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The School Counselor and Career Development

Combined version of The School Counselor and Career Development and The School Counselor and Career and Technical Education
(Adopted 2017; revised 2023, 2024)

ASCA Position

School counselors deliver school counseling programs that enhance student growth in three domain areas: academic, career and social/emotional development. As a part of that program, school counselors implement strategies and activities to help all students enhance their career development – the mindsets and behaviors students need to understand the connection between school and the world of work, plan for and make a successful transition to postsecondary education and work across the lifespan – while recognizing that growth in all three domains is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life.

The Rationale

As part of a school counseling program, school counselors provide resources and opportunities that help students explore their strengths and interests as well as career fields that align with these attributes. These efforts help students plan for and choose postsecondary pathways and create opportunities for students to develop college and career-readiness skills that help them successfully navigate postsecondary education and the world of work.

School counselors recognize that each student, regardless of background, possesses unique interests, abilities and goals, which will lead to future opportunities. By including culturally responsive practices within career development strategies, school counselors help historically marginalized populations create pathways for their future (Chan, 2019). Collaborating with students, families, educational staff and the community, school counselors work to ensure all students select a postsecondary path to productive citizenry (e.g., military, career technical certificate or two-/four-year degree program) appropriate for the student.

School counselors recognize career education begins in kindergarten and is exemplified by students who are knowledgeable about options and are prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary experiences without the

41 need for remediation. Best practice indicates that career technical education
42 (CTE) activities should begin at least by middle school to assist with
43 postsecondary planning and academic motivation (Bottoms, 2022).
44 Engagement in hands-on activities increases student motivation in school as
45 they make tangible connections in their classroom learning to the “real
46 world” (Bottoms, 2022).

47
48 Middle and high school students fluctuate in their ways of thinking, their
49 respective interests, and their wants; hence, exposure to various options
50 and careers further supports their growth (Bottoms, 2022). As facilitators of
51 student learning of career options, school counselors familiarize students
52 with CTE pathways and hands-on training, which can be critical to students’
53 career development (ACTE, 2023).

54
55 School counselors also recognize all students possess the skills and
56 knowledge needed to qualify for and succeed in their chosen field (Mau & Li,
57 2018). It is important to note that exposure to all pathways should not come
58 at the expense of limiting students to one option. CTE should be one of the
59 multiple options shared with students (Cashdollar, 2023).

60

61 **The School Counselor’s Role**

62 In their efforts to enhance students’ career development, school counselors:

- 63 • Introduce students to careers and the world of work beginning in
64 elementary grades (pre-K–3)
- 65 • Produce developmentally and age-appropriate connections to the world
66 of work
- 67 • Collaborate to provide learning and experiential opportunities for
68 students to acquire behaviors and skills necessary for career readiness
69 (Limberg et al., 2021)
- 70 • Work with students to identify their interests, abilities, specific career
71 clusters (Cicco, 2018) and postsecondary plans
- 72 • Help students plan the transition from school to postsecondary
73 education and/or the world of work, including high-quality CTE
74 programs (ASCA, 2021)
- 75 • Advise students on multiple postsecondary pathways (e.g., college,
76 career-specific credentials and certifications, apprenticeships, military,
77 service-year programs, full-time employment with a family-supporting
78 wage or with a sufficient wage for sustaining an independent lifestyle)
- 79 • Connect students to early-college and career development programs
80 (e.g., dual credit/dual enrollment, AP, IB, CTE)
- 81 • Collaborate with administrators, teachers, staff and decision-makers to
82 create a postsecondary-readiness, career-preparedness and college-
83 going culture

- 84 • Provide and advocate for all students' college and career awareness
85 through exploration and postsecondary planning and decision-making,
86 which supports students' right to choose from the wide array of
87 options after completing secondary education
- 88 • Identify gaps in college and career access and the implications of such
89 data for addressing both intentional and unintentional biases related to
90 college and career advising and counseling
- 91 • Work with teachers to integrate career education learning in classroom
92 lessons, including CTE pathways and relevant courses
- 93 • Provide opportunities for all students to develop learning strategies,
94 self-management skills and social skills leading to a positive attitude
95 toward learning, a strong work ethic and an understanding that
96 lifelong learning is necessary for long-term career success
- 97 • Engage in professional development addressing career trends
- 98 • Practice self-reflection and growth involving traditional career roles,
99 and expand equity and access through that growth

100 **Summary**

101 School counselors provide resources and opportunities that help students
102 explore their strengths and interests as well as career fields that might align
103 with these attributes. School counselors provide a school counseling
104 program that helps all students enhance their career development and
105 successfully navigate postsecondary education and the world of work, while
106 recognizing that growth in all three domains of academic, career and
107 social/emotional development is necessary for students to be successful now
108 and later in life. School counselors ensure that students have access to
109 explore all postsecondary options, including CTE pathways.
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