

The Professional Counselor and Use of Support Staff in School Counseling Programs

(Adopted 1974; reviewed and reaffirmed 1980; revised 1986, 1993, 1999, 2001, 2008)

American Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

Counseling program support staff provides a means to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school counseling program. Counseling program support staff members allow time for the professional school counselor to coordinate services and deliver programs that require specialized skills and training.

The Rationale

The utilization of counselor support staff provides a means of developing greater effectiveness within the guidance and within the counseling program. Counselor support staff members allow time for the professional school counselor to provide more of the services and deliver the programs that requires specialized skills and training.

The Role of Paraprofessionals in Counseling Programs

Given appropriate education and training school counseling program support staff members assist in the following areas:

- Collecting and maintaining current student files
- Reproducing materials needed for the professional school counselor in group or individual conferences
- Assisting with student record keeping
- Assisting students in the completion of various forms and applications
- Assisting with scheduling the professional school counselor's meetings and programs
- Assisting the professional school counselor with correspondence associated with the school counseling program
- Assisting in the dissemination of information to stakeholders
- Coordinating resources and counseling materials
- Keeping records
- Entering and collecting data

Some school counseling program support staff duties may require specialized training. The school counseling program support staff member should be sensitive to students' problems and needs and be knowledgeable of the role of the professional school counselor and the total school counseling program. School counseling program support staff members should maintain the highest level of confidentiality of student records and personal information. They should not involve themselves in situations that are more appropriately handled by the professional school counselor.

The Professional School Counselor's Role

The professional school counselor may assist in the selection of counseling program support staff and provide appropriate, ongoing supervision of counseling program support staff members. The professional school counselor should ensure counseling program support staff have initial training and the opportunity for ongoing professional development including clerical training, operation and use of multimedia material, use and operation of technology, practical investigations or research techniques, human relations and multicultural competence, ethics, community resources and training in confidentiality with regard to student records.

Summary

Professional school counselors are aware of the value added to a school counseling program from counseling program support staff members. Counseling support staff members provide a means to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school counseling program. Counseling program support staff members allow time for the professional school counselor to coordinate services and deliver programs requiring specialized skills and training. Professional school counselors may be involved with the selection, supervision and professional development of counseling support staff.