

Essential Elements of a School Counselor

Within the past ten years, the profession of School Counseling has transformed from service-centered to program-centered. In other words, the focus has shifted from services for some students to programs that impact all students. In order for school counselors to work effectively on this approach, many resources and connections have to be utilized. Therefore, the role of the school counselor has gone from “guidance counselor” to advocator, leader, collaborator, and systemic change agent.

It is essential for school counselors to embrace the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) National Model. Based on this model, school counselors and their constituents must collaborate to promote academic success, personal/social growth, and career development for every student in the school. Gone are the days where only high achieving and low achieving students are the focus of school counselors. A transformed school counselor advocates for all students and uses his or her position to collaborate and lead other school professionals to positively impact each student on a comprehensive level.

Designing, coordinating, implementing, managing, and evaluating programs to effect systemic change is another key element for school counselors. The ability to effectively collaborate and lead other school personnel to support and aid in the success of a program is crucial. Likewise, the vision and mission of the school district are of utmost importance. Therefore, it is of the essence for school districts to employ individuals that will uphold and support the school’s vision and mission.

The benefit of having a school counselor who works to impact systemic change by way of advocating for the students, collaborating with school personnel, and leading programs will have the best chance of effecting school-wide reform. It is also essential that school counselors make use of the comprehensive school counseling focus areas by helping students develop a personal-social self in order to maximize their academic potential, and in doing so, impact their future career choices in a positive way. I believe every student is worthy and deserving of this.