewed annually. The plan needs to contain specific goals along with objectives emphasizing student outcomes. The written evaluation is a dynamic document, modified annually to reflect the changing needs of the students and the improved skills of the school counseling staff. As professional school counselors are committed to the improvement of school counseling programs, the association also welcomes the opportunity to aid local administrators, department heads and others charged with the improvement or development of evaluation instruments and procedures.
The Professional School Counselor and Family/Parenting Education  
(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 1999)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors need to take an active role in the initiation, promotion and leadership of providing family/parenting education in the schools.

THE RATIONALE
Family/parenting education is specialized instruction on the practices of childrearing. Instruction and strategies are provided by trained group leaders who provide guidance, resources and consultation on a regular basis.

Family/parenting education programs positively influence the attitudes of parents and cause behavioral changes in their children. Research findings indicate that school-sponsored parent education integrates home and school life. It provides families with a model of participation.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
Under a comprehensive school counseling program, grades K-12, the school counselor will include units for community-oriented family/parenting education programs. The content of the guidance will vary according to the developmental levels, stages and needs of the participants but will be provided to students as part of the family life/teen parent component of the guidance program and to parents as part of the community outreach component of the guidance program. Group approaches are the preferred means of delivery for developmental guidance activities in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. The goal of the parent education program is to improve parenting skills in interpersonal relationships on the basis of mutual respect, to improve problem-solving and decision-making skills and to provide a “skill bank” of alternative coping skills. The counselor also provides resources and educational materials for parents to continue their independent study of parenting skills.

SUMMARY
Research indicates that school-sponsored family/parenting education integrates home and school life, providing families with a model of participation. The school counselor, as part of the comprehensive school counseling program, takes an active role in providing family/parenting education in the schools.
The Professional School Counselor and Gender Equity

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
ASCA members are committed to facilitating and promoting the fullest possible development of each individual by reducing barriers of race, gender, ethnicity, age or handicap and by providing equal opportunity and equal status for all genders. ASCA is committed to the use of inclusive language and positive modeling of gender equity.

THE RATIONALE
Many internal and external obstacles exist in school and society inhibiting students from developing their full potential (e.g., gender-role stereotyping and socialization, tracking systems). To expand the range of options available to students, it is important that school counselors become acutely aware of ways in which communications affect opportunities on the basis of gender. Some of the ways in which barriers are maintained or broken down are through language, organizational structures, leader selection, expectations of individual students and activities implementation.

This position statement focuses primarily on equal opportunity and status irrespective of gender and expands the range of opportunities available to students. Many federal and state laws have been passed protecting individuals from sex and race discrimination in education and work (e.g., the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Vocational Amendments of 1976, the Women's Educational Equity Act of 1974, Affirmative Action and Executive Orders, and Title IX). These important legal mandates ensure equal treatment under the law but do not necessarily change ingrained attitudes and behaviors.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
The professional school counselor uses inclusive language and equitable expectations toward students. Professional school counselors are sensitive to those aspects of interpersonal communication and organization that provide working models of gender equity and equality. They may also promote gender equity through large and small group presentations. Professional school counselors must become vigilant as to the pervasive negative effects of stereotyping gender-role expectations. The professional school counselor becomes sensitive to ways in which interpersonal attitudes and behaviors can have negative effects on others and provides constructive feedback on negative and positive use of inclusive language and organizational structure. The professional school counselor emphasizes a person’s competence and not his or her appearance. When planning activities, equal representation of genders in visible leadership positions as well as other role positions demonstrates gender equity.

SUMMARY
ASCA is committed to equity. ASCA supports consciousness-raising among professional school counselors including modeling of inclusive language and equal opportunity for everyone in order to break through stereotypical behaviors and expectations.
The Professional School Counselor and Gifted and Talented Student Programs

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
The Professional school counselor assists in providing technical assistance and an organized support system within the developmental comprehensive school counseling program for gifted and talented students to meet their extensive and diverse needs as well as the needs of all students.

THE RATIONALE
An organized support system throughout the formative years is imperative for such students to be able to realize their potential. A part of this support system is participation in a school counseling program that meets the extensive and diverse needs of the gifted and talented students.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
The role of the professional school counselor in gifted and talented programs may be as follows:

1. Assisting in the identification of gifted and talented students through the use of a multiple criterion system utilized in their school district, which may include:
   a. Intellectual ability
   b. Academic performance
   c. Visual and performing arts ability
   d. Practical arts ability
   e. Creative thinking ability
   f. Leadership potential
   g. Parent, teacher, peer nomination
   h. Expert evaluation

2. Advocating for the inclusion of activities that effectively address the personal/social, and career development needs, in addition to the academic needs of identified gifted and talented students

3. Assisting in promoting understanding and awareness of the special issues that may affect gifted and talented students including:
   a. Underachievement
   b. Perfectionism
   c. Depression
   d. Dropping out
   e. Delinquency
   f. Difficulty in peer relationships
   g. Career development
   h. Meeting expectations
   i. Goal setting
   j. Questioning others’ values

4. Providing individual and group counseling for gifted and talented students, as warranted.

5. Recommending material and resources for gifted and talented programs and teachers and parents of gifted and talented students.

6. Engaging in professional development activities through which knowledge and skills in the area of programming for the needs of the gifted and talented are regularly upgraded.

SUMMARY
Gifted and talented students come from many backgrounds, and their special abilities cover a wide spectrum of human potential. Specifically planned educational experiences can greatly enhance the continued development of gifted and talented persons. Professional school counselors work in a collaboration with other school personnel to maximize opportunities for these students. The professional school counselor is an integral part of the educational team that delivers a comprehensive school counseling program to meet the needs of all students.
**The Professional School Counselor and Group Counseling**

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

**AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION**

Every school district and every institution of higher learning should include and support the group counseling concept as an integral part of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program.

**THE RATIONALE**

Group counseling, which involves a number of students working on shared tasks and developing supportive relationships in a group setting, is an efficient and positive way of dealing with students’ developmental problems and situational concerns.

By allowing individuals to develop insights into themselves and others, group counseling makes it possible for more people to achieve a healthier personal adjustment, handle the stresses of a rapidly changing technological and complex environment and learn to work and live with others.

**THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE**

Many components of a comprehensive school counseling program are best delivered by means of group counseling. Small- and large-group approaches are the preferred medium of delivery for developmental counseling program activities, in terms of efficiency as well as effectiveness.

Professional school counselors facilitate many groups, as well as train others as group facilitators. Such groups might include the parent education group, the peer helpers group or in-school support groups for students. The counselor may be involved in groups specific to a particular community/school district.

**SUMMARY**

Group counseling is an efficient and positive delivery medium to meet students’ developmental needs and situational concerns. Groups and group counseling make it possible for students to achieve healthier personal adjustment in the face of rapid change and to learn to work and live with others. Groups are an integral part of a comprehensive school counseling program and should be included and supported by every educational institution.
The Professional School Counselor and “High Stakes” Testing
(Adopted 2002)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recognizes the use of standardized testing as one in a range of measures used to assess student performance and learning. ASCA recommends the use of multiple criteria and opposes the use of a single test to make important educational decisions affecting students and their schools.

THE RATIONALE
High stakes testing refers to any standardized assessment that uses resulting scores to generate consequences determining the educational direction for students, educators, schools and communities. Important consequences for students might include decisions affecting an individual student’s career choices, and educational opportunities such as academic placement, promotion, and graduation. Resultant scores from high stakes tests use inferred information as data to improve the quality of education through added or reduced funding, adjustment of curriculum, and altering of teacher certification standards.

High stakes tests can penalize schools and students for factors over which they have no control such as socioeconomic influences, naturally occurring yearly fluctuations or a student’s state of readiness to perform on the day of the test. The scores resulting from high stakes tests do not take into account important factors such as a school’s adequacy of educational funding; lack of standardization of the test’s administration; interpretation and scoring; potential errors in scoring; or barriers to student performance. The testing results do not necessarily indicate student learning. Life changing decisions may be based on the results of a single score.

The pressure to perform and the anxiety related to these tests in many cases are developmentally inappropriate and unhealthy for young children and may be for older students. Yearly administration of such tests may affect student achievement by promoting a negative attitude towards education and learning, as well as affect student performance on other authentic measures of assessment.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
The professional school counselor’s role is to adhere to professional standards regarding assessment measures and to provide explanations as to the nature, purpose and results of the assessment. The professional school counselor appropriately uses assessment results and takes reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information. The professional school counselor uses caution when making evaluations and interpreting the performance of populations not represented in the norm group on which an evaluation instrument is normed, or on criteria not represented in the assessment.

SUMMARY
ASCA supports the use of standardized tests as one of many measures of students’ and schools’ achievement and success. ASCA rejects the use of high stakes tests and/or the use of a single measurement instrument to identify student/school success. The professional school counselor encourages multiple measures when life-influencing decisions are being made.
The Professional School Counselor and Home Schooling
(Adopted 1999)

**AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION**

The professional school counselor works to support children and parents in public and private school settings. When a parent decides to provide schooling for children at home, the counselor supports the child as those transitions are made.

**RATIONALE**

Three main areas of involvement in children’s lives are the home, the school and relationships with peers. When a child is home schooled, those three areas become one. All states allow home schooling, and at a minimum, parents must let the state know of their intentions to teach their children at home and identify the children. Although home schooling parents across the country have banded together to form groups, the major area of concern for school counselors remains the isolation of home schooled children and the impact this has on social development. Professional school counselors address the three main areas of academic, career and personal-social development through their programs, and home schooled children may not receive the information in these areas available to children who attend school.

**THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE**

The professional school counselor works first to advocate for and support children. The school counselor gives information to parents on home schooling as appropriate and gives support as the state and local school system allows. As children and parents leave the school system, the counselor helps them understand the process of returning if they choose. The professional school counselor helps ease the adjustment of children returning to a school setting from home schooling and for children entering school from a home school setting for the first time.

**SUMMARY**

The professional school counselor advocates for and supports the child whose parent makes the decision to remove him/her from the school setting to a home school. Professional school counselors assist children with transitions to home school as well as from home school back into the school setting.
The Professional School Counselor and Military Recruitment
(Adopted 1984; revised 1993, 1999)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors encourage and promote positive and equal reception of representatives of all careers, career services and educational institutions in the schools.

THE RATIONALE
The relationship between the persons involved in armed services recruitment activities and the educators in a school district is a potential source of comfort and conflict. In most schools, recruiters of one or all military services are welcomed; in others, they are denied entry. In some schools, no information on military careers is seen in career centers; in others, information provided by the military is the only career material available. In order to protect the rights of students, three primary issues emerge: access to students during school time, release of lists of students’ names and addresses and administration and use of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The purpose of this position statement is to set forth reasonable expectations for both school officials and armed services recruiters to provide equal reception in the schools of all representatives of career and educational institutions.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
It is desirable that an annual meeting of school officials and armed services recruiters be conducted prior to the beginning of the school year to develop a clear understanding of the school and school district policy and procedures in the coming year. School representatives include the principal, head of the guidance department and the professional school counselor with primary responsibility for military career information. Recruiters would be provided with the student handbook, course catalog and schedule of classes, activities and major events, school organization chart, school map/floor plan and school district policy relating to release of student directory information and access to students. The school will be provided with the name/address/telephone number of their respective COs, recruiting activity plan; Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) testing program, the armed services’ stay-in-school policy and current information on education and career opportunities.

The participants will discuss mutual expectations for the school year, including assisting with developing awareness and providing information about the opportunities available for students with the armed services, as well as the Family Rights to Privacy Act and other federal and state statutes. Welcoming armed services participation in those activities where career and educational options are presented and following guidelines in accordance with policies established at the planning meeting should be mutually benefit to students and the military.

SUMMARY
To ensure the delivery of current and accurate military career information and to protect students’ rights, armed services recruiters, school administrators and school counselors meet annually to set forth expectations and guidelines.
The Professional School Counselor and Parent Consent for Services
(Adopted 1999)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
The professional school counselor makes counselees and their parents knowledgeable of the services available through the school counselor. School counselors provide written information regarding school counseling programs to the school publics; an explanation of legal and ethical limits to confidentiality may be included. Parental consent for services is obtained if state or local law or policy requires it.

RATIONALE
Local school boards and school administrators expect professional school counselors to implement a comprehensive counseling program available to all students. The professional school counselor follows all local guidelines regarding the circumstances under which signed consent for services must be obtained.

The professional school counselor has the responsibility to explain confidentiality to his or her clients. The professional school counselor adheres to the guidelines of ASCA’s Ethical Standards for School Counselors regarding informing the counselee of the purposes, goals, techniques and rules of procedure for counseling. According to the ethical standards, school counselors ensure that parents understand the counselor’s role, especially with regard to confidentiality, and respect the inherent rights and responsibilities of parents for their children while working to establish a collaborative relationship with parents.

ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR
The professional school counselor provides written information about the counseling program for students and parents. School counselors follow all local laws and guidelines regarding the circumstances under which signed consent for services must be obtained. As counseling with an individual progresses it may become important to initiate contact with parents utilizing a consulting role. The consulting process may be initiated by the parent or the counselor. In either case, agreement with the counselee concerning the consultation and information that may be shared is essential to maintain the trust in the counseling relationship.

SUMMARY
Providing written information about the school counseling program is essential to the ethical and legal functioning of the professional school counselor. A full understanding of the counseling relationship and process tends to increase the sense of trust between the counselor, the counselee and parents. School counselors obtain parental permission for services if required by local law or policy.
The Professional School Counselor and Peer Helping


AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION

Peer helping programs enhance the effectiveness of school counseling programs by increasing outreach and the expansion of available services.

THE RATIONALE

Peer Helping: A variety of interpersonal helping behaviors assumed by nonprofessionals who undertake a helping role with others, including one-to-one helping relationships, group leadership, discussion leadership, tutoring and all activities of an interpersonal helping or assisting nature.

Peer Helper: A person who assumes the role of a helping person with persons of approximately the same age who share related values, experiences and lifestyles.

Students often communicate their problems to their peers rather than to parents, administrators or counselors. In our society, peer influence may be the strongest single motivational force in a student’s life. Peers can be selected and trained by professional counselors in communication and helping skills through a carefully planned peer helping program. It is ASCA’s position that peer helping programs enhance the effectiveness of the school counseling program by increasing the outreach of the school counseling programs and raising student awareness of services. Through proper selection, training and supervision, peer helping can be a positive force within the school and community.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE

The professional counselor accepts responsibility for determining the needs of the school population and for implementing a peer helping program designed to meet those needs. Professional school counselors devise a selection plan for peer helpers compatible with the population to be served; coordinate an appropriate training program; schedule adequate time to work with peer helpers on a weekly basis for continued training, supervision, sharing and personal growth; construct a support system through positive, honest public relations; and continually monitor, evaluate and adjust the program and training to meet the assessed needs of the population it serves. The professional school counselor accepts responsibility for the design, completion and evaluation of the peer helping program. Results should be reported to the population served and other interested persons (i.e., school boards, etc.), including counselors.

SUMMARY

Well-trained peer helpers can have a positive, supportive effect upon students that no one else can provide. Students can relate to and accept alternative patterns of behavior from peers who are struggling with similar feelings and problems. Peer helpers increase the services of the school counseling program in an outreach function and are an invaluable part of a comprehensive school counseling program.
The Professional School Counselor and the Promotion of Safe Schools
(Adopted 1994)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
ASCA believes students have a fundamental and immutable right to attend school without the fear or threat of violence, weapons or gangs.

THE RATIONALE
Safe schools are essential to an effective learning environment and necessary for quality schools.

There is a threat to this safety due to the rapid increase of violence, weapons or gangs in the schools. The need to promote and provide a safe school environment is recognized by students, parents, staff, administrators, other school personnel, legislators and the community at large.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
It is the professional school counselor’s role to support programs and provide leadership emphasizing prevention and intervention related to violence, weapons and gangs. Programs for students must be designed to teach nonviolent alternatives to resolve differences. Inherent in these programs is an emphasis on the teaching of communication skills and an awareness of and an acceptance of diversity. The professional school counselor encourages and supports the shared responsibility of ensuring and providing a safe school environment and the development of policies to support a safe environment.

SUMMARY
ASCA believes it is each student’s right to attend a safe school that provides opportunities for optimum learning in an environment that values and respects diversity and equity.
The Professional School Counselor and Sexual Orientation of Youth
(Adopted 1995, Revised 2000)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors are committed to facilitating and promoting the fullest possible development of each individual by reducing the barriers of misinformation, myth, ignorance, hatred and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Professional school counselors are in a field committed to human development and must be sensitive to the use of inclusive language and positive modeling. ASCA is committed to equal opportunity and respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation.

THE RATIONALE
Identity is determined by a complex mix of nature and nurture. Developmental literature clearly states that sexual orientation is firmly established by age five and much research indicates such establishment occurs even earlier. Many internal and external obstacles exist in school and society that inhibit students from accurately understanding and positively accepting their sexual orientation. Professional school counselors need to become accurately informed and aware of the ways communication limits the opportunities and infringes upon the development of self-acceptance and healthy esteem. Harm is perpetrated against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth through language, stereotypes, myths, misinformation, threat of expulsion from social and institutional structures and other entities and from beliefs contrary to their identity. These youth begin to experience self-identification and the “coming out” process, both essentially cognitive activities, during adolescence. Such identification is not indicative of sexual activity.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
The professional school counselor uses inclusive and nonpresumptive language with equitable expectations toward individuals, being especially sensitive to those aspects of communication and social structures/institutions providing accurate working models of acceptance of identities and equality. Professional school counselors must be vigilant to the pervasive negative effects of stereotyping individuals into rigid gender roles and sexual identities.

The professional school counselor is sensitive to ways in which attitudes and behavior negatively affect the individual. School counselors are called to provide constructive feedback on the negative use of exclusive, presumptive language and inequitable expectations toward sexual-orientation minorities. The school counselor places emphasis on a person’s behavioral choices and not on his or her identity and uniqueness. Demonstrations of sexual-orientation-minority equity also include fair and accurate representation of sexual identities in visible leadership positions as well as other role positions.

SUMMARY
The professional school counselor is committed to the inclusion and affirmation of youths of all sexual orientation. The professional school counselor supports consciousness-raising among school counselors and increased modeling of inclusive language, advocacy and equal opportunity for participation for all. This is done to break through individual, social and institutional behaviors and expectations limiting the development of human potential in all populations.
The Professional School Counselor and the Special Needs Student
(Adopted 1999)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors encourage and support the academic, social/emotional and career development of all students through counseling programs within the schools. They are committed to helping all students realize their full potential despite cognitive, emotional, medical, behavioral, physical or social disabilities.

RATIONALE
Professional school counselors have increasingly important roles in working with the special needs student. With the passage of Public Law 94-142 and the current Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and 504 legislation, schools are required to provide an equitable education for all students, including those with special needs. Components of IDEA such as due process, individual educational programs, behavior modification plans and least restrictive environment offer opportunities to use the professional school counselor’s skills to benefit special needs students. Students who were once served in isolated special education environments are now taught in regular classrooms or are mainstreamed for the maximum time appropriate. Professional school counselors work with special needs students both in special class settings and in the regular classroom. It is particularly important that the professional school counselor’s role in these procedures is clearly defined and understood by all concerned.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
Interventions in which the professional school counselor participates may include but are not limited to: serving on the school’s multidisciplinary team to identify the special needs student; collaborating with other pupil support specialists in the delivery of services; providing social skills training in a classroom setting, in small groups or individually; leading group guidance activities to improve self-esteem through the comprehensive counseling and guidance program; providing group and individual counseling; advocating for special needs students in the school and in the community; assisting with the establishment and implementation of behavior modification plans; providing guidance and counseling for career planning and a smooth post-secondary transition from school to career; working with staff and parents to understand the special needs of these students; counseling parents and families; and making referrals to other appropriate specialists within the school system and in the community.

ASCA believes that it is not the professional school counselor’s responsibility to be the only source of information or administrative representative in a district in preparing individual education plans (IEPs) for students other than those portions relating to guidance and counseling. Further, school counselors should not make decisions regarding placement or retention or serve in any supervisory capacity in relation to the implementation of IDEA nor should they serve as a member of a multidisciplinary team reviewing placement referrals for those students not usually part of the counselor’s caseload. In addition, the school counselor should not be responsible for the coordination of the 504 planning team or supervision of the implementation of the 504 plan.

SUMMARY
The professional school counselor takes an active role in providing guidance and counseling services for students with special needs. School counselors advocate for all students, and services are provided to special needs students consistent with those provided to all students in the school counselor’s caseload.
The Professional School Counselor and Student Assistance Programs
(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors play a key role in initiating and creating student assistance programs in the schools.

RATIONALE
Although the problem of chemical dependence has received widespread attention in the media and in the helping professions, there remains a variety of approaches to address this problem. Student assistance programs, which can deal with substance abuse as well as other high-risk situations, serve as a systematic effort to help students understand themselves as self-respecting human beings while helping them to accept responsibility for their own actions.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
Professional school counselors provide comprehensive programs with a variety of counseling services. Although the focus of school counseling programs is on primary prevention and development, the realities of life and work cause school counselors to address problems that already exist and that are in some cases well-entrenched. This emphasizes the need to include crisis and remediation components in comprehensive school counseling programs, and student assistance programs may complement them. The school counselor may be the key person to coordinate the student assistance program. These programs provide proactive approaches to existing substance abuse problems and other high-risk or crisis situations. Assistance involves early identification of problem behavior by specifically trained staff, thorough assessment and appropriate referral and follow-up.

SUMMARY
Student assistance programs are designed to help students and their families with problems affecting their personal lives and academic performance. Professional school counselors, through comprehensive school counseling programs, should assist in the integration of student assistance programs. It is the professional school counselor’s responsibility to refer the student to the appropriate agencies and/or other professional consultants if the counselor learns that the student’s problems are beyond the counselor’s own professional expertise or scope of practice. The counselor must use information in accord with ASCA’s prescribed professional ethics and within the limitations defined by local, state and federal laws.
The Professional School Counselor and Student Safety on the Internet
(Adopted 2000)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recognizes both the democratic rights of all citizens in regard to freedom of speech and access to information. These freedoms must be balanced with the need for appropriate guidance, protection and security through students’ developmental stages. Professional school counselors advise parents and school personnel in determining age-appropriate materials and resources for children. This important information may be disseminated as part of the school’s comprehensive developmental school counseling program. Professional school counselors are cognizant of the benefits of accessing programs and materials for students as well as the need to ensure the safety of students with regard to online threats, privacy, access to personal information and consent.

THE RATIONALE
The Internet is an extraordinary resource for up-to-date information, crossing geographical boundaries, accessing archived information, meeting people, publicizing a commercial venture or business and having fun. Within the Internet, however, few parameters or traditional danger cues exist. The Internet does not have a central organizing body and authors of Internet information in chat rooms, pen pal services and on home pages have anonymity. These factors provide a potential for students to be victimized.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
Professional school counselors know children’s development stages and can provide Internet guidelines to parents and school personnel. ASCA encourages school counselors to disseminate the Internet Safety Guidelines authored by its partner, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Professional school counselors can educate parents on the potential for addictive behaviors in computer use. The professional school counselor is a consultant to parents, students and school personnel in cultivating those safety and survival skills related to Internet use.

SUMMARY
The Internet provides global opportunities for learning and exploring. Because of the freedom of access and use, professional school counselors need to assist and support parents and school personnel in protecting their students from harm and victimization.
The Professional School Counselor and Students-At-Risk
(Adopted 1989-90; revised 1993, 1999)

**AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION**

Professional school counselors at all levels make a significant, vital and indispensable contribution toward the academic, career and personal/social success of “at-risk” students. School counselors work in a leadership role with other student service professionals including social workers, psychologists and nurses, in liaison with staff and parents, to provide comprehensive developmental counseling programs for all students.

**THE RATIONALE**
There are probably as many definitions of the “at-risk” student as there are school districts. Any student may be at risk with respect to dropping out of school, becoming truant, performing below academic potential or exhibiting behaviors that may be harmful to self and/or others. The underlying reasons for these behaviors often deal with personal and social concerns such as poor self-esteem, family problems, unresolved grief, neglect or abuse. Students experiencing these concerns can be helped by professional school counselors. The decision to drop out of school can carry with it devastating lifelong implications. The school counselor, in conjunction with other school staff members, identifies potential dropouts and other students considered at-risk and works closely with them to help them stay in school or find alternative means of completing their education.

**THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE**
The school counselor provides proactive leadership in the area of prevention and consults in identifying “at-risk” students. The goal is to identify and intervene before they move through a continuum of self-destructive behavior. The school counselor provides responsive programs, including short-term individual, group, family and crisis counseling; provides programs for individual planning to meet academic, educational and career counseling needs; provides curriculum programs to strengthen personal/interpersonal skills (choice, self-acceptance, feelings, beliefs and behaviors, problem-solving, decision-making); identifies suicidal students, counsels them and refers them to appropriate outside agencies; provides in-service support presentations to staff; provides referrals for additional specialized support services within the district and from other community resources; and provides consultation with and support for parents/guardians of at-risk students. The school counselor works as a member of a team with other student service professionals.

**SUMMARY**
Professional school counselors, through a comprehensive, developmental, K-12 school counseling program, work with other educators and community resources to provide prevention, early identification and intervention for all students who may be considered at-risk.
The Professional School Counselor and the Use of Non-School-Counseling-Credentialed Personnel
(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000)

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION
Professional school counselors recognize and support cooperation and collaboration to ensure students’ complex needs are being met in a comprehensive, holistic and developmental manner. It is necessary, within each school setting, to establish the appropriate practices and procedures to ensure that individuals perform functions consistent with their training and capabilities and that accountability and supervision are part of every school counseling program. Professional school counselors should not be replaced by non-school-counseling-credentialed personnel.

THE RATIONALE
The professional school counselor recognizes that communities across the country are seeking solutions to the highly interrelated problems placing youth at risk of school failure. In response to the concerns, school districts employ a diversity of staff to address students’ needs. Schools must be extremely diligent in seeking the most highly trained personnel for dealing with crisis intervention, emotional and personal development and students’ sensitive, confidential needs. These situations present themselves on a daily basis in school counseling offices across the country. Individuals with inadequate training may, even with the best of intentions, provide inappropriate responses or interventions that create situations that may jeopardize students’ well-being.

In addition to the paraprofessional, peer helpers, volunteers, clerical support staff and other caring individuals, noncredentialed personnel may also include student assistance team members, mentors and agency counselors. Parents who entrust their children to our care must be assured that those providing services in our schools are properly qualified and trained to offer the services they provide. Only then can these collaborative efforts result in the efficient and effective delivery of a professional school counseling program.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE
Students’ needs in school can best be met through collaborative efforts of all personnel employed in the school setting. In situations in which noncredentialed personnel are performing school-counseling-related activities, these services must be limited to the scope of the role of the service provider, based on training and capabilities. Staff, students and parents must be informed as to these helpers’ roles within the school, their education level and the scope of their practice. Ethical and professional responsibilities require an assurance that the efforts of noncredentialed personnel are coordinated and supervised to ensure that students are receiving services appropriate to their needs. The supervision and coordination of these activities within the context of the school counseling program must be assumed by credentialed professional school counselors.

SUMMARY
The use of noncredentialed personnel in school counseling programs has become a reality to meet students’ diverse needs by using support personnel, including paraprofessionals, peer helpers, volunteers, clerical support staff and other caring individuals. With established guidelines and parameters and under the leadership and supervision of professional school counselors, appropriate practices and procedures support comprehensive, developmental counseling programs through collaboration and effective communication.
The Professional School Counselor and Use of Support Staff in Counseling Programs


AMERICAN COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) POSITION

Counselor support staff members in the counseling program provide assistance so that professional school counselors can use their own professional expertise more effectively. Counselor support staff members address the issue of clerical and routine responsibilities of the counseling department. Counselor support staff should never be used to replace professional school counselors.

THE RATIONALE

The utilization of counselor support staff provides a means of developing greater effectiveness within the guidance and within the counseling program. Counselor support staff members allow time for the professional school counselor to provide more of the services and deliver the programs that require specialized skills and training.

THE ROLE OF PARAPROFESSIONALS IN COUNSELING PROGRAMS

With the appropriate education and training of carefully selected personnel, counselor support staff members, under careful supervision, could assist in the following areas:

**Clerical Worker:** collect and maintain current files, reproduce materials needed for the professional school counselor in group or individual conferences, assist with student record keeping, assist students in completion of varied forms and applications, collect and distribute test materials, assist in monitoring group tests, and prepare and organize answer sheets for scoring (not interpretation of test results).

**Resource Person:** Under the supervision of a professional school counselor, the resource person may assist the counselor and perform duties, such as disseminate information, coordinate resources and counseling materials, record keeping, data entry and collection. Some counselor supportive staff duties may require specialized training.

The counselor support staff member should possess a sensitivity to students’ problems and needs, manifest an interest in working with students and be knowledgeable of the role of the professional school counselor and the total guidance and counseling program.

**THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S ROLE**

The professional school counselor should assist in the selection of counselor support staff and assume the responsibility of supervision of counselor supportive staff members.

ASCA encourages post-secondary institutions to offer training for counselor support staff in guidance and counseling programs. ASCA also encourages the collaboration of state education department personnel, post-secondary student services personnel and guidance and counseling personnel in local school districts in instituting such courses or programs.

The training for counselor support staff should include clerical training, operation and use of multimedia material, use and operation of computers, practical investigations or research techniques, human relations, the monitoring of group testing, ethics, community resources, and training in confidentiality with regard to student records.

**SUMMARY**

The utilization of counselor support staff in guidance and counseling programs provides a means to develop greater effectiveness within the program, allowing time for the professional school counselor to provide more of the services requiring specialized skills and training. Courses and training for counselor support staff should be instituted in collaboration with local school districts and the state department of education.
Support Personnel Accountability Report Card
A continuous improvement document sponsored by the California Department of Education and Los Angeles County Office of Education

School Name
(Address)
(Phone number and Fax number)
(Website address)

DISTRICT:  
GRADE LEVELS:  
ENROLLMENT:  
SCHOOL YEAR:  
PRINCIPAL:  

Principal’s Comments  

School Climate and Safety  

2002-2003 S.P.A.R.C. SAMPLE  

Student Support Personnel Team  

Student Results
Major Achievements

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Academic, Career, and Personal/Social Measurements

Focus for Improvement

Community Partnerships

Keeping You Informed
See what people are saying!

Comments about the **S.P.A.R.C.**

Dr. Jackie Allen, California Department of Education – “A must see and use document to evaluate your student support services program, enhance your program accountability, and demonstrate your program effectiveness in reducing barriers to learning and promoting student success.”

Dr. Carol Dahir, co-author of the National Standards for School Counseling Programs – “SPARC offers an opportunity for school counselors to demonstrate leadership, advocacy, accountability and collaboration, use data to document results, contribute to the educational environment, and show how students benefit from a comprehensive national standards-based program. A SPARC needs to be created for every school system across our nation!”

Dr. Norm C. Gysbers, University of Missouri-Columbia – “an excellent idea”

Trish Hatch, ASCA Supervisor/Post-Secondary Level Vice President – “SPARC is the easy and succinct advocacy tool school counselors have been looking for. It is a one-page document that has it all – including those all-important RESULTS! SPARC is the perfect way to share the school counseling programs connection to and impact on the schools overall academic program for student success. SPARC can be shared with all stakeholders such as board members, parents and community members, as well as accreditation, recognition, and compliance teams.”

Paul Meyers, California Department of Education – “The Support Personnel Accountability Report Card (SPARC) developed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) may prove to be your best friend during difficult fiscal times. The SPARC offers a useful layout to let community members know about your counseling program and its results. Kudos to LACOE’s Guidance Advisory Committee for the creation of a new marketing tool for student support programs!”
Support Personnel Accountability Report Card
A continuous improvement document sponsored by the California Department of Education and Los Angeles County Office of Education

School Name
(Address)
(Phone number and Fax number)
(Website address)

DISTRICT:
GRADE LEVELS:  ENROLLMENT:
SCHOOL YEAR:  traditional, multi-track, year-round
PRINCIPAL:

2002-2003 S.P.A.R.C. SAMPLE
Comments about the S.P.A.R.C.

Dr. Jackie Allen, California Department of Education – “A must see and use document to evaluate your student support services program, enhance your program accountability, and demonstrate your program effectiveness in reducing barriers to learning and promoting student success.”

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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 ASCA’s 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. 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 school counseling.

**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 principle.

**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.

**ASCA National Standards** – All school counseling programs should help students develop competencies in academic achievement, career planning and personal/social development.

### Delivery System

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

**Guidance Curriculum** – The guidance curriculum is 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 systemic activities designed to assist students individually in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.

**Responsive Services** – The traditional role of school counselors, responsive services are 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 helping 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 noncounseling 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 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 counseling programs 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 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 knowledge, skills and qualifications of post-secondary options, including college.
B. Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.

Career Development
A. Students will acquire the knowledge, skills and qualifications of the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Ordering Information
The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs 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. 9022.

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 are typically the only people in a school with formal training in both mental health and education. Although school counselors are team players who understand fair-share responsibilities within a school.
appropriate 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

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

Inappropriate (noncounseling) activities:
- 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 are often 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 order 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.