

Foundation

Beliefs

What are YOUR beliefs about a school counseling program?

What we believe about students, families, teachers and the educational process is crucial in supporting successes for every student. Beliefs have no right or wrong answers; they are what drive us to advocate for our students.

Have a dialogue as a team regarding the following questions:

- What do we believe about achievement for every student?
- Do we believe all students can achieve if given proper support?
- Do we believe there are differences in learning styles for students and that children respond differently? How do we react to those responses?
- What do we believe about the program's ability to provide academic, career and personal/social development for every student?
- When we look at the school's mission of academic achievement, what responsibility does the school counseling program have to support this mission?
- What do we believe about educational reform and the school counselor's role in it?
- What do we believe about the role of parents or guardians, staff and community members within the school counseling program?

As a team, are there any beliefs we all agree to? List them

Agreeing on Assumptions

Review the assumptions listed on page 28 of the ASCA National Model. Based upon the beliefs you all agreed upon create your list of assumptions to build into your philosophy.

Assumptions:

Philosophy Statement

Review the purpose and components of a philosophy statement found on page 28-29 of the ASCA Model.

At a minimum, the counseling philosophy should:

- Indicate an agreed-upon belief system about the ability of all students to achieve
- Address every student
- Address student development needs and focus on primary prevention
- Address the school counselor's role as an advocate for every student
- Identify persons to be involved in the delivery or program activities
- Specify who will plan and manage the program
- Use data to drive program decisions
- Define how the program will be evaluated and by whom
- Include ethical guidelines or standards

Keep in mind:

- The terms must be clear and stated objectively
- Is there consistency between the beliefs-assumptions and philosophy?
- Can it pass the "Stranger test"?

Write your district philosophy statement below:

Mission Statement

Review the “Mission Statement” portion of the ASCA Model (pp 30-31).

The mission statement:

- Keeps the program’s focus on the beliefs, assumptions and philosophy
- Establishes a structure for innovations
- Creates one vision
- Provides an anchor in the face of change

The content of the mission statement should:

- Be written with students as the primary clients
- Advocate for the equity, access and success of every student
- Indicate the content and competencies to be learned
- Show linkages with the school, school district or state department of education mission statements
- Indicate the long-range results desired for all students

Sample Mission Statements:

Iowa Department of Education

Champion excellence in education through superior leadership and service. We are committed to high levels of learning, achievement and performance for all students, so they will become successful members of their community and the workforce.

Heartland AEA 11

Heartland Area Education Agency is dedicated to enriching people’s lives. We are partners for learning who provide cutting-edge services for children and youth, families, schools and communities. Heartland AEA is a pro-active and caring organization fueled by a passion for excellence in all we do. We are committed, every day, to helping people grow, develop and learn.

After the completion of your department mission statement – have someone outside the “counseling world” check for

- Clarity – do you need words defined? Is everything clear?
- Is there a direct link between the district mission statement and the department mission statement?
- Are specific results identified?