

The School Counselor and Individual Student Planning for Postsecondary Preparation

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

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

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

Rationale

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

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

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors understand national, state and local requirements and programs that may affect future opportunities for college and career readiness and therefore play a critical role in academic and career planning. The school counselor takes a proactive role in assisting students, families and staff as they assess student strengths and interests and encourage the selection of a rigorous and relevant educational program supporting all students' college and career goals. School counselors provide all students the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate skills needed for school success
- Demonstrate the connection between coursework and life experiences
- Make course selections that allow them the opportunity to choose from a wide range of postsecondary options
- Explore interests and abilities in relation to knowledge of self and the world of work
- Identify and apply strategies to achieve future academic and career success
- Demonstrate the skills for successful goal setting and attainment
- Develop a portfolio to highlight strengths and interests

Summary

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

References

American School Counselor Association (2019). *ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs* (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Conley, D. (2013). *Getting ready for college, careers, and the Common Core: What every educator needs to know*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(86), 1-35.

Savitz-Romer, M. & Bouffard, S.M. (2013). *Ready, willing, and able: A developmental approach to college access and success*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.