

Concept and Design of *The Guide*

The Guide is designed and written with the intention to enhance student development through the facilitation of classroom activities. Activities in *The Guide* are comprehensive and developmentally sequenced. Perhaps most important and useful is that *The Guide* activities are designed and organized to meet national standards developed by ASCA. In addition, unlike other curricula materials, *The Guide* includes assessment instruments as a means to measure the outcomes of implementing a Guidance Curriculum. Finally, school counselors can determine the extent to which they are making a difference for their students. Rather than explaining *what school counselors do*, with *The Guide* you can demonstrate with data *how students are different* as a result of implementing your Guidance Curriculum. These data provide clear evidence that school counseling programs are accountable and responsive to the needs of students.

School counselors have been going into classrooms and facilitating classroom guidance lessons since the inception of our profession. Over time, curricular themes have evolved and concentrated on various competencies or skills for young people related to achievement, planning for eventual career choice, and interpersonal skills. By implementing a Guidance Curriculum that is comprehensive, developmental, and based on standards and outcomes, school counselors can

- ❑ demonstrate their effectiveness in enhancing the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students;
- ❑ establish their school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school;
- ❑ ensure every student has equitable access to school counseling initiatives, and school counselors; and
- ❑ teach and measure the knowledge and skills that all students should acquire.

If school counseling programs are built upon a mission to enhance student success, then it seems prudent that a Guidance Curriculum would focus on student development. *The Guide* is designed and organized around academic, career, and personal/social domains of student development. Activities in *The Guide* focus on building skills and competencies in these three developmental domains so that students are more likely to experience success in school. ASCA's National Standards include three standards for each domain and are listed below (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Academic Development

1. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.

2. Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.
3. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Career Development

1. Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
2. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.
3. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

Personal/Social Development

1. Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
2. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.
3. Students will understand safety and survival skills.

These standards serve as a foundation for school counseling programs. The standards (goal statements) and indicators (competencies) in ***The Guide*** provide a structure for the design of your Guidance Curriculum. ASCA's National Standards include 120 indicators categorized across the academic, career, and personal/social domains. The first steps in making these indicators useful requires that you decide which indicators you want to use and whether you want to add any of your own (perhaps cultural indicators or other outcomes important to your community). Second, the indicators must be sorted so that they are developmentally age/grade appropriate.

During the design and development phase of ***The Guide***, a panel of experts (school counselors, classroom educators, and counselor educators) categorized all of the ASCA indicators into a developmentally appropriate grade sequence: elementary school (K-5), middle school (6-8), and high school (9-12). Each domain contains three standards that serve as broad goal statements and these standards are applied to all three grade levels. It is *not* the standards (goals) that change over time; it is the indicators (competencies) that change. These indicators define the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students should obtain as a result of participating in a school counseling program. ***The Guide's*** standards and indicators for each domain of student development can be found in Addendum A.