

Article 9

Preparing the Next Generation: Implementing New Paradigms for School Counseling Preservice and Practice

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If we embrace a will to excellence, we can enable teachers to release the full potential of all of our children. (Hillard, 1991, p. 31)

School counseling practice has undergone a transformation similar to the experience of the academic disciplines. The concept of deep restructuring is a matter of drawing up an appropriate vision of human potential and of aiming for the stars (Hillard, 1991, p. 34). During the past 10 years the professional school counseling community has positioned itself as an influential partner in contemporary school improvement. Connecting school counseling to the mission of schools and education reform has contributed to eliminate the barriers to educational opportunity for every student. As school counselors address the challenge of closing the gap outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), they are seen as critical players in raising student aspirations and in helping every student meet the rigors of the academic standards to achieve a quality education.

For almost 10 years, initiatives such as the Education Trust’s (1997) Transforming School Counseling Initiative and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 1997) and National Model (ASCA, 2003) have powerfully raised the level of aspiration and expectation for the contributions of counseling to the school house. The significance of these new paradigms is not only in the eyes of the practitioner; the influence has greater implications for changing the way the next generation of school counselors will approach their work in schools with students.

The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) articulates the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that professional school counselors need to successfully transition from preservice to practice. Since 1997, TSCI has challenged the traditions of preparation and practice.

With the initial mission of this movement focused on the improvement of school counseling at the graduate preparation level, TSCI has placed significant attention on the particular role school counselors can play in increasing educational opportunities for all students and emphasizes advocacy, leadership, and contributions to the academic success of students.

The Transforming School Counseling philosophy motivates school counselors to examine their practice and look at ways of working beyond one student at a time, focusing attention on raising student aspirations and facilitating effective working relationships among students, faculty, parents, and community members. Grappling with school-based information helps school counselors to acquire an understanding of how to use data to inform practice, and use data driven decision making to respond to the needs of today’s students and schools.

Table 1. Traditional vs Transformed School Counselor Practice

The Practice of the Traditional School Counselor	The Practice of the Transformed School Counselor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling • Consultation • Coordination <p style="text-align: center;">Service-driven model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling • Coordination of services • Consultation • Leadership • Advocacy • Collaboration and teaming • Managing resources • Use of data • Technology <p style="text-align: center;">Data-driven and standards-based model</p>

(Education Trust, 1997)

This new vision (Education Trust, 1997) for school counseling articulates action, influence, and impact. School counselors are charged with the

responsibility to ensure that every child leave the school house prepared for the next transitional phase of her or his school and career plan and challenged to view his or her sphere of influence from a systems perspective. Many problems that individual students bring to the school counseling center are symptomatic of larger issues, and school counselors traditionally have not seen themselves as players in systemic change. Linking school counseling with the mission of schools connects the school counselor and the school counseling program with student achievement, social justice, advocacy, and accountability with the expressed purpose of positively impacting the system.

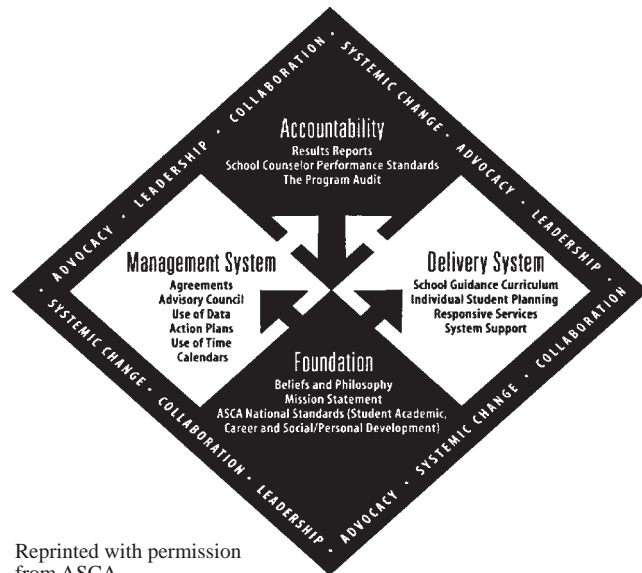
With a similar vision in mind, and in response to the educational reform agenda of *GOALS 2000: The Educate America Act* (1994), the American School Counselor Association had developed *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (ASCA, 1997) to better define the relationship of school counseling programs to the educational mission of schools (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). These National Standards had tied the work of school counseling programs to the mission of schools, and encouraged school counselors to assume a leadership role in school reform (Bowers, Hatch, & Schwallie-Giddis, 2001).

With the continued emphasis on school improvement, ASCA integrated the work of Gysbers and Henderson (2001), Johnson and Johnson (2002), and Myrick (2003), and connected these approaches to the National Standards (ASCA, 1997) and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1997). The resulting organizational structure, the ASCA National Model (2003), consists of four quadrants: Foundation, which includes Philosophy; Management System; Delivery System; and Accountability. These represent the key components of a 21st century comprehensive school counseling program. The ASCA National Model integrates the new vision school counseling (House & Hayes, 2002; House, Martin, & Ward, 2002) with the comprehensive process. The outside frame in Figure 1 represents the transformed skills of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change to help every student succeed academically. The inside of the graphic depicts the four interrelated quadrants that are the essential components of successful and effective comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2003).

Each of these quadrants is integral to an effective comprehensive school counseling program:

1. The *Foundation* of the program details the *what* of the program addressing what every student should know and be able to do (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). The foundation of the

Figure 1. The ASCA National Model



program reminds school counselors of the importance of mission, vision, and a proactive belief system ensuring that every student will benefit from the school counseling program.

2. The *Delivery System* describes *how* the program will be implemented and defines the implementation process and the components of the comprehensive program, i.e., guidance curriculum, individual planning with students, responsive services, and system support.
3. The *Management System* addresses the when, the why, and on what authority the program is delivered (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). This section also presents the organizational processes and tools needed to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program.
4. *Accountability* answers the question, “How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?” The ASCA National Model encourages school counselors to demonstrate accountability by presenting the effectiveness of their work in measurable terms such as impact over time, performance evaluation, and undertaking a program audit.

MEASURE, a six-step accountability process, is *one tool* designed to move the accountability component of the ASCA National Model forward by confirming the impact of the school counseling program on key school improvement and thus meet the accountability mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

MEASURE, an acronym for **M**ission, **E**lements, **A**nalyze, **S**takeholders – **U**nite, **R**eanalyze, and **E**ducate, advances school counselors from a counting-tasks system to aligning the school counseling program with standards-based reform.

Vision Without Action Is Meaningless

The new vision for school counseling as represented by the Transforming School Counseling Initiative and the ASCA National Model impacted the attitudes, skills, and behaviors of school counselors by focusing the school counseling program on improving student achievement. New vision counselors are committed to equity, advocacy, leadership, teaming, and collaboration, and to changing attitudes and behaviors to ensure that every student's success is at the forefront of the school's goals.

Connecting school counseling to student achievement is not intended to diminish the attention school counselors give to the mental health needs of students. Transformed school counseling offers new ways of working with individuals and groups that ensure balance in providing academic, career, and personal-social development. Twenty-first century school counselors are conversant with national standards, data-driven decision making, safe schools, the art of consultation, and the importance of connecting career development to academics; and they will be prepared to deliver comprehensive and accountable school counseling programs.

Through intentional efforts, school counseling programs have moved from a service-driven model to a data-driven and competency-based model. The school counseling program is now in a critical position to effectively complement academic rigor with affective development. Taking action also requires aligning the paradigm for practitioners with the preparation of preservice degree candidates. Systemic transformation requires intentional articulation between the school house and the university.

Where Lies the Future?

As child advocates, let's take risks, disarm our personal and organizational egos, try new strategies, work with new networks, and leave our comfort zones of business as usual.

(Children's Defense Fund, 2002, p. xix)

Contemporary counselor education has a strong social justice agenda that underpins the curricula. Similarly, the new paradigm for school counselor education is firmly rooted in advancing the moral dimensions of school to include a strong social justice

agenda to close the gap, especially for diverse populations of students who have been traditionally underserved or underrepresented. Contemporary counselor education programs prepare school counselor candidates to practice leadership and social advocacy in schools and to deliver effective school counseling programs that ensure that all students have equal access to quality academic programs and the support and skills needed in academic, career, and personal/social development. This cannot be at the expense of the acquisition of the essential knowledge and skills for individual and group counseling, consultation, and human growth and development. Candidates are taught to use technology—as delivery mechanism and as professional tool. Technology applications are an integral component of courses that emphasize student academic and career development, and postsecondary planning.

This next generation of school counselors, through words, behaviors, and actions, must contribute to school improvement and design and deliver student interventions that intervene, support, prevent, and motivate (Stone & Dahir, 2006). The school counselor who works systemically to achieve educational equity and excellence for all students embraces a leadership mindset and advocates for the success of every student. To successfully meet the needs of 21st century schools and students, this next generation of school counselors must be able to

- use counseling, consultation, and the coordination of services to impact the climate and culture of the school;
- advocate for a social justice agenda and promote equitable access to quality education for all students;
- follow the professional counseling codes of ethics;
- implement comprehensive, standards-based, accountable school counseling programs;
- examine data to effectively identify patterns and behaviors that impede student success; and
- use technology to efficiently and effectively expand the delivery of services and communication among all stakeholders, including parents (Stone & Dahir, 2004).

As the school counseling profession embraces these new paradigms, the challenge for the counselor educator is to seek a harmonic balance in providing opportunities to help trainees experience all aspects of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, while simultaneously developing, honing, and

refining counseling and intervention skills. Counselor educators have a responsibility to prepare the next generation to apply their counseling knowledge and abilities in a meaningful way and lead the way to contribute to school improvement.

Twenty-first century school counseling requires candidates to acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to collaborate with teachers, administrators, families, community resource networks, and others to promote educational equity and success for all children and youth (Stone & Dahir, 2006). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) promotes preparation that engages candidates in counseling, consultation, and leadership competence throughout their course assignments, at K-12 school-based field sites, through a professional counseling portfolio of written and technology-supported assignments, and in demonstrated data-driven action research.

Where lies the future? School counselors and counselor educators, by their beliefs and behaviors, can move the profession forward to its rightful position as the fifth discipline in a school setting. Has the influence of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1997), National Standards for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 1997), and/or the ASCA National Model (2003) raised the level of aspiration and expectation for change? It appears that for both the practitioner and the preparer, change is slow; the new vision could quickly become old.

The future lies in the profession's ability to change with the times and openly examine paradigms and practices that forward the profession. School counselors must demonstrate a willingness to contribute to 21st century schools in which human relationships are nurtured, diversity is valued, and every student receives equitable and quality education. When this next generation of school counselors lead and advocate to ensure academic, career, and interpersonal success for all students, the results of these efforts will be understood and supported by constituents and stakeholders. There lies the future!

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