

Counseling During COVID Update

School Counselor COVID Advocacy Tips

A November 2020 WSCA school counselor survey showed that 2/3rds of school counselors have had a change in their roles and now spend a greater percentage of their time on non counseling duties. WSCA has created a position statement that can be used by counselors to start conversations about your role in your school community. We hope these tips and questions will also help you in those meetings with supervisors and administrators.

Reflection Questions

What are you unable to get done in your contracted time if you're doing other duties?

Do a time study to show how you are currently spending your time. If you have done this previously you could compare the two to see how similar/different they are.

Have ideas to shift that time and how/why you think it will have a greater impact for students.

What is your admin team's plan if you are unavailable in an emergency situation?

What are your building and district goals this year?

Have you met with your supervisor or administrator to discuss things you can do to help meet those goals?

What does your administrator know about the role of the school counselor?

Give them a copy of ASCA's school counselor roles and responsibilities

Set up a weekly or bi-weekly meeting time with student services staff to talk about your school's climate and issues you may be facing – be part of the problem solving team.

Non-School-Counseling Duties

Non-school-counseling duties take away valuable time from implementing a school counseling program that meets students' needs. Consider these steps for the reassignment of non-school-counseling duties.

Identify tasks school counselors are currently responsible for that do not align with the appropriate duties of a school counselor.

Use data from the use-of-time calculator or estimate the amount of time in hours these duties take away from school counseling program implementation.

Consider if the tasks really need to be completed and how else the tasks might be completed, including through technology usage for increased efficiency.

Determine what school counseling activities would replace these tasks if they were removed, and estimate the impact on students.

Express willingness to be part of a plan for successful transfer of the tasks to staff who have skills to complete the task, keeping in mind that other staff members may already have a large list of responsibilities as well.

Recognize that reassigning tasks may take time.

In an effort to provide our members with the most support during these trying times, WSCA has crafted a position statement regarding School Counseling Duties During COVID 19. Click below to download the document.

[WSCA Position Statement on School Counseling Duties: COVID 19](#)

Additional Advocacy Resources related to COVID

School Counselor Ratio Infographic (ASCA)

Ed Trust Article on the need for students to have access to school counselors (ratios)

DPI Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act Guidance

In DPI guidance to schools on the use of federal stimulus funds, there are several areas that are supported by school counselors. These include:

Increasing Family and Community Engagement, especially to our families that may need extended outreach and support.

Opportunity Gap Closure for Specific Student Groups is identified as its own category and a core component of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Mental Health Services

Federal Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs

In mid April 2021, the US Dept of ED released COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs. This publication provides additional strategies for safely reopening schools and promoting equity.

Within Volume 2, you will find a list of allowable uses of funds made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). This list addresses student mental health, hiring school counselors, and other staff. Explicit language encourages district and school leaders to examine the current staffing ratios of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers as well as developing a plan to meet recommended ratios are also listed within the document. This language can be found on pages 7, 14, 17, and 40.

New York State guidance requiring each school and district to create a comprehensive developmental counseling plan is referenced as an example in this document. (pg. 18).