

The School Counselor and the Use of Non-School-Counseling Credentialed Personnel in Implementing Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors and the comprehensive school counseling programs they design and implement serve a vital role in maximizing student success (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007). School counselors are uniquely qualified and solely eligible to meet the requirements of designing and implementing these programs. School counselors recognize that personnel who do not hold a master's degree in school counseling are not qualified to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program that supports academic, career and social/emotional development and positively affects achievement for all students.

The Rationale

Research shows students who attend a school with a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program earn higher grades and are better prepared for life after high school (Carey & Harrington, 2010a, 2010b; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Stone & Dahir, 2006). School counselors recognize students face many issues that may place them at risk for school failure. Communities and school districts across the country are seeking solutions to these complex issues and may establish a variety of positions to address student needs. School districts work diligently to employ the most highly trained personnel for dealing with these issues and may employ non-school-counseling credentialed staff for specific functions. Although non-school-counseling credentialed staff members provide valuable services to students, they do not have the training or skills to design nor implement a comprehensive school counseling program nor are they qualified to be placed in the role of school counselor. Non-school-counseling credentialed staff may include:

- paraprofessionals
- peer helpers
- volunteers
- clerical support staff
- student assistance team members
- social workers
- psychologists
- nurses
- mentors
- mental health counselors including marriage and family counselors
- graduation coaches

The services non-school-counseling credentialed personnel provide must be clearly defined based on the individual's training and skills. Without appropriate training and skills, individuals with the best of intentions may provide inappropriate responses or interventions to students that could jeopardize their development and well-being.

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors recognize that student needs can best be met through the collaborative efforts of all school personnel. In situations in which non-school-counseling credentialed personnel are performing intervention or prevention activities, school counselors advocate that these activities be limited to the scope of the individual's training and capabilities. The school counselor collaborates with administrators, teachers and staff to establish appropriate guidelines, responsibilities and supervision for non-school-counseling credentialed staff as well as the activities provided.

When referring students to non-school-counseling credential staff, school counselors inform students and families of these staff members' role within the school. The school counselor may also provide information related to the individual's education level and scope of practice.

Summary

School counselors play an important role in the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. Non-school-counseling credentialed individuals do not have the training or skills to design or implement a comprehensive school counseling program nor are they qualified to be placed in the role of the school counselor. School counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers and staff to establish appropriate guidelines and supervision of services provided by non-school-counseling credentialed personnel and make referrals to these individuals as appropriate for the student.

References

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