



**SECTION 1**  
THE NEW JERSEY  
SCHOOL COUNSELING INITIATIVE:  
NEW DIRECTIONS IN  
SCHOOL COUNSELING



## Part 1: Where We Are Going

### 1.1 The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative

The NJSCI is a continuation of our original grass roots initiative to improve school counseling in New Jersey. The Initiative began more than 17 years ago by visionary school counselors as part of the national movement that culminated in the development of the American School Counselor Association's National Standards for School Counseling (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (2003), and The ASCA National Model Workbook (ASCA, 2004).

#### Purpose of the Initiative

The NJSCI provides a framework to assist local school districts in the development of their own comprehensive school counseling program and to enhance the role of the school counselor. The NJSCI uses the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (American School Counselor Association, 2003) as a foundation.



“Although the [ASCA] model serves as a framework for the development of a school counseling program, it is not meant for replication exactly as written. Effective programs consider local demographic needs and political conditions when integrating and adapting the National Model. The model, therefore, is not intended to be used as a cookie-cutter in developing school counseling programs. Rather, ASCA’s goal in developing the model is to institutionalize the framework for, and process of, developing a school counseling program.” (*The ASCA National Model*, p. 10)

## 1.2 NJSCI's vision for school counseling in New Jersey

Our vision is twofold, for students and for school counselors. The vision of the NJSCI is that:

All students in New Jersey acquire the personal/social, academic, and career skills necessary to reach their fullest potential, to become effective lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and productive, satisfied workers in an ever-changing world.

**In order to realize this vision, all students will:**

- establish an educational and a career goal
- develop a life-career plan to achieve goals
- use their unique talents, abilities, interests, cultures, and multiple intelligences
- take the most challenging courses
- benefit from parents/guardians and other adults who positively influence their career goals
- have real life career experiences in their community.

All school counselors in New Jersey develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the counseling and developmental needs of all students (Pre-K to 12). In order to realize this vision, we agree that a comprehensive school counseling program:

- promotes the educational excellence of all students and helps raise their educational and career aspirations
- is preventative, proactive, and developmental by design while addressing students' immediate needs and concerns
- integrates the expertise of counselors as an integral part of the educational program
- provides for the unique personal, social, academic and career needs of all students at each educational level (pre-K to post-high school)
- involves the community, including parents, teachers, students, business, industry
- monitors and evaluates student and program outcome data on a regular basis in order to meet changing needs
- supports active participation in local, county, state, and national associations which foster the development and improvement of school counseling



*Boyd and Walter (1975) compared the plight of school counselors to the cactus, "Both survive on a minimum of nutrients from the environment" (p. 103). School counselors often fill multiple, conflicting roles to meet the needs of students and the expectations of administrators, parents, and teachers.*

## 1.3 The evolving role of the school counselor

The New Jersey Framework emphasizes the broader role of the school counselor as a positive change agent in the school and as an advocate for the success of all students. NJAC 6A:9-13.8 (NJDOE, 2004) recognizes that school counselors counsel and collaborate with students and other significant adults in students' lives to help close the achievement gap and open opportunities for all students (teachers, administrators, parents, business, and community representatives).



*The New Jersey Administrative Code (2004) defines the role of the school counselor:*

### 6A:9-13.8 School counselor

(a) The school counselor endorsement authorizes the holder to perform school counseling services such as study and assessment of individual pupils with respect to their status, abilities, interest and needs; counseling with administrators, teachers, students, and parents regarding personal, social, educational, and vocational plans and programs; and developing cooperative relationships with community agencies in assisting children and families. The certificate holder is authorized to perform these duties in Grades preschool through 12.

School counselors who work in schools that have developed a comprehensive program are totally school counseling focused. They are master's level certificated professionals trained in counseling programs aligned with the standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

In a comprehensive school counseling program designed to respond to local student needs, school counselors are on the cutting edge of positive change. They are change agents, skilled in group dynamics problem-solving, goal setting and decision making, advocacy, family systems and systemic change. As active change agents in the school, they collaborate with others to facilitate and promote change each day in all school arenas—in classrooms, student centers, parent conferences, staff development, team meetings, I&RS committees, building leadership committees, community groups, and in their counseling center.

### **In schools using the New Jersey Framework to develop and implement their program, counselors:**

- design, lead, and evaluate their comprehensive school counseling program
- follow a clearly defined counselor role description based on counseling goals for all students
- utilize their professional training in individual and group counseling, group facilitation, consultation, coordination, collaboration, and systemic change
- collaborate with other specialists on multilevel school teams to promote student improvement and success
- work to remove school, cultural, community, and systemic barriers to student achievement

- assure access to opportunities and rigorous educational experiences for all students
- solicit broad participation from parents, teachers, students, community members, support staff, board members, and administrators
- seek national school counselor certification through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and/or the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).



Standards-based training has transformed and professionalized school counselors in New Jersey. The first New Jersey Initiative (1991) called for a professional role that was “totally school counseling focused” (p. 3). Has the initiative improved school counseling? Indeed. A recent study of New Jersey school counselors (Webber, 2004) showed:

- 66% followed a model to some degree
- 28% used a model extensively
- 60% of those involved in a program model reported that the model improved their counseling
- 54% felt using the model improved their job satisfaction
- 48% reported increased control over their jobs
- 78% described themselves as a counselor working in a school
- 18% described themselves as an educator using counseling skills































