

The School Counselor and Multitiered System of Supports

(Adopted 2008, revised 2014, 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors are stakeholders in the development and implementation of a Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS), including but not limited to response to intervention (RTI) and responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). School counselors align their work with MTSS through the implementation of a school counseling program designed to affect student development in the academic domain (achievement), the career domain (career exploration and development) and the social/emotional domain (behavior).

The Rationale

MTSS is a culturally responsive, evidence-based framework implemented in K–12 schools using data-based problem solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention at tiered intensities to improve the learning and social/emotional functioning of all students (Sink, 2016). Guided by student-centered data, MTSS teams engage in cyclical data-based problem solving; make informed decisions about general, compensatory and special education; and assist in the creation of a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention (Ehren, Montgomery, Rudebush, & Whitmire, 2006).

Within the framework of a data-informed school counseling program school counselors augment their collaboration, coordination and leadership skills (Shepard et al., 2013) to meet the needs of all students and identify students who are at risk for not meeting academic and behavioral expectations. School counselors collaborate across student service disciplines with teachers, administrators and families to design and implement plans to address student needs and to promote students' academic, career social/emotional success (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019). Data are collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the learning supports for continual improvement efforts over time.

MTSS offers school counselors opportunities to have a lasting impact on student academic success and behavior development while integrating the framework within a school counseling program (Ziomek-Daigle, Goodman-Scott & Donohue, 2016). The application of MTSS aligns with the role of school counseling at any grade level and can be used across multiple domains (Hatch, 2018; Hatch, Duarte, & Degregorio, 2017), such as academic, college/career and/or social/emotional development, based on the ASCA National Model.

The School Counselor's Role

The ASCA National Model serves as the foundation that assists school counselors in the academic, career and social/emotional development of students through the implementation of a school counseling program by:

- Providing all students with a standards-based school counseling curriculum to address universal academic, career and social/emotional development
- Analyzing academic, career and social/emotional development data to identify struggling students
- Identifying and collaborating on research-based intervention strategies implemented by school staff
- Evaluating academic and behavioral progress after interventions
- Revising interventions as appropriate
- Referring to school and community services as appropriate
- Collaborating with administrators, other school professionals, community agencies and families in the design and implementation of MTSS
- Advocating for equitable education for all students and working to remove systemic barriers

Where MTSS interacts with school counseling programs the school counselor can serve in roles of supporter and/or intervener (Ockerman, Mason, & Feiker-Hollenbeck, 2012). In the supporting role, the school counselor may provide indirect student service by presenting data or serving as a consultant to a student support team. In intervener role, the school counselor may provide direct student service through the delivery component of the ASCA National Model.

Summary

School counselors implement a school counseling program addressing the needs of all students. Through the review of data, school counselors identify struggling students and collaborate with other student services professionals, educators and families to provide appropriate instruction and learning supports within an MTSS. School counselors work collaboratively with other educators to remove systemic barriers for all students and implement specific learning supports that assist in academic and behavioral success.

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Resources

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