

## **The Professional School Counselor and the Use of Non-School-Counseling-Credentialed Personnel**

(Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006)

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

Professional school counselors are uniquely qualified and solely eligible to meet the requirements of designing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. Professional school counselors encourage collaboration with staff, parents and the community to ensure that student needs are met but 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 personal/social development and positively affects achievement for all students.

### **The Rationale**

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. 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

Non-school-counseling-credentialed staff may provide valuable services to students, but these services 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. Non-school-counseling-credentialed individuals do not have the training or skills to implement a comprehensive school counseling program nor are they qualified to be placed in the role of professional school counselor.

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

Professional 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, professional school counselors advocate that these activities be limited to the scope of the individual's training and capabilities. The professional 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 that are provided.

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

### **Summary**

Professional school counselors play an important role in the academic, career and personal/social development of all students. Non-school counseling credentialed individuals do not have the training or skills to implement a comprehensive school counseling program nor are they qualified to be placed in the role of the professional school counselor. Professional 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..