

## **The Professional School Counselor and the Prevention and Intervention of Behaviors That Place Students At Risk**

(Adopted 1989-90; revised 1993, 1999, 2004)

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

Professional school counselors make a significant contribution toward the academic, career and personal/social success of all students. Professional school counselors work in a leadership role with other student service professionals including social workers, psychologists and nurses, in liaison with staff and parents, to provide comprehensive school counseling programs that focus on prevention and intervention of behaviors that place students at risk.

### **The Rationale**

All schools and communities have students who could potentially drop out of school or engage in self-destructive behaviors that interfere with academic success. Behaviors including absenteeism, performing below academic potential or participating in activities that may be harmful to self and/or others such as substance abuse, threats and intimidation, and physical violence are some behaviors that place students at risk. These behaviors can have devastating lifelong implications and often stem from personal and social concerns including low self-esteem, family and relationship problems, unresolved grief, trauma, involvement with drugs or alcohol, neglect or abuse. Students experiencing these concerns can be helped by professional school counselors. Collaborating with parents, staff members and community agencies, the professional school counselor works closely with students exhibiting these behaviors to help them make appropriate decisions, stay in school or find alternative means of completing their education.

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

The professional school counselor provides proactive leadership in prevention and intervention services, using data to develop a comprehensive school counseling program that addresses the needs of all students. The professional school counselor collaborates with staff, school-wide teams, parents and the community to identify students who are participating in behaviors that place them at risk in order to intervene before the student moves through a continuum of self-destructive behavior. The professional school counselor may:

- provide classroom guidance lessons to increase student knowledge and awareness of the dangers of at-risk behaviors and available resources to address student needs.
- provide individual student planning sessions to address academic, personal/social and career development needs.
- provide responsive services, including short-term individual, and group counseling.
- collaborate with school staff to identify students in crisis.
- provide referral services to appropriate support services and community agencies.
- provide staff development to school and district staff.
- provide consultation and support to parents/guardians of students demonstrating at-risk behaviors.

### **Summary**

By implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, professional school counselors collaborate with other educators and the community to provide prevention, early identification and intervention for all students for the prevention and intervention of behaviors that place students at risk.