

## SCHOOL COUNSELORS

School counselors work with other educators to ensure student success. They address students' emotional needs and design approaches to help students chart a course for their lives and careers beyond school. Counselors may work from a separate office or counseling center, or they may take their program into classrooms for sessions with entire classes. Most counselors combine the two settings, selecting the approach that is appropriate to the school's schedule and student needs. Counselors are advocates for the appropriate level of instruction for students, and they engage in interventions designed to support student growth and the achievement of goals. These interventions are accomplished with students individually as well as in small-group and whole-class settings, and consist of both proactive and responsive services.

Proactive guidance services are often referred to as development guidance, in which counselors offer a curriculum of classroom presentations based upon the known developmental needs of children of the particular age group. Responsive services, on the other hand, emerge from issues that appear either in individual students (such as a school phobia) or within the school culture as a whole (for example, when a member of a class dies suddenly).

The role of counselors at the secondary level is quite different from that at the elementary level. With young children, the emphasis is on ensuring appropriate instruction and helping all students acquire communication skills, healthy self-images, and appropriate relationships with their peers. At the secondary level, the counselor's responsibilities typically shift to more individual postsecondary planning, helping students determine their strengths and optimal courses of action.

School counselors work at several levels of responsibility serving as a resource to individual students, teachers, parents and guardians, and the school as a whole. They counsel individual students regarding such matters as excessive tardiness or behavior problems and help them design an appropriate academic program. They may also collaborate with teachers to present curriculum-based guidance lessons or to offer advice on behavior management or study hall procedures. Guidance counselors regularly confer with parents about any number of issues that affect student learning, typically including issues related to behavior and emotions. In addition, the counselor might work at the school level, interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests; interpreting student records; and assisting the school principal and school psychologist in identifying and resolving student needs, issues, and problems.

The domains and components of a school counselor's responsibilities are as follows:

## Planning and Preparation

- Demonstrating knowledge of counseling theory and techniques
- Demonstrating knowledge of child and adolescent development
- Establishing goals for the counseling program appropriate to the setting and the students served
- Demonstrating knowledge of state and federal regulations and of resources both within and beyond the school and district
- Planning the counseling program, integrated with the regular school program, and including developmental guidance, intervention, and responsive services. This involves individual and small-group sessions, in-class activities, and includes crisis prevention, intervention, and response
- Developing a plan to evaluate the counseling program

## The Environment (office/small-group environment)

- Creating an environment of respect and rapport
- Establishing a culture for productive communication
- Managing routines and procedures
- Establishing standards of conduct and contributing to the culture for student behavior throughout the school
- Organizing physical space

## Delivery of Service

- Assessing student needs
- Assisting students and teachers in the formulation of academic; personal/social, and career plans, based on knowledge of student needs
- Using counseling techniques in individual and classroom programs
- Brokering resources to meet needs
- Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

## Professional Responsibilities

- Reflecting on practice
- Maintaining records and submitting them in a timely fashion

- Communicating with families
- Participating in a professional community
- Engaging in professional development
- Showing professionalism. This includes integrity, advocacy, and maintaining confidentiality

**FIGURE 5.13**

**Domain I for School Counselors: Planning and Preparation**

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>Ia: Demonstrating knowledge of counseling theory and techniques</b>	Counselor demonstrates little understanding of counseling theory and techniques.	Counselor demonstrates basic understanding of counseling theory and techniques.	Counselor demonstrates understanding of counseling theory and techniques.	Counselor demonstrates deep and thorough understanding of counseling theory and techniques.
<b>Ib: Demonstrating knowledge of child and adolescent development</b>	Counselor displays little or no knowledge of child and adolescent development.	Counselor displays partial knowledge of child and adolescent development.	Counselor displays accurate understanding of the typical developmental characteristics of the age group, as well as exceptions to the general patterns.	In addition to accurate knowledge of the typical developmental characteristics of the age group and exceptions to the general patterns, counselor displays knowledge of the extent to which individual students follow the general patterns.
<b>Ic: Establishing goals for the counseling program appropriate to the setting and the students served</b>	Counselor has no clear goals for the counseling program, or they are inappropriate to either the situation or the age of the students.	Counselor's goals for the counseling program are rudimentary and are partially suitable to the situation and the age of the students.	Counselor's goals for the counseling program are clear and appropriate to the situation in the school and to the age of the students.	Counselor's goals for the counseling program are highly appropriate to the situation in the school and to the age of the students and have been developed following consultations with students, parents, and colleagues.

*(figure continues)*

FIGURE 5.13

## Domain I for School Counselors: Planning and Preparation (continued)

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>Id:</b> Demonstrating knowledge of state and federal regulations and of resources both within and beyond the school and district	Counselor demonstrates little or no knowledge of governmental regulations and of resources for students available through the school or district.	Counselor displays awareness of governmental regulations and of resources for students available through the school or district, but no knowledge of resources available more broadly.	Counselor displays awareness of governmental regulations and of resources for students available through the school or district, and some familiarity with resources external to the school.	Counselor's knowledge of governmental regulations and of resources for students is extensive, including those available through the school or district and in the community.
<b>Ie:</b> Planning the counseling program, integrated with the regular school program	Counseling program consists of a random collection of unrelated activities, lacking coherence or an overall structure.	Counselor's plan has a guiding principle and includes a number of worthwhile activities, but some of them don't fit with the broader goals.	Counselor has developed a plan that includes the important aspects of counseling in the setting.	Counselor's plan is highly coherent and serves to support not only the students individually and in groups, but also the broader educational program.
<b>If:</b> Developing a plan to evaluate the counseling program	Counselor has no plan to evaluate the program or resists suggestions that such an evaluation is important.	Counselor has a rudimentary plan to evaluate the counseling program.	Counselor's plan to evaluate the program is organized around clear goals and the collection of evidence to indicate the degree to which the goals have been met.	Counselor's evaluation plan is highly sophisticated, with imaginative sources of evidence and a clear path toward improving the program on an ongoing basis.

**FIGURE 5.14**

**Domain 2 for School Counselors: The Environment**

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2a: Creating an environment of respect and rapport</b>	Counselor's interactions with students are negative or inappropriate, and the counselor does not promote positive interactions among students.	Counselor's interactions are a mix of positive and negative; the counselor's efforts at encouraging positive interactions among students are partially successful.	Counselor's interactions with students are positive and respectful, and the counselor actively promotes positive student-student interactions.	Students seek out the counselor, reflecting a high degree of comfort and trust in the relationship. Counselor teaches students how to engage in positive interactions.
<b>2b: Establishing a culture for productive communication</b>	Counselor makes no attempt to establish a culture for productive communication in the school as a whole, either among students or among teachers, or between students and teachers.	Counselor's attempts to promote a culture throughout the school for productive and respectful communication between and among students and teachers are partially successful.	Counselor promotes a culture throughout the school for productive and respectful communication between and among students and teachers.	The culture in the school for productive and respectful communication between and among students and teachers, while guided by the counselor, is maintained by both teachers and students.
<b>2c: Managing routines and procedures</b>	Counselor's routines for the counseling center or classroom work are nonexistent or in disarray.	Counselor has rudimentary and partially successful routines for the counseling center or classroom.	Counselor's routines for the counseling center or classroom work effectively.	Counselor's routines for the counseling center or classroom are seamless, and students assist in maintaining them.

*(figure continues)*

FIGURE 5.14

## Domain 2 for School Counselors: The Environment (continued)

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2d:</b> Establishing standards of conduct and contributing to the culture for student behavior throughout the school	Counselor has established no standards of conduct for students during counseling sessions and makes no contribution to maintaining an environment of civility in the school.	Counselor's efforts to establish standards of conduct for counseling sessions are partially successful. Counselor attempts, with limited success, to contribute to the level of civility in the school as a whole.	Counselor has established clear standards of conduct for counseling sessions and makes a significant contribution to the environment of civility in the school.	Counselor has established clear standards of conduct for counseling sessions, and students contribute to maintaining them. Counselor takes a leadership role in maintaining the environment of civility in the school.
<b>2e:</b> Organizing physical space	The physical environment is in disarray or is inappropriate to the planned activities.	Counselor's attempts to create an inviting and well-organized physical environment are partially successful.	Counseling center or classroom arrangements are inviting and conducive to the planned activities.	Counseling center or classroom arrangements are inviting and conducive to the planned activities. Students have contributed ideas to the physical arrangement.

**FIGURE 5.15**

**Domain 3 for School Counselors: Delivery of Service**

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>3a: Assessing student needs</b>	Counselor does not assess student needs, or the assessments result in inaccurate conclusions.	Counselor's assessments of student needs are perfunctory.	Counselor assesses student needs and knows the range of student needs in the school.	Counselor conducts detailed and individualized assessments of student needs to contribute to program planning.
<b>3b: Assisting students and teachers in the formulation of academic, personal/social, and career plans, based on knowledge of student needs</b>	Counselor's program is independent of identified student needs.	Counselor's attempts to help students and teachers formulate academic, personal/social, and career plans are partially successful.	Counselor helps students and teachers formulate academic, personal/social, and career plans for groups of students.	Counselor helps individual students and teachers formulate academic, personal/social, and career plans.
<b>3c: Using counseling techniques in individual and classroom programs</b>	Counselor has few counseling techniques to help students acquire skills in decision making and problem solving for both interactions with other students and future planning.	Counselor displays a narrow range of counseling techniques to help students acquire skills in decision making and problem solving for both interactions with other students and future planning.	Counselor uses a range of counseling techniques to help students acquire skills in decision making and problem solving for both interactions with other students and future planning.	Counselor uses an extensive range of counseling techniques to help students acquire skills in decision making and problem solving for both interactions with other students and future planning.

(figure continues)

FIGURE 5.15

## Domain 3 for School Counselors: Delivery of Service (continued)

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>3d: Brokering resources to meet needs</b>	Counselor does not make connections with other programs in order to meet student needs.	Counselor's efforts to broker services with other programs in the school are partially successful.	Counselor brokers with other programs within the school or district to meet student needs.	Counselor brokers with other programs and agencies both within and beyond the school or district to meet individual student needs.
<b>3e: Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness</b>	Counselor adheres to the plan or program, in spite of evidence of its inadequacy.	Counselor makes modest changes in the counseling program when confronted with evidence of the need for change.	Counselor makes revisions in the counseling program when they are needed.	Counselor is continually seeking ways to improve the counseling program and makes changes as needed in response to student, parent, or teacher input.

**FIGURE 5.16**

**Domain 4 for School Counselors: Professional Responsibilities**

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>4a: Reflecting on practice</b>	Counselor does not reflect on practice, or the reflections are inaccurate or self-serving.	Counselor's reflection on practice is moderately accurate and objective without citing specific examples and with only global suggestions as to how it might be improved.	Counselor's reflection provides an accurate and objective description of practice, citing specific positive and negative characteristics. Counselor makes some specific suggestions as to how the counseling program might be improved.	Counselor's reflection is highly accurate and perceptive, citing specific examples that were not fully successful for at least some students. Counselor draws on an extensive repertoire to suggest alternative strategies.
<b>4b: Maintaining records and submitting them in a timely fashion</b>	Counselor's reports, records, and documentation are missing, late, or inaccurate, resulting in confusion.	Counselor's reports, records, and documentation are generally accurate but are occasionally late.	Counselor's reports, records, and documentation are accurate and are submitted in a timely manner.	Counselor's approach to record keeping is highly systematic and efficient and serves as a model for colleagues in other schools.
<b>4c: Communicating with families</b>	Counselor provides no information to families, either about the counseling program as a whole or about individual students.	Counselor provides limited though accurate information to families about the counseling program as a whole and about individual students.	Counselor provides thorough and accurate information to families about the counseling program as a whole and about individual students.	Counselor is proactive in providing information to families about the counseling program and about individual students through a variety of means.

*(figure continues)*

FIGURE 5.16

**Domain 4 for School Counselors: Professional Responsibilities (continued)**

COMPONENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>4d: Participating in a professional community</b>	Counselor's relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving, and counselor avoids being involved in school and district events and projects.	Counselor's relationships with colleagues are cordial, and counselor participates in school and district events and projects when specifically requested.	Counselor participates actively in school and district events and projects and maintains positive and productive relationships with colleagues.	Counselor makes a substantial contribution to school and district events and projects and assumes leadership with colleagues.
<b>4e: Engaging in professional development</b>	Counselor does not participate in professional development activities even when such activities are clearly needed for the development of counseling skills.	Counselor's participation in professional development activities is limited to those that are convenient or are required.	Counselor seeks out opportunities for professional development based on an individual assessment of need.	Counselor actively pursues professional development opportunities and makes a substantial contribution to the profession through such activities as offering workshops to colleagues.
<b>4f: Showing professionalism</b>	Counselor displays dishonesty in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public; violates principles of confidentiality.	Counselor is honest in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public; does not violate confidentiality.	Counselor displays high standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public; advocates for students when needed.	Counselor can be counted on to hold the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality and to advocate for students, taking a leadership role with colleagues.

**Danielson, C.** (1996, 2007). *Enhancing Professional Practice – A Framework for Teaching*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Chapter 5: Pages 132, 140, 141-148.