

The School Counselor and Gifted and Talented Student Programs

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2013, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

The school counselor delivers a school counseling program to meet students' academic, career and social/emotional needs. Gifted and talented students have unique and diverse developmental needs that are addressed by school counselors within the scope of the school counseling program and in collaboration with other educators and stakeholders.

The Rationale

Research suggests gifted and talented students may share common personality characteristics, such as perfectionism, sensitivity and idealism (Mammadov, Cross & Ward, 2018). Within the school counseling program, school counselors create an environment in which the academic, career and social/emotional development of all students, including gifted and talented students, is fostered (Kennedy & Farley, 2018).

Purposeful gifted and talented education programs include several benefits: assisting the gifted student in college and career goals, defining postsecondary and career plans and increasing achievement levels. (Colangelo, Assouline & Gross, 2004; Delcourt, 1993; Hébert, 1993; Taylor, 1992). School counselors consider these needs when implementing developmentally appropriate activities as a part of a school counseling program (ASCA, 2019).

Research also suggests that ongoing exposure to micro-aggressions directed at marginalized students creates an environment where students fear the label of gifted and talented (Staumbaugh & Ford, 2014). The issue of overrepresentation of Asian and white students in gifted education programs was described in a data collection from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The data reveals American Indian, Hispanic and African American student groups have been underrepresented in elementary and secondary school gifted education programs since 1978 (US OCR, 2004).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors provide consultation in the identification of gifted and talented students when appropriate through the use of a districtwide, multiple-criterion system (i.e., intellectual ability; academic performance; visual and performing arts ability; practical arts ability; creative-thinking ability; leadership potential; parent, teacher, peer nomination; expert assessment) when appropriate. The definition of gifted and talented requirements differs by state and district. School counselors are involved in the analysis of data obtained from multi-criterion sources and are not responsible for the coordination, collection, and/or administration of the multi-criterion system or any assessment used in the selection process.

School counselors advocate for the inclusion of, and the participation in, activities that effectively address the academic, career, and social/emotional needs of gifted and talented students at all academic levels. School counselors assist in promoting understanding and awareness of the unique issues that may both positively and negatively affect gifted and talented students including:

- accelerated learning
- advocacy for access to rigorous and appropriately challenging programs
- meeting expectations
- perfectionism
- stress management
- depression
- anxiety
- underachievement
- dropping out
- delinquency
- difficulty in peer relationships
- twice exceptional (e.g., identified as gifted and talented and an identified disability; Foley Nicpon & Cederberg, 2015)
- advanced talent in various fields
- intellectual abilities
- high-achieving outcomes

School counselors provide individual and group counseling for gifted and talented students as needed and serve as a resource for gifted and talented students and their families in meeting the students' needs. School counselors are aware of students who are gifted and culturally diverse. Consequently, school counselors seek to identify marginalized students, students of color, English-language learners and first-generation students in order for them to have the most academically aligned experience (Mitcham-Smith, 2007). School counselors are prepared to address the needs of culturally diverse students in a holistic manner to incorporate effective and relevant strategies for students' success. School counselors also seek to keep current on the latest gifted and talented programming research and recommendations to employ best practices to meet the needs of identified students and collaborate with other school personnel to maximize opportunities for all gifted and talented students.

Summary

School counselors deliver a school counseling program to meet students' academic, career and social/emotional needs. Students identified as gifted and talented have unique developmental needs and special abilities, which are considered when implementing a school counseling program. Specifically planned educational experiences can greatly enhance the continued development of gifted and talented students (Sohailat, Soua'd & Mouhamed, 2013). School counselors work in collaboration with other school personnel to maximize opportunities for gifted and talented students.

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