

North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards

AS APPROVED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON DECEMBER 4, 2008

A New Vision for School Counseling

The demands of twenty-first century education dictate new roles for school counselors. Schools need professional school counselors who are adept at creating systems for change and at building relationships within the school community. Professional School Counselors create nurturing relationships with students that enhance academic achievement and personal success as globally productive citizens in the twenty-first century. Utilizing leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, professional school counselors promote academic achievement and personal success by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program that encompasses areas of academic, career, and personal/social development for all students.

In order to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program, the professional school counselor should understand and be competent in the following areas:

- Human growth and development,
- Core components for helping relationships,
- Cultural diversity,
- Societal change and trends,
- Student learning and academic success,
- Evaluation of student needs,
- Group and individual counseling techniques,
- Career development,
- Use of data,
- Use of technology,
- Role of the school counselor in leadership, advocacy, and systemic change,
- Legal and ethical guidelines,
- Collaboration with internal and external stakeholders,
- Research and program evaluation,
- School culture and mission, and
- Interaction with other educational professionals.

Intended Purpose of the Standards

The North Carolina Standards for School Counseling have been developed as a resource for school counselors to enhance their knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is

incumbent upon the school counselor to provide services as part of a comprehensive multidisciplinary team with complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences.

The school counselor standards will

- guide professional development as school counselors move forward in the twenty-first century,
- provide the focus for schools and districts as they support, monitor and evaluate their school counselors, and
- assist higher education programs in developing the content and requirements of school counselor education curricula.

Standard 1: School Counselors Demonstrate Leadership, Advocacy, and Collaboration

Professional school counselors demonstrate leadership, advocacy, and collaboration by developing a positive place for students and staff members to learn and grow. School counselors manage a comprehensive school counseling program that supports academic, career, and personal/social development for all students. School counselors advocate for equity for all students and staff members regardless of learning style, cultural background, or individual learning needs. School counselors improve the counseling profession by demonstrating high ethical standards and by following the codes of ethics set out for them.

School Counselors demonstrate leadership in the school.

School counselors work collaboratively with all school staff to create a positive learning community. School counselors take an active role in analyzing local, state, and national data to develop and enhance school counseling programs. School counselors create data-driven goals and strategies that align with the school improvement plan to improve student learning. School

counselors annually discuss the comprehensive school counseling program with the school administrator. School counselors provide input in the selection of professional development for the school staff that meets the needs of students and choose professional development activities that foster their own professional growth. School counselors mentor and support colleagues to improve the academic success of students.

- Work collaboratively with all school staff to create a positive learning community
- Take an active role in analyzing local, state, and national data to develop and enhance school counseling programs
- Create data driven goals and strategies that align with the school improvement plan
- Discuss the comprehensive school counseling program with the school administrator
- Provide input in the selection of professional development for the school staff
- Choose professional development activities that foster their own professional growth
- Mentor and support colleagues

School Counselors enhance the counseling profession.

School counselors strive to improve the counseling profession by staying current in research and best practices. School counselors contribute to establishing a positive school climate. School counselors promote professional growth for all educators and collaborate with their colleagues to improve the profession.

- Strive to improve the counseling profession
- Contribute to establishing a positive school climate
- Promote professional growth
- Collaborate with their colleagues

School Counselors advocate for schools and students.

School counselors advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning. School counselors promote awareness of and responsiveness to learning styles, cultural diversity, and individual learning needs. School counselors collaborate with staff in building relationships with students that have a positive impact on student achievement. School counselors participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve the education and development of all students. School counselors advocate for equitable, student-centered legislation, policy, and procedures.

- Advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning

- Promote awareness of and responsiveness to learning styles, cultural diversity, and individual learning needs
- Collaborate with staff in building relationships with students that have a positive impact on student achievement
- Participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve the education and development of all students
- Advocate for equitable, student-centered legislation, policy, and procedures

School Counselors demonstrate high ethical standards.

School Counselors demonstrate ethical behaviors. School Counselors uphold the American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors, revised June 26, 2004. (<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=173>), the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators (effective June 1, 1997) and the Standards for Professional Conduct adopted April 1, 1998 (www.ncptsc.org).

- Demonstrate ethical behaviors
- Uphold American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- Uphold Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and Standards for Professional Conduct

Standard 2: School Counselors Promote A Respectful Environment for A Diverse Population of Students

Professional school counselors establish a respectful school environment to ensure that each student is supported by caring staff. School counselors recognize diversity and treat students as individuals, holding high expectations for every student. Knowing that students have many different needs, school counselors work to identify those needs and adapt their services to meet them. School counselors recognize the fact that many adults share responsibility for educating students and collaborate with them to facilitate student academic success.

School Counselors foster a school environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.

School counselors create an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible. School counselors model and teach behaviors that lead to positive

and nurturing relationships through developmentally-appropriate and prevention-oriented activities.

- Create an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible
- Model and teach positive behaviors that lead to positive and nurturing relationships through developmentally-appropriate and prevention-oriented activities

School Counselors embrace diversity in the school community and in the world.

School counselors demonstrate knowledge of the history of diverse cultures and their role in shaping global issues. School counselors collaborate with teachers to ensure that the presentation of the *Standard Course of Study* is relevant to a diverse student population. School counselors actively select materials and develop activities that counteract stereotypes and incorporate histories and contributions of diverse cultures. School counselors recognize the influence of culture on a child's development and personality. School counselors help others understand how a student's culture, language, and background may influence school performance and consider these influences in the programs and services they provide.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of diverse cultures and their role in shaping global issues
- Collaborate with teachers to ensure that the presentation of the *Standard Course of Study* is relevant to a diverse student population
- Select materials and develop activities that counteract stereotypes and incorporate histories and contributions
- Understand how a student's culture, language, and background may influence school performance and consider these influences in the programs and services they provide

School Counselors treat students as individuals.

School counselors maintain high expectations, including graduation from high school, for students of all backgrounds. School counselors appreciate the differences and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment.

- Maintain high expectations for all students
- Appreciate the differences and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment

School Counselors recognize students are diverse and adapt their services accordingly.

School counselors recognize that all students have different needs and collaborate with school and community personnel to help meet their needs. School counselors identify these needs using data, referrals, observation, and other sources of information. School counselors collaborate with others to create a customized plan of action that provides follow-up services to meet students' varied needs.

- Collaborate with school and community personnel to help meet student needs
- Identify special needs using data, referrals, observation, and other sources of information
- Collaborate with others to create a customized plan of action that provides follow-up services to meet students' varied needs

School Counselors work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of students.

School counselors recognize that educating students is a shared responsibility involving the school, parents/guardians, and the community. School counselors improve communication and collaboration among the school, home, and community in order to promote and build trust, understanding, and partnerships with all segments of the school community. School counselors seek solutions to overcome barriers that may stand in the way of effective family and community involvement in the education of students.

- Improve communication and collaboration among the school, home, and community
- Promote and build trust, understanding, and partnerships with all segments of the school community
- Seek solutions to overcome barriers that may stand in the way of effective family and community involvement

Standard 3: School Counselors Understand and Facilitate the Implementation of A Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Professional school counselors align their programs with state and national best practices to ensure that their role fits into the school program. A comprehensive school counseling program meets the academic, career, and social/emotional developmental needs of students

through the implementation of programming including individual counseling, classroom presentation, academic advising, career development services, consultation, parent education and other responsive services. School counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling program for all students and provide developmentally-appropriate services and activities based on student needs. A school counselor must engage in leadership, advocacy, and collaboration with all school personnel for the successful implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors understand how students learn and help all students develop in the areas of academic, career, and personal social success. School counselors align their services with the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* to meet the needs of students.

School Counselors align their programs to support student success in the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*.

In order to support the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*, school counselors align content standards and implement program models developed by professional organizations in school counseling. School counselors support equity and access to rigorous and relevant curricula for all students. School counselors develop and apply strategies to enhance student success.

- Align content standards and implement program models developed by professional organizations in school counseling
- Support equity and access to rigorous and relevant curricula
- Develop and apply strategies to enhance student success

School Counselors understand how their professional knowledge and skills support and enhance student success.

School counselors bring richness and depth of understanding to their school through their knowledge of theories and research about human development, student learning, and academic success. School counselors apply this knowledge as they address the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

- Know theory and research about human development, student learning, and academic success
- Address the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students

School Counselors recognize the interconnectedness of the comprehensive school counseling program with academic content areas/disciplines.

School counselors understand how the comprehensive school counseling program relates to other disciplines. School counselors support the mission and goals of the school and district by providing technical assistance to all curricula areas as they align components of the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study Guidance Curriculum* to their content areas/disciplines. School counselors support teachers and other specialists' use of the *North Carolina Guidance Curriculum* to develop and enhance students' twenty-first century skills and promote global awareness.

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- Support teachers and other specialists' use of the *North Carolina Guidance Curriculum* to develop and enhance students' twenty-first century skills and promote global awareness

School Counselors develop comprehensive school counseling programs that are relevant to students.

School counselors use data to develop comprehensive programs that meet student needs. School counselors deliberately, strategically, and broadly incorporate into their programs the life skills that students need to be successful in the twenty-first century. These skills span the academic, personal/social, and career domains and include leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility.

- Use data to develop comprehensive programs that meet student needs
- Incorporate into their programs the life skills that students need to be successful in the twenty-first century

Standard 4: School Counselors Promote Learning for All Students

Professional school counselors are knowledgeable of the ways in which learning takes place and understand the significance of academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. School counselors work to

eliminate barriers that students may experience. School counselors use data to plan programs that help students develop their academic and career-related skills as well as their abilities to relate cooperatively and effectively with other people. School counselors use a variety of methods to implement programs that will help raise achievement and close gaps. School counselors help students think through their problems and find solutions. School counselors listen and communicate well, and they model those behaviors for others around them.

School Counselors know how students learn.

School counselors understand the teaching and learning process. School counselors know the influences that affect individual student learning, such as human development, culture, and language proficiency. School counselors are aware of barriers that impact student learning and assist in overcoming them. School counselors provide resources to staff to enhance student strengths and address student weaknesses.

- Know the influences that affect individual student learning, such as human development, culture, and language proficiency
- Assist in overcoming those barriers that impact student learning
- Provide resources to staff to enhance student strengths and address student weaknesses

School Counselors plan their programs for the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

School counselors use academic, behavior, and attendance data to plan appropriate programs for students. School counselors discuss the comprehensive school counseling program with school administrators and communicate the goals of the program to stakeholders. School counselors consult and collaborate with colleagues, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders to ensure that students' needs are addressed. School counselors make their programs responsive to cultural diversity and student needs.

- Use academic, behavior, and attendance data to plan appropriate programs
- Discuss the comprehensive school counseling program with school administrators and communicate the goals of the program to stakeholders
- Consult and collaborate with colleagues, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders
- Make their programs responsive to cultural diversity and student needs

School Counselors use a variety of delivery methods.

School counselors utilize the Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Preventive and Responsive Services in meeting the needs of students as they strive to raise achievement and close gaps. School counselors spend the majority of their time in these direct services, allocating time based on the developmental needs of their students. School counselors are responsive to individual student needs and differences in learning styles and culture in the programs and activities they provide. School counselors employ technology as appropriate to enhance delivery of their programs.

- Utilize the Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Preventive and Responsive Services in meeting the needs of students as they strive to raise achievement and close gaps
- Allocate time based on the developmental needs of their students
- Respond to individual student needs and differences in learning styles and culture in the programs and activities they provide
- Employ technology as appropriate to enhance delivery of their programs

School Counselors help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

School counselors assist all students with developing academic, career, and personal/social skills. School counselors help students utilize sound reasoning, understand connections, and make complex choices. School counselors help students learn problem-solving techniques that incorporate critical thinking skills such as identifying problems, recognizing options, weighing evidence, and evaluating consequences. School counselors encourage students to use these skills to make healthy and responsible choices in their everyday lives.

- Assist all students with developing academic, career, and personal/social skills
- Help students utilize sound reasoning, understand connections, and make complex choices
- Help students learn problem-solving techniques that incorporate critical thinking skills such as identifying problems, recognizing options, weighing evidence, and evaluating consequences
- Encourage students to use these skills to make healthy and responsible choices in their everyday lives

School Counselors use and promote effective listening and communication skills.

School counselors listen responsively to students, colleagues, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders in order to identify issues and barriers that impede student success. School counselors use a variety of methods to communicate effectively in support of the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. School counselors assist students in developing effective listening and communication skills in order to enhance academic success, build positive relationships, resolve conflicts, advocate for themselves, and become responsible twenty-first century citizens.

- Listen responsively to students, colleagues, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders in order to identify issues and barriers that impede student success
- Use a variety of methods to communicate effectively in support of the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students
- Assist students in developing effective listening and communication skills in order to enhance academic success, build positive relationships, resolve conflicts, advocate for themselves, and become responsible twenty-first century citizens

Standard 5: School Counselors Actively Reflect on Their Practice

Professional school counselors demonstrate accountability for managing and delivering a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors analyze formal and informal data to evaluate their programs in a deliberate on-going manner. School counselors participate in professional development opportunities that support the school and district's mission as well as the comprehensive counseling program. School counselors recognize that change is constant and use best practices to continually improve their programs.

School Counselors analyze the impact of the school counseling program.

School counselors think systematically and critically about the impact of the comprehensive school counseling program on student academic, career, and personal/social development. School counselors analyze student achievement, behavior, and school climate data, as well as feedback from students, parents, and other stakeholders to continually develop

their program. School counselors evaluate the effectiveness of their program based on these data.

- Think systematically and critically about the impact of the comprehensive school counseling program on student academic, career, and personal/social development
- Analyze student achievement, behavior, and school climate data, as well as feedback from students, parents, and other stakeholders to continually develop their program
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their program

School Counselors link professional growth to the needs of their school and their program goals.

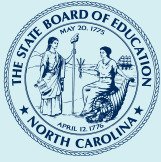
School counselors participate in continued, high quality professional development that reflects a global view of educational practices; includes twenty-first century skills and knowledge; aligns with the State Board of Education priorities; and meets the needs of students and their own professional growth.

- Participate in continued, high quality professional development

School Counselors function effectively in a complex dynamic environment.

Understanding that change is constant, school counselors actively investigate and consider new ideas that improve student academic, career, and personal/social development as well as the school counseling profession. School counselors collaborate with students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders to implement these ideas.

- Actively investigate and consider new ideas that improve student academic, career, and personal/social development as well as the school counseling profession
- Collaborate with students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders to implement these ideas



Future-Ready Students: Goals for the 21st Century

The guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century.

NC Public Schools Will Produce Globally Competitive Students.

- Every student excels in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what students need to know and demonstrate in a global 21st Century environment, including a mastery of languages, an appreciation of the arts and competencies in the use of technology.
- Every student's achievement is measured with an assessment system that informs instruction and evaluates knowledge, skills, performance and dispositions needed in the 21st Century.
- Every student will be enrolled in a course of study designed to prepare them to stay ahead of international competition.
- Every student uses technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that will be needed as a life-long learner to be competitive in a constantly changing international environment.
- Every student has the opportunity to graduate from high school with an Associate's Degree or college transfer credit.

NC Public Schools Will Be Led By 21st Century Professionals.

- Every teacher will have the skills to deliver 21st Century content in a 21st Century context with 21st Century tools and technology that guarantees student learning.
- Every teacher and administrator will use a 21st Century assessment system to inform instruction and measure 21st Century knowledge, skills, performance and dispositions.
- Every education professional will receive preparation in the interconnectedness of the world with knowledge and skills, including language study.
- Every education professional will have 21st Century preparation and access to ongoing, high quality professional development aligned with State Board of Education priorities.
- Every educational professional uses data to inform decisions.

NC Public School Students Will Be Healthy and Responsible.

- Every learning environment will be inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive and flexible for student success.

- Every school provides an environment in which each child has positive, nurturing relationships with caring adults.
- Every school promotes a healthy, active lifestyle where students are encouraged to make responsible choices.
- Every school focuses on developing strong student character, personal responsibility and community/world involvement.
- Every school reflects a culture of learning that empowers and prepares students to be life-long learners.

Leadership Will Guide Innovation in NC Public Schools.

- School professionals will collaborate with national and international partners to discover innovative transformational strategies that will facilitate change, remove barriers for 21st Century learning and understand global connections.
- School leaders will create a culture that embraces change and promotes dynamic, continuous improvement.
- Educational professionals will make decisions in collaboration with parents, students, businesses, education institutions, and faith-based and other community and civic organizations to impact student success.
- Public school professionals will collaborate with community colleges and public and private universities and colleges to provide enhanced educational opportunities for students.

NC Public Schools Will Be Governed and Supported By 21st Century Systems.

- Processes are in place for financial planning and budgeting that focus on resource attainment and alignment with priorities to maximize student achievement.
- Twenty-first century technology and learning tools are available and are supported by school facilities that have the capacity for 21st Century learning.
- Information and fiscal accountability systems are capable of collecting relevant data and reporting strategic and operational results.
- Procedures are in place to support and sanction schools that are not meeting state standards for student achievement.

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