

The Brain Storm

At a recent summit in Tucson, Ariz., experts in the school counseling field took significant strides on the journey to creating a National Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.

BY JUDY BOWERS, TRISH HATCH AND PAT SCHWALLIE-GIDDIS, Ph.D.

Since their introduction in 1997, the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs have served as the single most legitimizing document in the history of the profession. The standards contain competencies and goals for students and serve as the foundation for the development of a comprehensive school counseling program. Although many states and districts have developed comprehensive models aligned with the national standards, many others still need a great deal of direction and support in this process.

To meet this need, ASCA leaders are building on the National Standards and creating a National Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. To take the first step in developing the model, nationally recognized experts in the field of school counseling met in Tucson, Ariz., in June.

The two-and-a-half-day summit brought together college educators, state department consultants, school

counselors, guidance coordinators and ASCA leaders to be a part of this exciting and historic challenge. Summit participants agreed that a comprehensive school counseling program must be integral to student academic achievement and must help set higher standards for student achievement. A national model must provide a framework that allows flexibility for states and school districts to create a program based on their districts' individual needs and accountability.

Mark Kuranz, ASCA past president, compared a national model with a blueprint for a house. "We know that every house should have a kitchen, but we don't want to dictate that every kitchen must have blue tiles and a double sink. Similarly, we should identify the major components that every comprehensive program should contain, but individual schools and school districts can decide how those components look in their building."

Model Components

To create components affording flexibility yet still requiring particular requirements to be met, meeting participants agreed on several parameters for development of a national model. They include, but are not limited to:

- The ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs are integral to any comprehensive program and should serve as the program foundation. A comprehensive school counseling program should be preventive in design and developmental in nature.
- A delivery system (i.e. guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, system support) must be integrated and aligned with a management system to ensure programs are based on student needs and include action plans and tools for student monitoring. This delivery and management system should be developed and implemented districtwide not just at

individual schools. “Counselors need the inner strength to step up to work with teachers to improve student achievement,” Kuranz said. “I need to be able to demonstrate that what I do is connected to student learning.”

- A comprehensive school counseling program must have a data-driven evaluation system that is accountable for student and program results, and the design of the program model must include accountability tools for measuring results. “It is important to identify outcomes, not just techniques and methods,” said Norm Gysbers, counselor educator, University of Missouri-Columbia. “The program must identify results needed and how to organize to get it done.” In identifying results, a distinction must be made between “student competencies” for school counseling programs and operational and results “standards” for the program itself.
- Comprehensive school counseling programs must include the concept of intentionality in the development of the program to ensure that underserved or underperforming populations achieve the required competencies.
- Comprehensive school counseling programs must infuse the concepts of systemic change, leadership and advocacy throughout all components. Further, comprehensive school counseling programs empower school counselors and teach them how to work with administrators to re-assign nonguidance activities such as master scheduling or testing. Although the programs must be implemented by licensed or credentialed professional school counselors who drive the efforts for change, successful

development and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program relies on school/community collaboration.

Based on these concepts, summit participants agreed to develop a national model consisting of four primary components, which are recommended for all comprehensive school-counseling programs:

1. Foundation
2. Delivery system
3. Management system
4. Evaluation system

There would be four to five program elements in each of the components. The ASCA national standards would be the foundation upon which the building blocks of the program curriculum would be built.

Future Steps

A preliminary draft of the national model was presented to the ASCA Delegate Assembly and to the national standards trainers at ASCA’s Annual Conference in Portland, Ore., in June. State leaders also received an overview of the model at ASCA’s Leadership Development Institute for state presidents and presidents-elect in July.

ASCA is developing a handbook explaining the National Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. When completed, the handbook, an implementation guide and other materials will provide school districts and state departments with the tools they need to develop their own programs based on the national standards and national model. To facilitate the adoption of a comprehensive school counseling program model by school districts, ASCA will identify

and disseminate best practices for designing, developing, coordinating, implementing, evaluating and enhancing the program.

The national model will be field-tested at school districts in California and Arizona in November and revised based on the findings. A revised draft of the national model, scheduled to be introduced in early 2002, will be sent to state and national educational leaders for review and comment. ASCA hopes school districts can begin implementing the national model by fall 2002.

ASCA has collected several samples of state and district models to review in the creation of this draft handbook. ASCA is still in the process, however, of gathering state and district program models in order to incorporate pertinent information that fits into the four components. Ultimately all models submitted will be available from ASCA for states to use as they develop their own model based on local need. State leaders and counselors within districts that have developed working models are asked to send three copies of their programs and/or handbooks for review to Richard Wong, 801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 310, Alexandria, VA 22314. ✉

Judy Bowers, Tucson Unified School District, Ariz., is western regional vice president on ASCA’s Governing Board and can be reached at judyb@earthlink.com. Trish Hatch, Moreno Valley Unified School District, Calif., is supervisor/post-secondary vice president on ASCA’s Governing Board and can be reached at thatch@mvusd.k12.ca.us. Pat Schwallie-Giddis is a counselor educator at The George Washington University and can be reached at schwallieg@aol.com.



Norm Gysbers, Ph.D.
Counselor Educator
University of Missouri-Columbia

“The ASCA model will aid in advocacy. It is a framework of structure and organization. It helps to know what you are doing and carrying out, because you can’t be an advocate if you don’t know what you are advocating for.”



C.D. “Curly” Johnson, Ph.D.
Retired Counselor Educator

“A comprehensive guidance and counseling program must be data driven, customer-results-based and should not focus on methods and techniques only.”



Robert Myrick, Ph.D.
Counselor Educator
University of Florida

“I think parents, boards, etc., want to know what it is that counselors do. What are the implications for students? Here are the things that counselors, and only counselors, do and what impact that has on students.”

School-counseling professionals involved in the development of ASCA's National Model for School Counseling Programs are:

Judy Bowers, guidance coordinator, Tucson Unified School District, Ariz., and ASCA western region vice president

Carol Dahir, Ed.D., counselor educator, New York Institute of Technology

Pam Gabbard, counselor, Ballard County Elementary School, Ky., and ASCA president

Norm Gysbers, Ph.D., counselor educator, University of Missouri-Columbia

Trish Hatch, coordinator, student services, Moreno Valley Unified School District, Calif., and ASCA post-secondary/supervisor level vice president

Peggy Hines, Ph.D., counselor educator, Indiana State University

c.d. "Curly" Johnson, Ph.D., retired counselor educator

Dawn Kay, Utah state guidance coordinator

Mark Kuranz, counselor, J.I. Case High School, Racine, Wis., and ASCA past president

Stan Maleszewski, Ph.D., counselor educator, University of Arizona

Pat Martin, executive director, midwest region, College Board (formerly with the Education Trust)

Bob Myrick, Ph.D., counselor educator, University of Florida

Pat Schwallie-Giddis, Ph.D., counselor educator, The George Washington University

Carolyn Sheldon, counselor educator, Lewis and Clark College

Richard Wong, ASCA executive director

Scribes were **Lori Holland**, school counselor, Moreno Valley Unified School District, Calif., and **Holly Colonna**, school counselor, Tucson Unified School District, Tucson, Ariz.

INT. SCHOOL SERVICES
1/3 square

U OF MO.
1/3 square