

1 **The School Counselor and Use of Support Staff in School Counseling Programs**
2 (Adopted 1974; reviewed and reaffirmed 1980; revised 1986, 1993, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2013,
3 2019)

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

6 School counselors understand the value added to a comprehensive school counseling program
7 through the effective use of support staff. Assistance from school counseling program support
8 staff members allows school counselors to use their time more efficiently and use their
9 professional expertise and leadership skills more effectively to meet student needs.

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11 **The Rationale**

12 To achieve maximum effectiveness, the ASCA National Model recommends a student-to-school-
13 counselor ratio of 250:1 and that 80 percent or more of a school counselor's time be spent
14 providing direct and indirect services to students (ASCA, 2012). However, even though recent
15 studies have demonstrated significant correlations between student achievement and student-to-
16 school-counselor ratios (e.g., Gewertz, 2018), the national average ratio is 464-to-1 for the 2015–
17 2016 school year. In addition, the ASCA National Model offers a framework for a
18 comprehensive school counseling program that includes testing coordination and clerical duties
19 on its list of “inappropriate activities for school counselors” (ASCA, 2012).

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21 According to Heitin (2013), school counseling program support staff provide means to increase
22 the effectiveness and efficiency of the school counseling program by relieving school counselors
23 of many inappropriate, although necessary, tasks such as maintaining clerical records and
24 coordinating paperwork. Heitin added that school counseling program support staff members
25 allow school counselors to spend more time planning and delivering programs and activities
26 requiring specialized skills and training.

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28 **The Role of Support Staff in School Counseling Programs**

29 School counseling program support staff members may assist in a variety of areas, including
30 collection and maintenance of current student files, record keeping, clerical support, data entry,
31 new student registration and many other activities, allowing the school counselor to concentrate
32 on delivering the comprehensive school counseling program.

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34 The school counseling program support staff members should be sensitive to students' problems
35 and needs and be knowledgeable of the role of the school counselor and the total school
36 counseling program. School counseling program support staff members should maintain the
37 highest level of confidentiality of student records and personal information. They should not
38 involve themselves in situations that are more appropriately handled by the school counselor.

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40 **The School Counselor's Role**

41 School counselors may assist in the selection and professional development of school counseling
42 program support staff, collaborate to outline processes and activities that best support the school
43 counseling program and ensure the support staff understand the ethical standards required for the
44 office (Atici, 2014). These activities may include providing appropriate, ongoing supervision of
45 school counseling program support staff members and ensuring the support staff has initial
46 training as well as the opportunity for ongoing professional development in areas of clerical

47 training, human relations and multicultural competence, ethics, community resources and
48 training in confidentiality with regard to student records. When the school counselor works
49 effectively through collaboration with support staff, the efficacy of the school counselor is
50 enhanced (Atici, 2014).

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52 **Summary**

53 School counselors understand the value support staff members add to a school counseling
54 program. School counseling support staff members provide a means to increase the effectiveness
55 and efficiency of the delivery of the comprehensive school counseling program and allow school
56 counselors to spend more time planning and delivering a program that requires specialized skills
57 and training. School counselors may be involved with the selection of support staff and
58 collaborate with them to outline processes and activities that best support the school counseling
59 program.

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