

## **The Professional School Counselor and Test Preparation Programs**

(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2006)

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

Professional school counselors assist students in preparing for standardized tests by promoting opportunities designed to increase knowledge and improve test-taking skills. Professional school counselors help students and their families become aware of test preparation programs and assist them as they decide which programs best meet their needs.

### **The Rationale**

Students are often apprehensive about standardized tests and sometimes view tests as intimidating or threatening. Because of these feelings, professional school counselors are often asked for advice on test preparation programs. Research on test-taking strategies such as time-use and guessing strategies revealed that such preparation can improve scores. These gains are even larger when a student participates in a longer test preparation program that allows the student to practice and develop more broad cognitive skills. Other research shows that participating in a rigorous high school curriculum is the best preparation for tests such as the SAT or ACT.

Many students benefit from becoming familiar with the test format and test-taking strategies before taking a standardized test. Content area review and repeated test-based practice have shown to be beneficial for students as they prepare for exams.

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

Professional school counselors provide test taking strategies as a part of a comprehensive school counseling program, promoting academic, career and personal/social development for all students. Test taking skills and strategies include:

- stress management
- time management
- process of elimination
- memory and recall strategies
- familiarity with test format
- familiarity with grading rubrics

Professional school counselors collaborate with school staff to coordinate and provide information about test preparation programs that may help students prepare for examinations. Professional school counselors provide students and parents with a variety of test preparation options including free programs as well as those that have a fee. The professional school counselor collaborates with staff to encourage integration of test taking strategies and content into the curriculum.

### **Summary**

Research shows that test preparation can help students improve test scores. Professional school counselors collaborate with school staff to assist students as they prepare for tests by providing instruction on test taking skills and offering information about test preparation programs to students and their families.

### **References**

Crocker, L. (2005). *Teaching for the test: How and why test preparation is appropriate*. In *Defending standardized testing*, R. Phelps (Ed.), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.