

The School Counselor and Character Education

(Adopted 1998; Revised 2005, 2011, 2016, 2022)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors cultivate students' character development by integrating character education programs into a comprehensive school counseling program. The school counselor promotes the infusion of character education in the school curriculum by fostering participation of the entire school community.

The Rationale

Character education involves “the embodiment of multidimensional virtues as the core component of human moral functioning” (Brunsdon & Walker, 2021, p.3). The school counselor understands that teaching universal virtues that help people live and work together promotes healthy student development and academic achievement through reduced problem behavior, lower discipline rates and improvement in student self-concept (Brunsdon & Walker, 2021, Parker, et. al, 2010; Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006; Watson, 2006).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors, along with teachers, administrators, family and the community, share the responsibility of teaching character education virtues. School counselors encourage character education activities by:

- developing a school philosophy and mission statement supporting positive character development
- establishing positive family-school-community partnerships
- implementing school counseling lessons and activities promoting positive character development while helping all students develop clear academic, career and social/emotional goals
- advocating for discipline policies that nurture the development of appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills
- using proactive counseling methods that reinforce character education and lead to an increase in positive school climate
- encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities that include the involvement of students, school staff, parents/guardians and community members
- teaching skills in decision-making, conflict resolution, leadership and problem solving
- teaching communication etiquette in the technological world
- involving students in the development of school rules
- integrating multicultural competence and diversity appreciation into lessons and activities
- developing student recognition programs focused on character traits
- involving families and communities in the character education program

School counselors collaborate with teachers, administrators, families and the community to teach and model behaviors that enhance each student's academic, career and social/emotional development essential to making appropriate, healthy decisions.

Summary

Character education helps students achieve academic, career and social/emotional development goals to become positive contributors to society. Effective character education programs require the entire community's participation and must be integrated throughout the entire school curriculum and culture through curriculum development, consensus building, community engagement, technology and professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The school counselor provides leadership and collaborates with teachers, administrators and the school community to promote character education for all students as an integral part of school curriculum and activities.

References

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