

School Counseling in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Supporting Every Student for College and Career Success

“Tools for Developing a Comprehensive K-12 Guidance and Counseling Plan” was developed for all school districts by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. A committee of school counselors met and developed these a companion guide and toolkit for practical implementation of a comprehensive K-12 School Counseling /Guidance Plan. This document provides school district counselors a step-by-step process, a framework, resources and best practice models for developing the plan. School counselors are integral in the academic, career and personal/social development of all PreK-12 students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A comprehensive guidance plan is required as part of Pennsylvania School Code under Chapter 339 entitled Guidance. Additionally, a comprehensive program of student services is required under Chapter 12 entitled- Services to Students. The Core Academic Standards for Career Education and Work address the importance of career planning for all students related to labor market projections and workforce needs.

The Pa. Companion Guide facilitates and answers any questions surrounding the relevance of a school-counseling program. Use of this tool in planning a comprehensive school-counseling program provides evidence that school-counseling programs and school counselors are integral members of the school academic team in raising achievement, meeting school goals, and preparing Pennsylvania students for college and career success. The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs established a structure for effective school counseling programs. The Pa. Companion Guide to the ASCA National Model addresses the unique offerings and requirements of school counseling programs in the Commonwealth.

The future of school counseling depends on the successful implementation of Comprehensive programs. School counselors must transform their roles and produce evidence of their impact on student success in their three domains: Academic, Career and Personal/Social Development. School counselors are critical to successful efforts to close the achievement gap. School counselors, by virtue of their training and skills, are poised to play key roles in addressing the educational challenges facing Pennsylvania schools.

Counselors should include all five-stakeholder groups when developing the comprehensive guidance plan. Representation from all of the groups should be included on the District Advisory Council including:

- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- Educators/Administrators
- Business/Community Members
- Postsecondary Representatives