

Elementary Guidance & Counseling Services

Hudson Maxim
Tulsa Trail
Durban Avenue



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Preface

It is our hope to convey to all readers the vital role of the school counselor and our guidance and counseling programs and services. The school counseling profession is being redefined to be uniquely capable of assuming a central role in school communities and in the life of children to provide programs and services that will ensure all students have access to a thorough and efficient education.

Our children need our guidance to achieve success personally, socially, emotionally, and academically while understanding the workings of the real world. Together with the parents, teachers, and students, counselors can continue to empower their students to learn skills and make right choices to meet their individual needs. The philosophy of the department, district-wide, is to advocate proactively for our students.

Chapter 1

Guidance & Counseling Staff

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Hudson Maxim

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What Does the School Counselor Do?

At each grade level there are different responsibilities and programs to accommodate the age of the students. Each year, we assess how well we serviced our students, parents, and community. We update and revise our programs accordingly and are always looking for new ways to be effective. If you would like to share ideas or have comments, please contact the Director of Guidance. Below is a snapshot of the Guidance programs at each school.

Hudson Maxim

Tulsa Trail

Durban Avenue

Services & Programs

- Character Education
- Classroom Visitations/Lessons
- Consultations
- Organizations & Liaisons
- Drug Awareness Activities
- School Violence Awareness
- Group Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Snapshot of Programs
 - Be Cool
 - Belong & Drum Along
 - Children in Change
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 - Creative Coaching
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- Shoe Walk
- Smart Choices for Success
- Stress Busters
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- Take the Remote
- Taming the Testing Tiger
- Teasing Bullying
- Think Social
- Wash Out Violence with Kindness
- Worry Busters Club

Academic Information

- Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)
- Coordinate 504 procedures
- Basic Skills
- Collaboration with Child Study Team
- Grade Reporting
- Marking Period Dates
- Honor Roll
- Home Instruction
- NJ ASK
- Terra Nova

Chapter 2

Services & Program

The Comprehensive Counseling Program implemented at Hudson Maxim and Tulsa Trail Schools involve many responsibilities and services to meet the developmental needs of the students in the areas of academics, social and emotional learning, and behavior. There are classroom, small group and/or individual sessions as needs arise and scheduling permits. Programs may include guidance activities such as sharing ideas, sharing feelings, writing journals, role playing, creating books, drawing, singing, rapping, doing puppet shows, crafting, etc. If you would like to discuss any new program options, please contact the Director of Guidance.

Character Education

Character Education is meant to strengthen school climate, enhance student success, and prevent problem behaviors. Character education effectively incorporates social and emotional learning into daily academic instruction in order to improve achievement. The Counselor teaches classroom lessons and provides teachers with follow-up activities.

Bucket Filling

This year at Hudson Maxim, the school-wide theme is Bucket Filling. The basic concept is that everyone carries an invisible bucket that holds good thoughts and feelings. Doing or saying kind things fills an imaginary bucket, and when it is full, we feel happy. Bucket dipping is taking away those good feeling by doing or saying things that hurt others. Every classroom has a bucket to fill with the caring and respectful things that people do or say at home or at school. Monthly classroom lessons will encourage Bucket Filling and recognize students who practice the concept every day.

Classroom Visitations/ Lessons

The elementary counselor is very visible within the schools. The counselor frequently visits classrooms for observations, to facilitate peer interactions, and to conduct classroom guidance lessons. Classroom lessons offer the best opportunity to provide guidance to the largest number of students. Lessons often relate to school-wide themes, character education, or specific topics requested by teachers to address classroom issues (such as tattling or personal space). They are designed to be comprehensive and developmentally appropriate to best meet the needs of all students in the area of social and emotional learning.

Consultations

The counselor serves as a consultant to all staff members and families in order to help people be more effective in working with others. Consultations help individuals think through problems and concerns, acquire more knowledge and skills, and become more objective and self-confident.

Organization & Liaisons

The counselor serves as coordinator of many indirect services which benefit students. The counselor serves as a liaison between the school, families, private practitioners, and community agencies, as well as a source of referral to assistance programs.

Drug Awareness Activities

The counselor coordinates and promotes Red Ribbon Week at the end of October through school-wide activities and classroom lessons on healthy life choices. There is often a great deal of collaboration between the school counselor and teachers for this national event. The counselor also promotes healthy alternatives to substance abuse and provides resources and referrals to outside agencies when needed.

School Violence Awareness

All school districts in New Jersey are required to observe School Violence Awareness Week during the week beginning with the third Monday in October. The counselor coordinates and promotes school-wide activities for School Violence Awareness week and conducts classroom lessons to address bullying. The counselor also provides resources for staff on violence prevention with supporting activities for the classroom.

Group Counseling

Group counseling sessions consist of discussions, unstructured, or structured learning activities. Groups typically include two to eight students working towards a common goal. Group members have the opportunity to learn and grow with one another by sharing ideas, gaining knowledge, discussing issues or problems, and setting goals for growth. Group topics vary, depending on student need, but may include: friendship skills, emotions, self-control, managing anger, calming down, conflict resolution, self-esteem, behavior, and much more. Two examples are listed below:

Temper Tamers Anger Management Program

This group is for students who have trouble controlling their emotions. During the program, students learn appropriate coping strategies for managing anger and other difficult feelings. Sessions include stories and learning activities to identify anger triggers and practice utilizing coping strategies for social problem solving.

Banana Splits (Divorce Support Group)

This is a confidential program to address the issue of divorce with young children. The program helps students realize that they are not the only ones experiencing divorce or separation. The activities and discussions during the group will offer children coping strategies to help maintain their well-being during a difficult time. The purpose of the group is to provide a safe place to share and explore feelings, increase self-esteem, and help children develop problem solving skills

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling is meeting with a student one on one in order to maximize privacy to freely explore ideas, feelings, and behavior. Individual counseling may be used to address sensitive or private issues or work towards a specific goal with a child.

Snapshot of Programs

Be Cool

Assertiveness training is the goal of this program. There are different modules designed to teach elementary students how to cope with criticism, teasing, bullying, other people's anger and their own anger.

Bee Your Best

The friendly bee helps develop a highly motivational comprehensive character education program. "Bee Words" from the "Honey Pot" serve as reminders to remember the "Buzz Words."

Belong & Drum Along

The Belong & Drum Along project creates an opportunity for students to participate in a culture of belonging through interactive percussion activities. The purpose is to empower students to be inclusive in their social interactions.

Children in Change

Children explore feelings that relate to family changes and transitions. We focus on learning about grief and loss process as it applies to change. Various Divorce Support Group Programs for children are implemented.

Confidence All Star

Based on the Program, The Self-esteem Garden, children learn to grow a positive self-concept. Four garden tools are used for Doing, Thinking, Talking and Feeling. Children create a manual to care for their garden that represents their life.

Creative Coaching

This program provides a curriculum for a support group for children with ADHD or those who would benefit from learning and practicing specific life skills (e.g., listening, organization, self-concept, controlling impulsivity, communication, friendship) related to attention challenges.

Friendship Keepers

Based on the program Making and Keeping Friends, students participate in activities for building relationships, understanding the four levels of friendship, and the behavior that encourages or discourages friendship.

Got Thinking

The Foundation for Critical Thinking provides research based programs for teaching thinking skills. Sessions include introducing fair and unfair thinking, teaching intellectual standards to help evaluate and analyze their own thinking, and learning intellectual virtues to assist with character development and internal motivation. Skills from this program are at times integrated into other group guidance projects.

Lunch Bunch

This informal counseling setting is a great way to get to know many students, facilitate peer interactions, and work towards a common goal. The students thrive on the special attention and enjoy playing games and doing activities related to the theme of the Lunch Bunch. Topics may include: Friendship Skills, Self-Esteem, Divorce, Grief, Worries, Temper Tamers, or Conflict Resolution.

L.E.T.S. Dig It Project: Learning Excellent Thinking Skills – Dig It provides students with a multidisciplinary experience of the science of archaeology. The goals included learning to improve critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

Natural Setting Social Groups

Various groups are offered to provide a natural setting for positive social interactions among students. These may be in a Magic Club (students learn how to be a magician), Chess Club, Drum Along, Adventure Guidance Activities, etc.

PAWS Program

PAWS - Positive Assistance Wins Success received statewide recognition as a Best Practice Program by the NJ Department of Education. The goal is to utilize animal-assisted counseling techniques and guidance activities to enhance the provision of an effective school counseling program for all students.

Shoe Walk

A program to teach how to step into others' shoes. Empathy related awareness and skills assist to develop pro-social behavior and to increase emotional competence.

Smart Choices for Success

Students learn a step-by-step process for making good decisions. The role of the three types of decisions (i.e., We, I and They decisions) are explored and applied to personal skills, social skills or survival skills.

Stress Busters

Various anger management programs are offered

Superflex

Social smarts is the goal of this superhero social thinking curriculum. Children learn about different perspectives, flexible thinking, problem solving and how to change their own thinking and behavior. Strategies to defeat inflexible and anti-social thinking and behaving are addressed.

Tame the Testing Tiger

Ways to calm standardized testing jitters is the focus of this program. Strategies such as Positive self-talk, relaxing routine, keeping it together and preparing physically for the test are learned.

Take the Remote

Sessions based on the book and activity guide: Hunter and His Amazing Remote Control. Students with ADD/ADHD or those who need to learn to filter out distractions, think before acting and use positive self-talk would benefit from this program.

Teasing Bullying

Various trade books (e.g., Simon's Hook, Kicky the Mean Chick, Have You Filled A Bucket Today, How Full is Your Bucket) along with anti-bullying/peace programs are offered.

Thinking Clearly

Based on the Seven C's of Thinking Clearly, this emotional competency program has character based learning activities for developing emotional, social and thinking skills. Students learn hindsight, insight and foresight questions to assist them in making appropriate choices and to do their best.

Think Social

Social smarts is the goal of this social thinking curriculum. Children learn about perspective, flexible thinking, problem solving and how to change their own thinking and behavior. Strategies to defeat inflexible and anti-social thinking and behaving are addressed.

Wash Out Violence With Kindness

A school-wide project whereby students write or draw ways to wash out violence with kindness and respect. Each classroom collects some soap, laundry detergent, mops, etc. to be donated to DASI, a non-profit agency in Sussex County that serves victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Worry Busters Club

Children will learn strategies to disarm their worries. This program is based on the kid's guide: What to Do When You Worry Too Much. Increased confidence and positive thinking are the expected results of participating in this program.

Newsletters

The counselor submits a monthly newsletter to the school newsletter with information for parents on character education and guidance topics.

Website

The counselor develops and maintains a website on the district site that is informative to parents, students, and other professionals. Refer to the Counseling Corner website for up to date information about the current School Counseling Program at Hudson Maxim and Tulsa Trail Schools.

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)

The counselor serves as coordinator for the I&RS team. The I&RS process begins with a teacher referral to the I&RS team for academic, social, emotional, or behavioral concerns. The counselor then begins researching, observing the student referred to the team and sending letters inviting parents and team members to attend the meeting. The I&RS team may include grade level teachers, academic support teachers, a member of the Child Study Team, the building principal, and the counselor. At the brainstorming meeting, the counselor writes the action plan and then sets up a follow-up meeting. The coordinator is responsible for following-up on the interventions within that plan to ensure academic, social, and emotional success of each student.

504 Procedures

The counselor may assist in developing and writing 504 Plans according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which addresses the rights of persons with disabilities. A 504 Plan is written for a person who (1) has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as learning), (2) has a record of such impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such impairment.

Basic Skills

After students take the appropriate standardized test for their grade level, the score results will be analyzed by the principal and grade level supervisor for review of eligibility for basic skills. At the elementary level, basic skills instruction supplements classroom instruction in the areas of mathematics and reading. To determine if students are eligible for basic skills, the principal will look at current grades, previous year grades, academic rigor of courses, current test scores, and previous test scores. All factors contribute to ensuring our students get the remediation they so deserve.

Collaboration with Child Study Team

The counselor works in collaboration with the Child Study Team in order to best meet the needs of individual students who are classified. The counselor serves as a resource for the Child Study Team and helps to brainstorm ideas for individual student success.

Grade Reports

At the midpoint of each marking period, progress reports are prepared to report students' growth. At the elementary level, commendation or deficiency reports will be distributed to select students notifying parents of students consistently performing at or above grade level standards or of students experience academic difficulty. In certain instance, the parent/guardian may be informed by phone if the student is in danger of failing. The progress and deficiency reports dates are listed on the school website.

Also, report cards will be issued to parents four times during the school year. Students or parents who have questions regarding achievement have the following options for communication with teachers:

1. Email – use teacher's first name initial and entire last name @hopatcongschools.org
2. Voicemail – call the school phone number #4, #1, enter extension
3. Call or email your child's guidance counselor to discuss any other concerns.

Lunch Balance

The Power School Parent Portal allows parents to view their child's lunch balance and lunch transactions for the entire school year Power School – log onto <http://powerschool.hopatcongschools.org/> to create an account. Enter the information requested. To link your children to your account, you must enter your Access ID & Access Password, which any school can give you.

Marking Period Dates

Marking Period	Progress Reports	Report Cards
1	Oct. 6 (DA, TT only)	Nov. 9
2	Dec. 16 (HMX, TT, DA)	Jan. 27
3	March 2 (HMX, TT, DA)	April 5
4	May 18 (HMX, TT, DA)	Last Day of School

Honor Roll

Tulsa Trail

At the conclusion of each month, select students receive awards for exemplary citizenship, academic achievement or sustained effort

Durban Avenue

At the conclusion of each month, students who meet the following criteria will be recognized accordingly:

High Honors = All A's including specials

Honors = All A's and B's with at least two A's in Reading, Writing, Math, English, Science, & Social studies

Home Instruction

Students who are ill or confined to home for medical reasons for a period of two weeks or more are entitled to home instruction with teachers assigned by the school. In order to receive this instruction, a phone call must be made to the Guidance Counselor requesting the service. A physician's note must be submitted which details that home instruction is required, the approximate length of time of home instruction needed, and clearly stated diagnosis

Once the principal submits the request for home instruction for board approval, the counselor will begin to gather assignments and set up tutoring. A parent/guardian or other responsible adult must be at home during the instruction period. Teachers assigned to home instruction will call the home directly to make visitation arrangements with the parent directly.

Standardized Testing

NJ ASK

NJASK or the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge is a standardized test given to all New Jersey public-schooled students in grades 3-8 during the spring. It is a comprehensive, multi-grade assessment program. It assesses student achievement in language arts, math, and science. Along with other indicators of student progress, the results of the elementary-level assessments are intended to be used to identify students who need additional instructional support in order to reach the CCCS.

Terra Nova

TerraNova is a series of standardized achievement tests used in the first and second grades designed to assess students' achievement in reading, language arts, mathematics, vocabulary, spelling, and other areas. The test series is published by McGraw-Hill.

Chapter 4

Transition from School to School

Grade 1 into Grade 2

Hudson Maxim to Tulsa Trail

The counselor is available at the Elementary Schools Open House in August to assist and welcome all students in their new schools. The counselor works with all second grade students, families, and teachers to ensure a smooth transition to Tulsa Trail School. The counselor also shares relevant information to facilitate a smooth transition and continuous services if needed in third grade.

Grade 3 into Grade 4

Tulsa Trail to Durban Avenue

The counselor assists third graders at Tulsa Trail with the transition to Durban Avenue. The counselor at grade 3 is the same for the grade 4 and 5 at Durban Avenue, which ensures a smooth transition to the new school and maintains a continuity of the counseling services. The counselor is able to be a constant familiar face to the students in a new building. Also, any student concerns are conveyed to the principal of the new school.

Grade 5 into Grade 6

Durban Avenue to Middle School

The counselor assists fourth graders at Durban Avenue with the transition to the Hopatcong Middle School. The elementary counselor will meet with the counselors at the Middle School to review any student concerns and to discuss the at grade 3 is the same for the grade 4 and 5 at Durban Avenue, which ensures a smooth transition to the new school and maintains a continuity of the counseling services.

Chapter 5

Counselor Responsibilities

Each member of the Guidance and Counseling Department is responsible for effecting our philosophy of needed student services. This ongoing process should include but is not limited to the following:

1. Committing to the primary responsibility to the District's mission: to empower each student with the skills necessary to become a successful contributing participant in a rapidly changing global society.
2. Counseling individual students to promote improvement in the student's social, emotional, behavioral and/or cognitive functioning.
3. Providing counseling for special needs students and writing IEP counseling goals.
4. Responding to the immediate needs and concerns of all students.
5. Identifying counseling needs by using inventories, checklists, and/or observing behavior.
6. Assisting teachers with students who require immediate attention for social and/or emotional issues.
7. Offering consultant services to teachers and parents.
8. Designing special programs and activities that meet classroom or school wide needs.
9. Acquiring resources on developmental issues and making them available to teachers and parents.
10. Serving as a student advocate by consulting with parents and teachers.
11. Networking with other elementary school counselors in the county and state.
12. Networking with community agencies and private practitioners.
13. Interpreting test scores and other evaluative data to the student so he/she will have a good understanding of himself/herself.
14. Coordinating the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) and 504 Plans Coordinator.
15. Providing support for students new to the school district.
16. Administering and/or proctoring state testing.
17. Advocating for equitable access to educational opportunities and to high expectations for all our students.
18. Maintaining contact logs and managing student records.
19. Participating in school-wide activities such as Back to School Nights, Conferences, lunch duty, recess duty, cover classes, school committees, etc.
20. Serving as a Crisis Team member.
21. Submitting reports to summarize monthly guidance and counseling activities

Who Are School Counselors?



School counselors, referred to as "guidance counselors" in the past, help every student improve academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning. School counselors in the 21st century are highly trained educators in pre K—12 settings who uphold ethical and professional standards to design, implement and manage comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs that promote and enhance student success.

School Counselor Qualifications

School counselors are certified or licensed professionals who possess a master's degree or higher in school counseling, or a substantial equivalent, meet the state certification/licensure standards and abide by the laws of the states in which they are employed. School counselors are required by most public school systems to successfully complete advanced-degree coursework in the following topics:

- Human growth and development
- Counseling theory
- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Social and cultural foundations
- Testing and assessment
- Research and program evaluation
- Professional orientation
- Career development

School counselors also are required to complete a practicum and internship supervised by a certified school counselor in a school setting.

What Do School Counselors Do?

School counselors address the academic and developmental needs of all students, not just those in need, by collaborating with students, parents, school staff and the community. School counseling programs exhibit the following characteristics:

Foundational mission and goals. School counselors design, implement, and maintain guidance programs that align with the educational mission and philosophies of their schools and school districts. These programs help every student develop competencies in academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning.

Delivery methods. School counselors follow a comprehensive guidance curriculum to work with students in individual, small group and classroom settings. School counselors help students create an academic plan for their education to prepare for successful careers after graduation and help students develop the necessary skills, such as organizational, time-management, and study skills. They also help students overcome obstacles that may form barriers to learning by helping students respond to issues such as divorce or death in their family, as well as developmental issues typical in childhood and adolescence.

Program management. School counselors manage their programs just as teachers manage their curriculum. They collaborate with administrators and other educators to ensure that the school counseling program helps fulfill the mission of the school by setting annual goals and putting mechanisms in place to facilitate the successful and effective delivery of the school

counseling program.

Accountability. School counselors hold their programs accountable for student achievement by monitoring student progress to ensure that the school counseling program meets its desired goals and objectives. School counselors collect, analyze and present statistics about grades, test scores, attendance and disciplinary records, and other information to make data-based and data-driven decisions about the school counseling program.

"The responsibilities of school counselors have increased tremendously over the years. School counselors are an integral part of the whole school community working to help children, teachers and other school personnel and parents. School counselors help children face challenges, tough classes, peer pressure, friendship problems, depression and more – all that can be roadblocks to future success."

-- Argela Reformato, a school counselor in New York

How Do School Counselors Impact Student Achievement?

Numerous research studies show that school counselors, implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, can serve a vital role in maximizing student achievement.

A research study of Florida students in 5th through 9th grades found that students in schools with a comprehensive guidance program scored significantly better on state's standardized test for reading and math.

--Does Implementing a Research-based School Counseling Curriculum Enhance Student Achievement? (Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, 2004)

School counselors provide solutions to help curb rates of school failure and dropout by addressing broader contexts that include personal, social, emotional, and career development.

--*An Investigation of a Model of Academic Motivation for School Counseling*, M. Scheel and J. Gonzalez, *Professional School Counseling*, October 2007.

School counselors are in a key position to assist schools in their education reform mandates to reduce the achievement gap among low income and minority children.

-- *Fostering Educational Resilience and Achievement in Urban Schools Through School-Family Community Partnerships*, J. Bryan, *Professional School Counseling*, February 2005.

In working with at-risk youth, a 2004 study of middle school students in Baltimore County showed that school counselors helped increase academic achievement, raise career awareness, and improve overall student self-efficacy.

-- *Impact of Career Intervention on At-Risk Middle School Students' Career Maturity Levels, Academic Achievement, and Self-Esteem*, H.L. Legum, and C. Hoare, *Professional School Counseling*, December 2004.

School counselors, because of their unique training and responsibility, have an influential role of helping students become more engaged in the academic and social arenas within the school.

--*The Multidimensionality of School Engagement and Math Achievement Among Racial Groups*, D. T. Sciarra, and H. J. Scirup, *Professional School Counseling*, April 2008.

The school counselor is an integral system support for the school-family-community relationship that meet the personal/social, academic, and career needs of a large number of students through collaboration, coordination, and consultation with school and community stakeholders.

--*An Examination of School Counselor Involvement in School-Family-Community Partnerships*, J. Bryan, C. Holcomb-McCoy, *Professional School Counseling*, June 2007.



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The Need for School Counselors

- From the American School Counselor Association

Today's school counselors are vital members of the education team. They help *all* students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.

School counselors are an important part of the educational leadership team and provide valuable assistance to students regardless of whether they work in an elementary school or middle school, high school or beyond. See the following pages for specific information on why we have elementary counselors and a guidance director.

Student-to-Counselor Ratios

Although ASCA recommends a 250-to-1 ratio of students to counselor, the national average is actually 467 (2007-2008 school year).

New Jersey School Counseling Mandates

Is school counseling mandated for grades K – 8?	Yes *
Mandated School Counselor-to-Student ratio:	None
Source of mandate:	State Administrative Code
Who funds mandate:	Local school board
Other:	*While school counseling programs are mandated in New Jersey, there is no rule mandating that school counselors themselves be employed in schools. http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap8.pdf

Sample Distribution of Total School Counselor Time

Delivery System Component	Elementary School % of Time	Middle School % of Time	High School % of Time
Guidance Curriculum	35%-45%	25%-35%	15%-25%
Individual Student Planning	5%-10%	15%-25%	25%-35%
Responsive Services	30%-40%	30%-40%	25%-35%
System Support	10%-15%	10%-15%	15%-20%

Adapted from Gysbers, N.C. & Henderson, P. (Eds.) (2000). *Developing and managing your school guidance program*, (3rd ed.), Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Why Elementary School Counselors?

- From the American School Counselors Association

“Today’s young people are living in an exciting time, with an increasingly diverse society, new technologies and expanding opportunities. To help ensure that they are prepared to become the next generation of parents, workers, leaders and citizens, every student needs support, guidance and opportunities during childhood, a time of rapid growth and change. Children face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that have an impact on academic achievement.

– “*Toward a Blueprint for Youth: Making Positive Youth Development a National Priority,*” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Elementary School Students’ Developmental Needs

The elementary years are a time when students begin to develop their academic self-concept and their feelings of competence and confidence as learners. They are beginning to develop decision-making, communication and life skills, as well as character values. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups and family. Comprehensive developmental school counseling programs provide education, prevention and intervention services, which are integrated into all aspects of children’s lives. Early identification and intervention of children’s academic and personal/social needs is essential in removing barriers to learning and in promoting academic achievement. The knowledge, attitudes and skills that students acquire in the areas of academic, career and personal/social development during these elementary years serve as the foundation for future success.

Meeting the Challenge

Elementary school counselors are professional educators with a mental health perspective who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today’s diverse student population. Elementary school counselors don’t work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. They provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help students achieve school success. Professional school counselors align with the school’s mission to support the academic achievement of all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century. This mission is accomplished through the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, developmental and systematic school counseling program. ASCA’s National Standards in the academic, career, and personal/social domains are the foundation for this work. The ASCA National Model: A Framework For School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2002), with its data-driven and results-based focus, serves as a guide for today’s school counselor who is uniquely trained to implement this program.

Elementary School Counselors Implement the Counseling Program by Providing:

School Guidance Curriculum

- Academic support, including organizational, study and test-taking skills
- Goal setting and decision-making
- Career awareness, exploration and planning
- Education on understanding self and others
- Peer relationships, coping strategies and effective social skills
- Communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution
- Substance abuse education
- Multicultural/diversity awareness

Individual Student Planning

- Academic planning
- Goal setting/decision- making
- Education on understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses
- Transition plans

Responsive Services

- Individual and small-group counseling
- Individual/family/school crisis intervention
- Conflict resolution
- Consultation/collaboration
- Referrals

System Support

- Professional development
- Consultation, collaboration and teaming
- Program management and operation

Elementary School Counselors Collaborate with:

Parents

Parent education
Communication/networking
Academic planning
College/career awareness programs
One-on-one parent conferencing
Interpretation of assessment results

Administrators

School climate
Behavioral management plans
School-wide needs assessments
Student data and results
Student assistance team building

Teachers

Classroom guidance activities
Academic support, including learning style assessment and education to help students succeed academically
Classroom speakers
At-risk student identification and implementation of interventions to enhance success

Students

Peer education
Peer support
Academic support
School climate
Leadership development
Community
Job shadowing, service learning
Crisis interventions
Referrals
Parenting classes
Support groups
Career education

***These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive*

Why Elementary School Counselors?

Elementary school years set the tone for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skill necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners. Through a comprehensive developmental school counseling program, school counselors work as a team with the school staff, parents and the community to create a caring climate and atmosphere. By providing education, prevention, early identification and intervention, school counselors can help all children achieve academic success. The professional elementary school counselor holds a master's degree and required state certification in school counseling. Maintaining certification includes on-going professional development to stay current with education reform and challenges facing today's students. Professional association membership enhances the school counselor's knowledge and effectiveness

Why a Director of Guidance?

- From the American School Counselors Association

Professional school counselors have a positive impact on student achievement through programs and services that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program. The development and implementation of these programs, as outlined by “The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling” (ASCA, 2005), requires a collaborative effort among well-trained, highly competent professional school counselors. School counselor directors/coordinators provide leadership at the district and state levels to ensure:

- the employment of highly qualified school counselors
- the development, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive school counseling programs that benefit all students
- the availability of professional development, consultation and supervision relevant to school counseling
- the use of performance appraisal instruments based on the appropriate role of the professional school counselor

Meeting The Challenge

School counselor directors/coordinators collaborate with professional school counselors to develop, implement and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs. Comprehensive school counseling programs, aligned with school, district and state missions, promote academic achievement and success for all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century. The ASCA National Model® serves as a guide for today’s professional school counselor, who is uniquely trained to implement this program. Driven by student data and based on standards of academic, career and personal/social development, these programs lead to results measured by improvement in academics, attendance and behavior of all students.

School counselor directors/coordinators:

- Advocate for the needs of students, based on school and district data
- Work to eliminate barriers to access and equity to a rigorous education for all students
- Provide information about the need for a K-12 comprehensive school counseling program to school-, district- and state-level administrators, school boards and the community
- Provide leadership toward the implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program at the school, district and state levels
- Provide leadership in the process of hiring qualified, diverse professional school counselors.
- Encourage membership and involvement in professional school counselor associations
- advocate for programs and services that lead to student success and achievement with school staff members, parents, district- and state-level staff, school board members and the community
- advocate for a professional school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250
- advocate for professional school counselors to spend 80 percent of their time in direct services to students as defined by the ASCA National Model®
- provide individual and group supervision to school counselors in practice
- provide leadership in the evaluation process to ensure school counselor performance appraisal is aligned with the appropriate role of the professional school counselor
- ensure regularly scheduled professional development for school counselors and for the continuous improvement of the school counseling program
- collaborate in the supervision of school counseling interns/fieldwork students
- coordinate the integration of school counseling programs with the total educational curriculum of the school district and state
- collaborate with school staff and community members on district and state leadership teams
- encourage professional school counselors to participate in school leadership teams
- provide leadership to promote equity in policies and procedures that impact students
- Collaborate or serve as a liaison with school and community officials regarding crisis response efforts

Supervision of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

School counselor directors/coordinators have advanced training in supervision and school counseling programs. School counselor directors/coordinators provide direction to school administrators if these administrators supervise professional school counselors. School counselor directors/coordinators also provide feedback and support to professional school counselors as the school counselors develop and implement comprehensive school counseling programs.

The ASCA National Model® provides in-depth information on the development of a comprehensive school counseling program. The primary responsibility of the school counselor director/coordinator in a district or state is to provide leadership and support in the development and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program based upon the identified needs of the students in the individual school building, district or state.

A Credentialed and/or Licensed Professional

Professional school counselor directors/coordinators hold a master's degree or higher in counseling or the substantial equivalent and meet licensure and credentialing requirements in school counseling as defined by each state. These degree and licensure requirements include the completion of supervised practicum and internship/fieldwork experiences. Many states require that school counselor directors/coordinators hold administrative and/or supervisory licensure in addition to school counseling licensure.

Why School Counseling Directors/Coordinators?

The development and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs requires a collaborative effort among well-trained, highly competent professional school counselors. School counselor directors/coordinators ensure that highly qualified school counselors are hired, professional development, consultation and supervision are provided and that school counselors are evaluated in relationship to the professional competencies as outlined by the ASCA National Model. School counselor directors/coordinators also provide leadership for the development and implementation of an effective comprehensive school counseling program. Their efforts include promoting or coordinating the design, delivery, evaluation and improvement of comprehensive school counseling programs in a systematic manner to improve the academics, attendance and behavior of all students.