

1 **The School Counselor and Social/Emotional Development**
2 (Adopted 2017)

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

5 School counselors implementing comprehensive programs strive to have an impact on student
6 growth in three domain areas: academic, career and social/emotional development (ASCA,
7 2012). School counselors recognize students should demonstrate growth in these domains
8 equally to be successful. School counselors understand these domains are not considered
9 separate but are intertwined, each affecting the other (Schenck, Anctil, & Smith, 2010). Although
10 this statement focuses on social/emotional development it is understood academic and career
11 development need to be considered with equal diligence.

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13 **The Rationale**

14 School counselors serve as a first line of defense in identifying and addressing student
15 social/emotional needs within the school setting. School counselors have unique training in
16 helping students with social/emotional issues that may become barriers to academic success.
17 Within the context of a comprehensive school counseling program school counselors develop
18 school counseling core curriculum, deliver small-group counseling and provide individual
19 student planning directed at improving students' social/emotional well being.

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21 The social/emotional domain is composed of standards to help students manage emotions and
22 learn and apply interpersonal skills (ASCA, 2014). School counselors promote mindsets and
23 behaviors that enhance the learning process and create a culture of college and career readiness
24 for all students in the area of social/emotional development.

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26 According to a meta-analysis by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011),
27 students who participated in social/emotional learning programs demonstrated significantly
28 improved social/emotional skills, attitudes, behavior and academic performance that reflected an
29 11-percentile-point gain in academic achievement when compared with control groups. The
30 American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution (2015) concluded that
31 social/emotional competencies are critically important for the long-term success of all students in
32 today's economy.

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34 The school counselor is key to identifying students' social/emotional needs (VanVelsor, 2009).
35 Educational systems as a whole, including school counselors, should graduate students who are
36 not only proficient in core academic subjects but demonstrate an ability to socially and
37 emotionally practice healthy behaviors and behave respectfully when working with others from
38 diverse backgrounds (ASCD, 2007).

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40 School counselors play a role in creating an environment that produces engagement vital to
41 students' social/emotional development. When students enter high school there is a 40 percent–
42 60 percent chance they will disengage from school (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Klem & Connell,
43 2004). School performance can be negatively affected when students demonstrate high-risk
44 behaviors such as substance abuse, sex, violence, depression and attempted suicide (Eaton et al.,
45 2008). School counselors address the potential of disengagement by addressing students'
46 social/emotional development.

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The School Counselor’s Role

School counselors:

1. Provide direct instruction, team-teach or assist in teaching the school counseling core curriculum, learning activities or units in classrooms aimed at social/emotional development (ASCA, 2012)
2. Understand the nature and range of human characteristics specific to child and adolescent development
3. Identify and employ appropriate appraisal methods for individual and group interventions that support K–12 students’ social/emotional development
4. Know and utilize counseling theories to inform both direct and indirect services providing support to K–12 students’ social/emotional development
5. Use evaluation in the context of appropriate statistics and research methodology, follow-up evaluation and measurement methods to implement appropriate program planning for social/emotional development
6. Select and implement technology in a comprehensive school counseling program to facilitate K–12 students’ social/emotional development

Summary

School counselors are committed to supporting students’ social/emotional needs. As advocates for students, school counselors promote a positive environment that enhances the students’ ability to properly manage the social/emotional demands of their lives. School counselors use appropriate appraisal methods to promote a school environment designed to propel students toward positive mindsets and behaviors supporting social/emotional development through direct (e.g., classroom curriculum, group counseling and individual counseling) and indirect (e.g., collaborating or consulting with staff, families or communities) services.

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