

## **The Professional School Counselor and Character Education**

(Adopted 1998, revised 2005)

### **American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position**

Professional school counselors endorse and support character education programs. The professional school counselor promotes the inclusion of character education in the school curriculum and takes an active role in promoting character traits within the comprehensive school counseling program.

### **The Rationale**

Inclusion of character education in the school curriculum helps students acquire the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes necessary for student achievement and success in life. The professional school counselor understands that the acquisition of positive character values promotes healthy student development. These universal values include such traits as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship, which all affirm basic human worth and dignity and support healthy communities. Character education emphasizes key social values and encourages students to become responsible, contributing members of society.

### **The Professional School Counselor's Role**

Professional school counselors, teachers, administrators, family and the community share the responsibility of teaching character education values. Professional school counselors encourage character education activities including:

- the development of a school philosophy and mission statement addressing student achievement
- guidance to help all students develop clear academic, career and personal/social goals
- discipline policies that reinforce character education and nurture the development of the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes
- student participation in extracurricular activities that include the involvement of students, school staff, parents and community members
- teaching skills in decision-making, conflict resolution and problem solving
- student involvement in the development of school rules
- inclusion and integration of character in cultural competence and diversity skill development
- student recognition programs focused on character traits
- involvement of families and communities in the character education program

In effective character education programs, adults in the school and community model the behaviors desired in students. Professional school counselors work with teachers, administrators, families and the community to model these behaviors while teaching students the academic, career and personal/social skills essential to making appropriate, healthy decisions.

### **Summary**

Character education helps students achieve academic, career and personal/social development goals and become positive members of society. The professional school counselor collaborates with teachers, administrators and the school community to promote character education for all students as an integral part of school curriculum and activities.