1

Introduction to the Field of School Counseling
Today, in most high schools, counselors are not only expected to advise students about college, they are also asked to police for drugs, keep records of dropouts, reduce teenage pregnancy, check traffic in the halls, smooth out the tempers of irate parents, and give aid and comfort to battered and neglected children. School counselors are expected to do what our communities, our homes, and our churches have not been able to accomplish, and if they cannot, we condemn them for failing to fulfill our high-minded expectations.

(Boyer, 1988, p. 3)

For too many years, and for as long as the school counseling profession has existed, the scope and sequence of services delivered have been defined and influenced by forces outside of the profession more than by the profession itself (Dahir, 2001, 2004). State departments of education, school district administrators, and educational organizations and foundations have clearly dictated the functions, activities, and programs that professional school counselors should deliver to students (Cunanan & Maddy-Bernstein, 1994). School counseling programs were perceived as a collection of well-intentioned responsive services based upon the professional orientation of the counselor, the priorities of an individual school building, and administrative needs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Confusion existed as to what actually constituted a school counseling program and what role the school counselor assumed in a school setting.

School counseling has been on a continuous journey of change since the inception of the profession in the 1890s. One hundred years later, a concerted effort initiated by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA; 1994) and the Education Trust (1997, 1999) focused attention on the essential dimensions for effective school counselors and counseling programs in schools as represented in Table 3.1.

Today’s 21st-century, professional school counselor is a systemic change agent, who uses leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and data-driven decision making skills to “become the academic conscience of the school, insuring that the school remains focused on student achievement and accepts responsibility for student outcomes” (Hart & Jacobi, 1992, p. 49). As student advocates, school counselors support equity in educational opportunities for all students and nurture dreams and aspirations. School counselors embrace the ethical and moral obligation to reduce and eliminate the institutional and/or social barriers that may stand in the way of every student’s academic, career, or personal/social development (Lee & Walz, 1998; Stone, 2005). The profession of school counseling has embraced changing times. It displays a willingness to analyze, monitor, and adapt the school counseling program to the changing educational landscape and the goals of school improvement. School counselors recognize and embrace the critical part they play on the educational team. They also accept the challenge to share in the responsibility to prepare students to meet the expectations of higher academic standards and help them become productive and contributing members of society.

It is not to say that school counselors did not previously embrace this way of work; ASCA and the Education Trust’s efforts at the national level promoted the transformation of the profession in ways that complemented the national agenda to improve schools and equitably address every student’s educational needs. Twenty-first century school counseling programs are in a proactive and pivotal position to effectively demonstrate how the complement of academic rigor and affective development is the formula to student success (Stone & Dahir, 2007).
At the heart of the national debate about education is simply what’s working and what’s not working in public schools. Since the publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the education and business communities, and the public and private sector regularly deliberate the expectations of American public education. The school improvement agenda of the 1980s (American Association of School Administrators, 1981; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the education and business communities, and the public and private sector regularly deliberate the expectations of American public education. The school improvement agenda of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) evolved from the decades-old educational reform movement which is rooted in A Nation at Risk. America 2000 (USDE, 1990), and its reauthorization as Goals 2000 (USDE, 1994) was the impetus for the development of national standards across all academic disciplines. Phrases such as “higher academic achievement,” “increasing student potential,” and “rigorous academic preparation,” as well as the word accountability, have become commonplace in every community across the nation.

As the academic disciplines moved forward to develop statements of what “students should know and be able to do” (National Education Goals Panel, 1992, p. x). The development of the National Standards (Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998) encouraged the school counseling community to look within itself to clarify its purpose and establish higher expectations for both students and the programs delivered. ASCA determined that the school counseling standards, like the academic subject standards, would define what K–12 students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). ASCA believed that national standards would:

- Promote equitable access to school counseling programs and services for all students,
- Identify and prioritize the key content components for school counseling programs, and
- Ensure that school counseling programs are comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic fashion for all students (Campbell & Dahir).

A major research study was undertaken by ASCA in 1995 to analyze relevant school counseling and educational reform literature and to review existing school counseling program models developed at the state level. The findings confirmed the continued importance of the three widely accepted and interrelated areas of student development: (a) academic, (b) career, and (c) personal/social development (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). As a result of this work, the nine national standards (represented in Table 3.2) ensued. These standards offer school counselors, administrators, teachers, and counselor educators a common language to promote student success through school counseling programs, which also is readily understood by colleagues who are involved in the implementation of standards across other disciplines.

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 1997) tied the work of school counseling programs to the mission of schools and encouraged school counselors to assume a leadership role in school reform (Bowers, Hatch, & Schwallie-Giddis, 2001). National standards-based school counseling programs are intended to help students develop attitudes, knowledge, and skills in academic, career, and personal/social development that are needed in today’s and tomorrow’s world. Higher expectations would also necessitate the development of new and different measures of school counseling accountability to evidence that the student competencies—and ultimately, the standards—are achieved. Measurable success resulting from this effort can be documented by an increased number of students completing school with the academic preparation, the career awareness, and the personal/social growth essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college (Education Trust, 1997).

### National Standards: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1</th>
<th>Traditional vs. Transformed School Counseling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Practice of the Traditional School Counselor</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Practice of the Transformed School Counselor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Coordination of Services</td>
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<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<td>Advocacy</td>
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<td>Collaboration and Teaming</td>
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<td>Managing Resources</td>
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<td>Use of Data</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Service-driven model</td>
<td>Systemic and programmatic model</td>
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</table>

*Note: Adapted from Working definition of school counseling. Education Trust. Washington, DC: Author, 1997.*

**Student Competencies**

Expectations of student accomplishments or outcomes as a result of participating in a standards-based school counseling program are written in terms of student competencies. Student competencies support the goals of the National Standards; guide the development of strategies and
activities, and are the basis for assessing student growth and development. Competencies represent the specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students can acquire to support their academic, career, and personal/social success. The 122 ASCA student competencies are arranged in the three domain areas and provide the pathways to each, achieving the nine standards.

In addition to the concept of age appropriate and developmental needs, many sources influence the selection and formation of student competencies. State, district-level, and building-site comprehensive school counseling programs often include specific competencies or outcomes that are aligned with the school's or system's mission statement and the academic or curriculum standards, and are categorized according to elementary, middle, or secondary levels. Competencies that are identified through needs assessments and data analyses are pathways to documenting and demonstrating student growth and progress development to the achievement of the nine standards. School plans may identify the competency expectations by grade levels consistent with developmental expectations and local needs and priorities. The competencies are incorporated into a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program that emphasizes early intervention and prevention as well as responsive counseling services. Thus, they are delivered in the multitude of ways that school counselors provide services to students.

The ASCA National Standards and the student competencies provide a context for every student to acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills. School counseling programs based on this framework advocate for a consistency in expectations for all students across all levels of education—elementary, middle, and high schools—and seek to close performance gaps among students from different economic classes, genders, races, or ethnic groups. Comprehensive national-standards-based school counseling programs seek to ensure that all students are served equitably and provide readily available data for assessing program equity and efficacy.

### The Next Step: The ASCA National Model

With the continued progression of school improvement and standards-based education, the next logical progression was the development of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) to assist the field in delivering comprehensive school counseling programs. The concept of comprehensive programs was not new; first developed by Gysbers and Moore (1981), it has been continuously refined over the past 20 years (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, 2001, 2002). The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) integrated the work of Gysbers and Henderson (2000, 2001, 2002), C. D. Johnson & Johnson (2001), S. K. Johnson & Johnson (2005), and Myrick (2003), and added the content of the National Standards (ASCA, 1997) and the process of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1999). The ASCA National Model has contemporized school counseling foundation and philosophy, management and delivery systems, and accountability, and has aligned the program with the expectations of 21st-century schools (Myrick, 2003).

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**Table 3.2 National Standards for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 1997)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>A Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>A Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/ Social</td>
<td>A Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Students will understand safety and survival skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An organizational structure emerged for the model that consisted of four quadrants: (a) Foundation and Philosophy, (b) Management, (c) Delivery, and (d) Accountability. The inside of the graphic shown in Figure 3.1 depicts the four interrelated quadrants that are the essential components of successful and effective comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2003). The ASCA National Model also facilitates the new vision of the transformed school counselor (House & Hayes, 2002; House, Martin, & Ward, 2002). The outside frame of Figure 3.1 represents the skills of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change (Education Trust, 1997) needed to help every student succeed academically.

A brief summary of each quadrant follows.

1. **The Foundation** of the program describes the **what** of the program and discusses what every student should know and be able to do (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). The foundation of the program, based on the National Standards, highlights the importance of a mission statement and developing a proactive belief system to ensure that every student will benefit from the school counseling program.

2. **Delivery** monitors how the program will be implemented and defines the components of the comprehensive program—that is, guidance curriculum, individual planning with students, responsive services, and system support. The ASCA National Model details each of the components and offers examples and tools for implementation.

3. **Management** addresses the **when**, the **why**, and on what authority the program is delivered (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). This section also presents the organizational processes and tools needed to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program. The model presents sample agreements of responsibility, data application, and action plans. Time and task analysis tools are also presented.

4. **Accountability** answers the question: “How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?” The ASCA National Model encourages school counselors to demonstrate accountability by presenting the effectiveness of their work in measurable terms such as impact over time, performance evaluation, and undertaking a program audit.

### Exploring Each Quadrant

#### The Foundation

The foundation of the program calls for school counselors to develop a proactive belief system that ensures that every student will benefit from the school counseling program. The vision and mission statements guide the development of an effective comprehensive school...
counseling program while the National Standards and student competencies guide and support student development in academic, career, and personal/social domains. The foundation provides the basis for every student to benefit from a comprehensive school counseling program and serves as the solid ground upon which the rest of the program is built. Beliefs and philosophy are inextricably related to behaviors. What school counselors believe about students, families, colleagues, and community can strongly influence their approach to their work. The foundation addresses the value of the program, the content and beliefs about what every student should know and be able to do (ASCA, 2003, p. 22).

The Mission Statement The mission describes the purpose for the school counseling program, is aligned with the school's mission, and publicly commits the counselor's intention to provide every student with the skills needed to become lifelong learners and productive members of society. The mission statement promotes collaboration with colleagues to ensure that every student fully benefits from the educational opportunities offered in each school system. School counselors are reminded to align their work with their school's mission statement, which is a public proclamation about student success.

The ASCA National Standards: A Key Component of the Foundation The ASCA National Standards and competencies are an integral component of the ASCA National Model. The student competencies define the knowledge, attitudes, or skills students should obtain or demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program. They clarify the relationship of school counseling to the educational system and they address the contributions of school counseling to student success. The foundation of the program, based on the National Standards, emphasizes the importance of having a mission, a vision, and a proactive belief system that ensures that every student will benefit from the school counseling program (ASCA, 2003).

The National Standards place student competencies first, move school counselors into the educational mainstream, and align school counseling programs with the academic disciplines (Dahir et al., 1998). The National Standards provide consistency in the description of school counseling programs and the services they provide. They are also a basis for assessing program quality. The information gained from the evaluation process tells what students have learned as a result of participating in a national-standards-based program. Measurable success demonstrates the effectiveness of a school counseling program. Collecting data, gathering information, and conducting research are critical to determine the success of a school counseling program. This empirical information provides the evidence to deliver a defined and accountable comprehensive program designed to help students be successful in school and in life.

The Delivery System

The delivery quadrant offers the methods for delivering an effective school counseling program. The scope of the program may differ across grade levels, thus the variation of delivery methodology is adjusted to meet developmental needs. For example, in elementary schools, the guidance curricula and group guidance activities are utilized more frequently than they are at the secondary level. Gysbers and Henderson (2000, 2002) offered a model for distributing the time allotment of each delivery component across grade levels. The challenge lies in the school counselor's ability to deliver a program that is balanced and blends the four delivery methods: (a) school counseling curriculum, (b) individual student planning, (c) responsive services, and (d) system support.

By carefully examining current practice and student needs revealed by school improvement data, school counselors can determine the amount of time they need to spend on each of the key areas:

1. school counseling curriculum (e.g., structured groups, classroom guidance, advisory programs);
2. individual planning with students (e.g., advising, assessment, placement, academic, career and personal/social goal setting, and follow up);
3. responsive services (e.g., individual and group counseling, consultation, and referral); and,
4. system support (e.g., program management, coordination of services, community outreach, and public relations).

Each of these delivery components has a significant purpose in the comprehensive school counseling program.

School Counseling Curriculum The school counseling curriculum is a sequential, standards-based instructional program designed to assist all students acquire, develop, and demonstrate competence in three content area domains: (a) academic, (b) career, and (c) personal/social development. The involvement of school faculty and administration is essential for effective and successful curriculum implementation. In most circumstances, the curriculum is intended to serve the largest number of students possible, and this is accomplished through large group meetings and classroom presentations. The curriculum gives attention to particular issues or areas of concern...
in the school building or district, such as eliminating bullying, resolving conflict, or raising aspirations.

Curriculum design requires building a scope and sequence, which helps to define and clarify the topics and competencies taught at each grade level and articulates what students should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the curriculum. The curriculum can be delivered through classroom instruction in which school counselors design, teach, and assess the impact of standards-based lessons and presentations that meet the academic, career, and personal/social developmental needs of each student. It can also be delivered through large group instructional activities and presentations that convey information in a variety of ways by offering group activities, workshops, assemblies, and meetings to accommodate student needs and interests.

**Individual Planning With Students** Successful students learn to take ownership for their academic, career, and personal/social development. Individual student planning provides opportunities for students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their progress. Activities can include but are not limited to working with students to establish and monitor goals, develop a career plan, commit to behavioral goals, create an educational plan, and apply testing and assessment information to present and future plans. The planning process personalizes the educational experience and helps students develop a pathway to realize their dreams.

Individual student planning consists of ongoing, systematic activities that assist students with planning, managing, and monitoring their academic, personal/social, and career and employability goals. These activities are counselor directed and delivered on an individual or small-group basis. Each student is provided with the information, encouragement, and support needed to work toward his or her personal goals. Parents and/or guardians are frequently included in these activities.

**Responsive Services** When school counselors proactively address student-related concerns such as peer pressure, conflict resolution, family relationships, personal-identity issues, substance abuse, motivation, and achievement challenges, they deliver responsive services. Included in responsive services are interventions necessary to help students succeed, which include individual and group counseling, consultation, referrals to community agencies, crisis intervention and management, and prevention activities. The impetus for response and intervention can be dominated by crisis, school building and faculty concerns, parental trepidations, community concerns, and student requests. Responsive services can also proactively address concerns and prevent situations from occurring. Implementation strategies can include the following:

1. **Individual or small group counseling:** Counselors counsel students with identified needs/concerns or students who request counseling. This is an opportunity to discuss/clarify needs and guide therapeutic intervention. The school counselor must act ethically at all times in accordance with the ASCA Ethical Standards (ASCA, 2004) and with federal, state, and local laws and policies regarding confidentiality, suspected cases of abuse, and threats of harm or violence.
2. **Consultation:** Counselors work collaboratively with students, parents, teachers, and community members to develop a broad base of support and help for students.
3. **Referrals:** Counselors consult with and make referrals to community agencies to assist students facing personal crisis outside the scope of the school counseling program.
4. **Crisis counseling:** Counselors provide short-term prevention and intervention counseling and support to students and school staff dealing with crises.
5. **Crisis prevention and crisis management plans:** Specialized plans guide school prevention, intervention, and management of crisis response. Staff crisis training establishes readiness to meet student/school needs in emergency situations.
6. **Schoolwide prevention and intervention programs:** Counselors collaborate with all faculty, students, staff, and community-based organizations to expand responsive service outreach.
7. **Student support services team:** Counselors collaborate with school-based professionals such as the school psychologist or social worker to plan interventions for the academic, social, and emotional needs of students.

**System Support** School counselors, when engaged in system support, offer ongoing sustenance to the school environment by actively participating in school-based activities when delivering the comprehensive school counseling program. Involvement in system support sends a strong message to the faculty that the school counselors are committed to achieve the system’s goals and mission. System support demonstrates the degree to which the school counseling program is aligned with the school district’s priorities and with state and federal school improvement mandates.

System support usually consists of indirect services, which are not delivered directly to students. For example, chairing the school improvement team, coordinating student service volunteers, and facilitating the school peer mediation program are examples of proactive services that connect school counseling to the mission of the school. System support also provides school counselors with multiple opportunities to act...
as leaders and advocates by facilitating discussions around school improvement, examining data that may be impacting success of some groups of students, and assisting with professional development and in-service activities for the faculty. Indirect services including professional development to faculty, serving on school committees, coordinating safe school initiatives are essential to impact systemic change and support the “new vision” of transformed school counseling (Ripley, Erford, & Dahir, 2002).

The Management System

Effective programs require strong organization and effective management. The management component of the ASCA model addresses the **when** (action plan and calendar), the **why** (use of data), the **who** will implement (management agreement), and on what authority (management agreement and advisory council) the school counseling program is delivered. The ASCA National Model suggests the following key elements to manage the program.

**Developing Management Agreements** Management agreements are established annually between school counselors and the building administrator. The counselor(s) produce and present yearly a document that prioritizes school counseling, timelines, and the implementation plan. The principal then reviews the document and arrives at consensus with the school counselor as to how students, services, and activities are assigned. These decisions should be made based on site needs and data analysis. The agreement delineates counselor responsibilities, program implementation, and methods of accountability, and it offers a timeline for when these activities will occur.

When the principal and school counselors meet and agree on program priorities, implementation strategies, and the organization of the counseling department, the entire program runs more smoothly and is more likely to produce the desired results for students. Thus, the management agreement is a public statement to all stakeholders, and it demonstrates the commitment of school counselors and administrators to collaborate on an annual statement describing what the counselors hope to accomplish in the coming year.

**Advisory Council** An advisory council helps to solicit school and community support to inform the program’s direction, to provide a sounding board for discussion about what is working and what needs to change, and to discuss the ways in which the comprehensive school counseling program can better support student success. An advisory council assists in the development of the school counseling program by annually reviewing program goals and results, and making recommendations for improvement. It provides a forum for open dialogue between schools and community and the perspective of community and parental expectations for the counseling program.

Council membership should reflect the community’s diversity and can include school staff, parents, school board members, and student, business, and community representatives. Members selected must share an interest and enthusiasm for the school counseling program and representation could consider including the following stakeholders:

- Teachers
- Parents
- School counselors
- Administrators
- Community members (nonparent)
- Business/industry/labor leaders
- School board members
- Student(s)
- College (2- and 4-year) representatives
- Community-based organizations
- Counselor educators

**Use of Data** Monitoring student achievement data helps to ensure that all students have equity and access to a rigorous academic curriculum and identifies academic gaps. Counselors suggest systemic changes in policy and procedures to improve student performance. The use of data to effect change within the school system is integral to ensuring students’ success. School counselors should be proficient in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, and they should monitor student progress through collection of three types of data:

1. Student achievement data, which can include standardized test scores, GPA, graduation rate, promotion/retention rates, and so forth;
2. School improvement data, which can include course enrollment patterns, discipline referrals, suspension rates, attendance rates, parent/guardian involvement, participation in extracurricular activities, and so forth; and
3. Student competency data, which can include percentage of students with a 4-year plan, percentage of students participating in job shadowing, and percentage of students achieving the competencies as determined by the faculty.

**Action Plans** Planning is necessary to detail annual program activities which show how the desired results will be achieved. Action plans usually contain:

- Domain areas, national standards, and school improvement goals;
- Student competencies and descriptions of the activity;
• Curriculum/materials being used in the activity;
• Time lines;
• Methods of evaluation;
• Measurable outcomes;
• Person(s)/responsible; and
• A description of the students involved.

Program Audit/Self-Study

An annual program audit or a self-study helps to determine the degree to which the school counseling program is being implemented and is in alignment with the ASCA model. Audit results provide information on the current state of the school counseling program, identify gaps and/or implementation challenges, and help the counselors plan for the following school year.

Use of Time  Gysbers and Henderson (2000) offered specific recommendation for time distribution and suggested that school counselors spend 80% of their time in direct service to students and 20% of their time in indirect services and program management. While the amount of time counselors should spend delivering services in each component area may vary according to the individualized needs of each school, the ASCA has provided the recommendations shown in Table 3.3.

Calendars  Calendars (district, departmental, and individual) are integral to maintaining a comprehensive counseling program because of the specificity in terms activities, actions, and events. An annual district calendar articulates the delivery of the various elements that comprise the program. Developed by the leaders of the district’s school counseling program, the calendar allocates time for curriculum development, individual student planning, responsive and intervention services, and system support. When a calendar is developed and published, teachers, administrators, students, and families are aware of the scope and extensiveness of the activities of the school counseling program.

An annual school counseling department calendar follows the district calendar. The school counseling departments in each of the district’s elementary, middle, and high schools construct calendars that align with the building calendar. This calendar is set up by month and by grade levels for the entire year for each school. Counselors list activities or themes to be delivered and specify how collaboration with school, district, family, and community stakeholders will occur. Yearly calendars also include quarterly grade reporting dates, state assessments, college entrance exams, orientation, graduation, as well as ongoing activities such as respect days, wellness days, career fairs, college expos, and other special events for students and their families.

Calendars ensure involvement. When stakeholders are aware of activities and services, the probability of becoming involved or participating increases. Calendars are also significant public relations tools and are public statements of the variety of services and activities offered both during the school day and in extended hours and/or weekends.

The management quadrant reminds us of the importance of organization and building a cadre of support for comprehensive school counseling. Although the program is coordinated by school counselors, many activities are shared by the entire staff and require a collaborative approach. These can include

• Planning and organizing tasks,
• Action plans around specific school issues,
• Organizing activities with teachers about program operation, and
• Publicizing activities and events.

The Accountability Quadrant

Accountability provides evidence of program accomplishments or student gains as a result of intentional efforts by the school counselors (Hart & Jacobi, 1992). School counselor accountability intentionally contributes to closing the achievement gap and meets the goals of school improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3  Sample Distribution of Total School Counselor Time Within the Delivery System Component*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery System Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive Services</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

School counselors are sometimes challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms. The *ASCA National Model* (ASCA, 2003) encourages school counselors to collect and analyze data, use data-driven decision making, use evaluation methods that focus on student achievement, and contribute to the school and system improvement goals. By using their specialized training in group process, collaboration and teaming, and data analysis, school counselors demonstrate how the school counseling program moves school improvement data in a positive direction.

**Using Data** Data present the picture of the status of student needs and achievement issues and corroborate the development of practices that can lead students to higher levels of success. Data inform, confirm progress, and reveal shortcomings in student performance (Stone & Dahir, 2007). Annual school report cards publicize critical data elements such as attendance, demographics, graduation and postsecondary planning rates, and standardized testing results. These can be monitored and analyzed longitudinally and show how the work of school counselors impacts student achievement.

**MEASURE-ing Success**

MEASURE, a six-step accountability process, confirms the impact of the school counseling program on critical data, those elements of the school report card that are the backbone of the accountability movement. MEASURE supports the accountability component of the *ASCA National Model* (ASCA, 2003) and moves school counselors from a “counting tasks” system to aligning the school counseling program with standards-based reform (Stone & Dahir, 2007). MEASURE is a way of using information such as retention rates, test scores, and postsecondary going rates to develop specific strategies for connecting school counseling to the accountability agenda of today’s schools. MEASURE is an acronym to help school counselors remember the following:

- **Mission**: Connect your program to the mission of your school and to the goals of your annual school improvement plan.
- **Elements**: Identify the critical data elements that are important to the internal and external stakeholders.
- **Analyze**: Carefully discuss which elements need to be aggregated or disaggregated and why.
- **Stakeholders- Unite**: Invite stakeholders to collaborate and address this school improvement issue and unite to develop strategies.
- **Results**: Reflect on your results; rethink and refine your strategies; refocus your efforts as needed.
- **Educate**: Show the positive impact the school counseling program has on student achievement and on the goals of your school’s improvement plan.

MEASURE is a model of teaming and collaboration. It requires school counselors to work side by side with administrators, faculty, and stakeholders to identify and positively impact the critical data elements that are important barometers of student success (Dahir & Stone, 2003). MEASURE supports the accountability component of the *ASCA National Model* (ASCA, 2003) by helping school counselors move from a “counting tasks” system to aligning the school counseling program with standards-based reform. This process enables school counselors to demonstrate how they are accountable for results and contribute to student achievement.

**Putting Theory Into Practice**

During the 2004–2005 school year, a pilot project in New York City demonstrated that school counselors can use data to act on their belief system and assume a leadership role to identify and rectify issues that impact every student’s ability to achieve at expected levels. The school counselors in three schools in Region 4 in Queens, New York, used MEASURE to initiate, develop, lead, and coordinate systems to improve the learning success for every student. The school counselors, working from an accountability perspective, contributed to key school improvement data and brought attention to student progress and results.

The school counselors identified a specific school improvement goal and analyzed the data that represented the issues surrounding that goal. As the school counselors aligned their services and activities to the issue, they shared accountability for student success with the administrators, faculty, staff, and students and contributed to the expectations of *No Child Left Behind* (USDE, 2001) and the accountability quadrant of the *ASCA National Model* (ASCA, 2003) and New York State Models (New York State School Counselor Association, 2005). The baseline data was identified and disaggregated demographically. The results of three of the pilot school’s projects are included in Table 3.4.

School counselors, working within an accountability framework, can challenge the pervasive belief that socioeconomic status and color determine a young person’s ability to learn. Acting as agents of school and community change, school counselors can create a climate where access and support for quality and rigor is the norm (Lapan, 2005; Stone & Dahir, 2007). In doing so, underserved and underrepresented students now have a chance at acquiring the education skills necessary to fully participate in the 21st-century economy (S. Johnson, C. Johnson, & Downs, 2006; Stone & Martin, 2004). The *No Child Left Behind Act* (USDE, 2001) is a clear imperative for school counselors to accept the responsibility to support academic achievement, share the pressures of school accountability, and demonstrate advocacy for every student to experience success.
(Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Gysbers, 2005; Stone & Dahir, 2006, 2007). With an accountable, data-driven school counseling program, school counselors are seen as powerful partners and collaborators in school improvement and most importantly, as proactively driving their own destiny (S. Johnson et al., 2006; Stone & Dahir, 2007).

Can school counseling continue to evolve with the times and openly examine paradigms and practices that forward the profession? The profession of school counseling has evolved in a very short period of time from a service driven approach to a systemic and programmatic model. The National Standards (ASCA, 1997), Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1997), and the ASCA National Model (2005) have enabled school counselors to seize the present and forge a path to the future. School counselors now have a well designed approach to design, coordinate, implement, manage, deliver, and evaluate their programs. Leadership, advocacy, and systemic change are essential skills that ensure that school counselors can respond to the question, “How are students different as a result of what we do?”

No matter how comfortable the status quo or how difficult or uncomfortable change may be, every school counselor must work diligently to support every student’s quest for success. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) has directed school counselors toward a unified, focused, and professional school counseling program with one vision and one voice.

### Table 3.4 New York City School Counselor Accountability Project 2004–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>School Improvement Data</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS 229 Emanuel Kaplan</td>
<td>Woodside</td>
<td>Caucasian/Non-Hispanic: 30.6%</td>
<td>Increase the 4th grade English Language Arts test scores</td>
<td>Increased the number of students from level 2 (below standards) to level 3 (meets standards) by 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td></td>
<td>African American: 3.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic: 38.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian: 27.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free/Reduced lunch: 43.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ESL: 19.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island City High School</td>
<td>Long Island City</td>
<td>Caucasian/Non-Hispanic: 15.9%</td>
<td>Improve the number of students achieving Regents diplomas</td>
<td>Increased the number of students achieving Regents diplomas by 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4100 students</td>
<td></td>
<td>African American: 15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic: 51.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian: 17.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch: 60.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ESL: 15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown High School</td>
<td>Elmhurst</td>
<td>Caucasian/Non-Hispanic: 8%</td>
<td>Improve attendance</td>
<td>Increase of 2% in average daily attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4290 students</td>
<td></td>
<td>African American: 6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic: 60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian: 26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch: 27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ESL: 40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REFERENCES


