

## **The Professional School Counselor and Equity for All Students**

(Adopted 2006)

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

Professional school counselors recognize and distinguish individual and group differences and strive to value all students and groups equally. Professional school counselors advocate for the equitable treatment of all students in school and in the community.

### **The Rationale**

Students from any background can face development issues that impact student success. Some students in schools report there is no adult in the school with whom they feel they can discuss these issues, and many of these students come from underrepresented social or cultural groups.

Historically, underrepresented populations have faced barriers to participating in a rigorous curriculum and higher level classes. Professional school counselors, teachers, administrators and other school staff are involuntary gatekeepers of access to these classrooms. When students feel like they are being treated in a biased or negative manner, they often exhibit self-destructive behaviors such as truancy, withdrawal, acting out and non-participation in class activities. Conversely, when students believe that they are treated fairly, they are more likely to be engaged in school, talk about pressing issues, and participate in class activities.

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

Professional school counselors develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes equity and access for all students. Professional school counselors are mindful of school and community perceptions of the treatment of underrepresented groups and understand the importance of collaborating with school and community groups in order to help all students succeed.

Professional school counselors promote equitable treatment of all students by:

- Maintaining professional knowledge of the ever-changing and complex world of students' culture
- Maintaining knowledge and skills for working in a diverse and multicultural work setting
- Informing school staff of changes regarding different groups within the community
- Promoting the development of school policies that promote equitable treatment of all students and opposing school policies that hinder equitable treatment of any student
- Promoting access to rigorous standards-based curriculum, academic courses and learning paths for college and career for all students
- Developing plans to address over- or underrepresentation of specific groups in programs such as special education, honors, Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup>, and International Baccalaureate<sup>®</sup>
- Creating an environment that encourages any student or group to feel comfortable to come forward with problems.

### **Summary**

Professional school counselors recognize and distinguish individual and group differences and strive to value all students and groups equally. Professional school counselors promote the equitable treatment of all students in school and the community.