

The School Counselor and School-Family-Community Partnerships

(Adopted 2010; Revised 2016, 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors have an essential and unique role in promoting, facilitating and advocating for collaboration with families and community stakeholders. These collaborations are an important aspect of implementing equitable, data-informed school counseling programs that promote the successful academic, career and social/emotional development of all students.

The Rationale

The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2019), the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies (ASCA, 2019) and the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative endorse school counselors' roles in facilitating school-family-community partnerships (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). School counselor investment in the partnership of school-family-community collaboration enhances student achievement (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Emde, 2015; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Griffin & Farris, 2010). Student achievement is defined by greater investment in academics, college preparedness and social/emotional well-being (Hann Morrison, 2011).

School counselors enhance the collaboration of school-family-community stakeholders by being the catalyst through which these collaborations occur (Bryan & Henry, 2012). Family involvement benefits both the student and the school as it increases student achievement and attendance, promotes career development, enhances school climate and fosters student resilience (Castillo, 2022).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors work with students, their families, school staff and community members to establish school and community partnerships. In fostering partnerships, school counselors:

- collaborate with families, educators, businesses and community organizations focused on anti-racism/bias (ASCA, 2021)
- promote student academic, career and social/emotional development
- encompass existing school, family and community strengths, resources and assets (Bryan et al., 2020)
- inform the school community about relevant community resources
- actively pursue collaboration with family members and community stakeholders
- foster resilience through equity-based school-family-community partnerships and parent-family-school agreements based on empowerment, democracy, collaboration, social justice and strength-based principles (Bryan et al., 2020).

Focusing on family and community partnerships in schools is an important aspect to culturally responsive education (Castillo, 2022). School counselors serve as advocates, leaders, facilitators, initiators, evaluators and collaborators to create, enrich and assess the effect of these partnerships on student success within the school counseling program.

Summary

School counselors work toward systemic change to improve student outcomes through the facilitation of school-family-community partnerships. School counselors are trained in counseling, human relations and collaboration skills (e.g., group dynamics, consultation skills), which makes them well-suited to engage families and community stakeholders (Bryan et al., 2017). School-family-community partnerships have increased the successful academic, career and social/emotional development of all students. School counselors are called on to create, lead, facilitate and assess these partnerships and work to remove barriers to these helpful collaborative relationships.

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