


5 Tips to Advocate for Your School Counseling Program



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Tip 1: Change Your Title



What does that look like?

- Why should you make the switch?
 - Perception of competence
- How do you make the switch?
 - Conversation with principal to support the change through HR
 - Contract renewal discussion
- What if you receive pushback?
 - MA DOE school counselor liaison Lisa Weinstein
 - Licensure changed to “School Counselor” in 2019
 - Continued PD = staying relevant/current with best practices



Guidance Counselor vs. School Counselor

Historically, the term “guidance counselor” was used to refer to counselors working in the schools. This term has evolved to “school counselor” as the scope of duties has changed and evolved. Although some schools still used the outdated “guidance counselor” term, the American School Counselor Association encourages the use of “school counselor” to more accurately reflect the role.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

- Reactive
- Services to some
- Impact measured via feelings and perceptions
- Ancillary role to school improvement process
- Work in isolation

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

- Proactive/data-driven
- Program for all
- Impact measured via achievement, attendance and behavior data
- Essential role in the school improvement process
- School counselors as school leaders
- Develop, manage and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program

Excerpt from “*School Counseling Principles: Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future: A History of School Counseling*,” by Norman C. Gysbers, Ph.D.

“The terminology issue is still with us today. Is it guidance, counseling, guidance and counseling, or

counseling and guidance? The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has come down firmly on the side of the term school counseling program although the literature still reflects the usage of various combinations of terms. The terminology issue also is reflected in personnel titles. Again, ASCA has come down firmly on the title school counselor, although the public still uses the title guidance counselor, and some school districts use the title guidance dean, going back to a title used earlier.

The terminology issue is interesting from a historical perspective too. Remember the first term was vocational guidance, and then many modifiers were placed in front of the word guidance. In the 1930s guidance became a service within pupil personnel services with five services: information, assessment, counseling, placement and follow-up. Then the counseling service assumed prominence, so the common labels used were guidance and counseling. Information and assessment continued to be a part of guidance and counseling, but placement and follow-up became less important and have now almost disappeared as active parts of school counseling. Following ASCA’s lead, counseling became the label of choice as in school counseling programs. Guidance is still present but is used to label one of the delivery components of the program, namely, the guidance curriculum.”

REFERENCES

American School Counselor Association (2012). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs*, Third Edition. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Gysbers, N. (2010). *Remembering the past, shaping the future: A history of school counseling*. Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

Lambie, G. W., & Williamson, L. L. (2004). The challenge to change from guidance counseling to professional school counseling: A historical proposition. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(2), 124-131.

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS OR SCHOOL COUNSELORS: HOW THE NAME OF THE PROFESSION INFLUENCES PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE



FOUNDATION OF THE RESEARCH

IN 1990, ASCA issued an official statement calling on the profession to change the title to “school counselor” rather than the previous title of “guidance counselor.”

WHY THE TITLE CHANGE?

The title “guidance counselor” no longer encompassed the broad scope of work that was done by the professionals in the school.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Researchers sought to determine if there were significant differences on a measure of perceived competence of school counselors based on job title. About half the participants completed a version of a research survey that used the term “guidance counselor” and half completed a version of a research survey that used the term “school counselor.”

~~School~~
**GUIDANCE
COUNSELOR**



WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?

Participants who completed the surveys that used the term “guidance counselor” were statistically significantly less likely to believe individuals with that job title were able to perform the 25 tasks on the survey. The results of this study show the following:

THE TITLE MATTERS:

- Using “guidance counselor” versus “school counselor” has an impact on the perceived competence of school counselors.
- School counselors who received the survey using the term “guidance counselor” were statistically significantly more likely to assign lower scores on the survey than their peers who received the version with the term “school counselor.”
- School counselors who saw the term “guidance counselor” used to describe school counselors’ standards and competencies were less likely to believe school counselors were able to perform the tasks of a data-informed comprehensive school counseling program.
- School counselors perceived that guidance counselors are less competent to complete the job roles and tasks

described within the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies and CACREP standards.

- School counselors with every level of experience were equally affected by the survey terminology. The years of experience of the school counselor did not affect the perceptions of competence.

Because titles are used to describe the nature of the work of the profession, when the terms “guidance counselor” and “school counselor” are used interchangeably, *when in fact they are not interchangeable*, this results in confusion around the nature of the work completed by school counselors.

When school counselors use “guidance counselor” to describe the work they do, it significantly influences their own perception of the competence of members of their profession in a negative way.



WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

- 1** Advocate to ensure the use of the title “school counselor” in all areas of your work by all educational stakeholders.
- 2** Use your title as a form of social capital to advance the recognition and legitimacy of the profession and to ensure all students receive data-informed comprehensive school counseling programming.
- 3** Adopt the title “school counselor” on all communication media, including business cards, door plaques, and digital communication such as email signatures, social media and websites.



SOURCE: “Guidance Counselors or School Counselors: How the Name of the Profession Influences Perceptions of Competence” (*Professional School Counseling*, Vol. 22, Issue 1). Authors: Brett Zyromski, Ph.D., Tyler D. Hudson, M.A., Emily Baker, M.A., and Darcy Haag Granello, Ph.D. The Ohio State University. This study used a sample of 276 school counselors who were recruited for participation at a 2018 state counseling association conference in Ohio.

Tip 2: Celebrate Your Work with Families

What does that look like?

- Be active in planning of: school/grade/class orientation, open houses, and “Welcome” days
 - Emphasis how school counselors support students’ academic, social emotional, and college/career development
 - Handouts:
 - Develop an FAQ handout from past conversations with families and students



WHO ARE SCHOOL COUNSELORS?

School counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve student success for ALL students by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

EMPLOYED AT ALL LEVELS

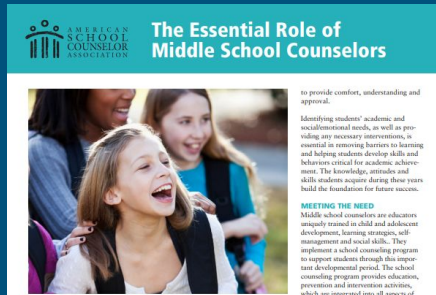
- ELEMENTARY
- MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S ROLE

School counselors are vital members of the education team and maximize student success.

► **Help all students:**

- apply academic achievement strategies
- manage emotions and apply interpersonal



AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

The Essential Role of Middle School Counselors

to provide comfort, understanding and approval.

Identifying students' academic and social/emotional needs, as well as providing any necessary intervention, is essential in removing barriers to learning and helping students develop skills and behaviors critical for academic achievement. The knowledge, attitudes and skills students acquire during these years build the foundation for future success.

MEETING THE NEED

Middle school counselors are educators uniquely trained to child and adolescent development, learning strategies, self-management and social skills. They implement a school counseling program to support students through the important developmental period. The school counseling program provides education, prevention and intervention activities, which are integrated into all aspects of



School Counselors

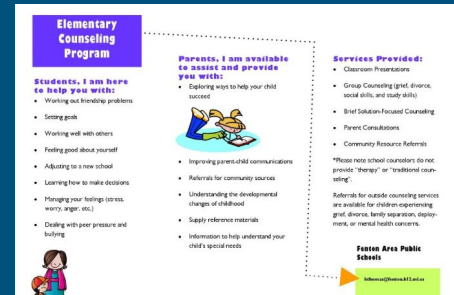
THE KEY

to

STUDENT SUCCESS

School counselors improve three key factors of student success:

- 
- 
- 



Elementary Counseling Program

Students, I am here to help you with:

- Working out friendship problems
- Setting goals
- Working well with others
- Feeling good about yourself
- Adjusting to a new school
- Learning how to make decisions
- Managing your feelings (stress, worry, anger, etc.)
- Dealing with peer pressure and bullying

Parents, I am available to assist and provide you with:

- Improving parent-child communications
- Referrals for community resources
- Understanding the developmental changes of childhood
- Supply reference materials
- Information to help understand your child's special needs

Services Provided:

- Classroom Presentations
- Group Counseling (gift, sharing, social skills, and study skills)
- Brief Solution Focused Counseling
- Parent Consultations
- Community Resource Referrals

*Please note school counselors do not provide "therapy" or "traditional counseling."

Referrals for outside counseling services are available for children experiencing grief, divorce, family separation, displacement, or mental health concerns.

Fenton Area Public Schools

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What does that look like?

- Monthly family newsletter
 - Align with core curriculum schedule
 - Include tips and tricks for at home SEL support
 - Include areas of support: academic, college/career, social emotional
- Accessibility - the likelihood of family communication on existing platforms, e.g. Class Dojo, Remind, etc.
 - Google Voice
 - Text “anonymously” with families who won’t respond to email
 - Language comprehension
 - Avoid complex verbiage when possible
 - Does your school have a translator or translation program?

MONSON HIGH SCHOOL	
National School Counseling Week	
FEBRUARY 7 - 11, 2005	
<p>Overcoming test anxiety is a "Family Affair"</p> <p>Test anxiety is a universal term these days. It is actually unusual to find a student who doesn't approach a big test without experiencing a high level of anxiety. Such anxiety can leave students with a array of problems: upset stomach, headache, loss of focus, fear, irritability, anger, and even depression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ "Successful emotions can leave students unable to absorb, retain and recall information."➤ Anxiety creates a "noise" in the brain that interferes with our ability to retrieve information from our memory along with the ability to comprehend and reason.➤ Feelings like frustration, fear, anger and anxiety distract our brain activity, leaving it "out of sync."➤ On the other hand, uplifting feelings, like appreciation, leave the brain synchronized and able to think more clearly. <p>Helpful hints for successful test taking</p> <p>Research has shown that providing students with tools and strategies that build both emotional skills and healthy physical habits when preparing for a test can help students overcome test anxiety and the related symptoms. At the same time it is imperative to prepare students to be able to perform well on critical testing.</p> <p>Helping students identify their feelings will lead to success as well. Giving them the tools they will need to face emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt, anger and/or frustration. Physically, students must practice good habits in order to have enough energy to think clearly over a long period of time.</p> <p>Tips to share with your child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Practice the neutral test. When your child has uncomfortable feelings about whether they will do well on a test, practice the neutral test with them. It is important to catch negative thoughts before they become self-doubt. Each time your child experiences these negative feelings, practice slow breathing, allowing the body to become calm. This breathing may become helpful in days leading up to the test, the night before, or even during the test.○ The what-if question. Often times, anxiety surrounding test taking has to do with the negative feelings associated with "what-if" thoughts. Addressing such questions like, "What if I fail?" will help you and your child find out where the anxiety stems from. Have your child write down possible "what-if" questions and the change in school environment, parents can offer some focus on the value of education.○ Rest. Big tests require a lot of energy and stamina so that your child can focus. Make sure your child gets at least 8-10 hours of sleep the night before a test.○ Do something fun the night before a test to take your child's mind off of the test - see a movie, play a board game or engage in a physical activity. This allows the student's mind and emotions to become more relaxed leading up to the test.	<p>.....School Counselors Point You in the Right Direction.....</p> <p>Family Involvement is the Key to Student Success</p> <p>For three decades, studies on the importance of family involvement in children's learning have concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ All families want to and can help their children learn regardless of their income or educational level.➤ Forty percent of parents across the country believe that they are not devoting enough time to their children's education.➤ Teachers ranked strengthening parents' role in their children's learning as the issue that should receive the highest priority in future public educational policy.➤ Among students ages 14-17, 48% said they would like to talk to their parents more about schoolwork.➤ 71% of urban school leaders felt the lack of parent involvement to be a major problem. <p>The Role of Families</p> <p>Involved family members can make an enormous difference in their child's learning. High school students enrolled in a sequence of challenging courses will prepare them for college and/or career. At a time when many young people feel overwhelmed by their peers, the real and personal pressures from their parents, and the change in school environment, parents can offer some focus on the value of education.</p> <p>Family involvement needs to be placed at the center of our community. Being a good example through emotional, ethical, and civic commitments has always been the primary responsibility of parents and other family members. With parent involvement, everyone will benefit considerably.</p>

Tip 3: Reinforce your Position with Teachers

What does that look like?

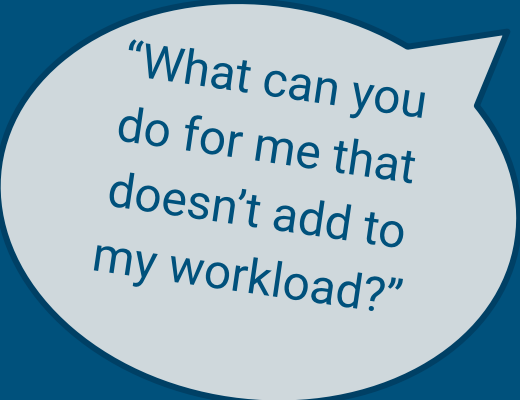
- Send out a Staff Program Evaluation and Needs Assessment: do we actually know what they know or need?

- Google Forms (GSuite)
- Excel Forms (Office 365)
- SurveyMonkey

- Provide PD for teachers: we are a resource!

- [MASCA Model 2.0](#)
- MA DESE [Educator Evaluation Rubrics - Classroom Teacher](#): I.A.2.; II.A.2.; II.B.1.; II.B.2; II.B.3; II.D.1.; III.A.1.; III.C.1.; IV.C.1.; IV.E.1.
- MA DESE [Frameworks](#)

- MA [Career Development Education](#) and [2005 Guide for The Developed Self](#)
- ASCA [Ethics/Competencies](#): A.3.a; A.4.a; B.2.a; M 5; B-SS 6
- CASEL [SEL Competencies](#)
- [Common Core Standards](#)



“What can you do for me that doesn't add to my workload?”

What does that look like?

- Attend grade/team meetings
- Clear visual reminders: repetition, familiarity, trust
 - The fewer and more frequent, the better
 - “Tagline” in email signature
 - Putting School Counseling handouts in staff mailboxes
 - Bulletin boards
 - Handouts / posters around office
 - www.canva.com
- Show specific appreciation
 - We all know teachers do a great job - but do they know *why* we appreciate them?

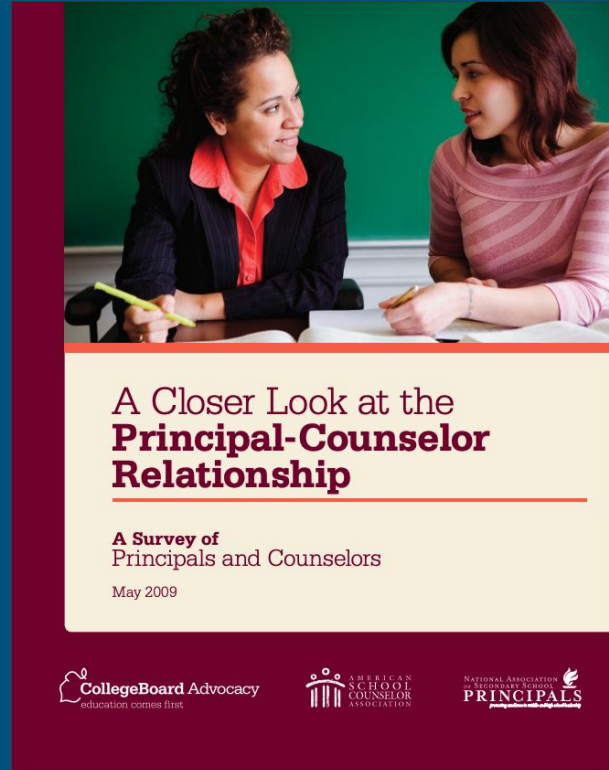
ASCA Certificate of Appreciation



Tip 4: Share Your Work with Administration & School Boards

Sharing Your Work with Administration

- Includes School Administration and District Administration
- An effective principal-school counselor relationship can lead to better educational outcomes for all students
- Research has shown that Communication, Shared Vision, Respect and Trust noted as the most important aspects of this relationship



What does that look like?



ENHANCING THE PRINCIPAL-SCHOOL COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP

>Toolkit

- Complete the [ASCA Annual Agreement](#)
- Create a vision and mission statement for the SC Department that aligns with school
- Plan for administrative meetings
- Make sure to communicate the positive SC efforts during Administrative Meetings
- Invite administration to come to important school counseling events or department meetings
- Read through the [Enhancing the Principal School Counselor Toolkit](#) if you would like to foster a better relationship

Provide support and relevant data

- Offer to provide PD for teachers on various subjects
- Develop an end of the year report to highlight the awesome work of the SC Department and submit it to your administrators and superintendent
- Share relevant research data with principal about the value of school counseling



What does that look like for School Boards?



- Invite the School Board members to events hosted by the school counseling department
- Ask School Board members to be on your Advisory Committee*
- Present at School Board Meetings*
- Develop an end of the year report to highlight the awesome work of the SC Department and submit it to your school board
- Share relevant [research data](#) with school board

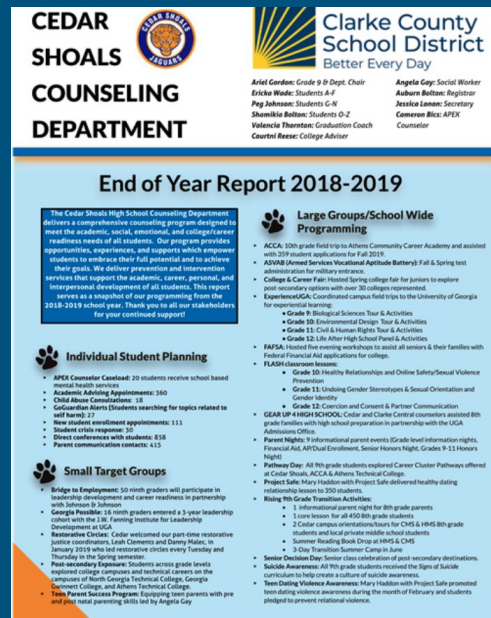
*ASCA School Counselor Magazine article: [Sharpen Your Influence](#)

Examples of End of the Year SC Reports

Elementary School Example



High School Example



Tip 5: Develop a Relationship with your State Legislators

What does that look like?

- Know who your local state legislators are
 - For you
 - For your school
- Reach out and introduce yourself
 - Email
 - Personal Meeting at State House
 - Meet & greets
- Connect with them virtually
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
- Invite them to Special Events that showcase your SC program
- Share the needs of your school and community with them



Resources

- ASCA [Careers/Role page](#): infographics, role descriptions, empirical study summaries, guidance v. school counselors, competencies, appropriate v. inappropriate duties
- US News & World Report article: [How High School Counselors Can Help Students, Parents](#)
- ASCA [Role of the School Counselor page](#): infographics, why school counselors are needed, videos
- ASCA [School Counselor-Principal Relationship page](#): survey results, articles, videos
- [NYU Steinhardt school counselor infographic](#)
- Edutopia article: [School Administrator's Guide to Supporting the Role of School Counselors](#)
- [MASCA NSCW 2020](#): samples of newspaper editorials, family newsletters, infographics
- ASCA School Counselor Magazine article: [Sharpen Your Influence](#)
- ASCA School Counselor Magazine article: [Expand Your Reach by Marketing Your Program](#)
- MASCA Newsletter article: [MASCA and You: Advocacy at Every Level](#)
- [MASCA Model 2.0](#) page: templates, guidelines, advocacy “toolkits”
- College Board [National Office for School Counselor Advocacy](#): guidelines, templates, planning tools, curriculum plans, toolkits
- [The School Counseling Analysis, Leadership and Evaluation](#) Center archive

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