School Counseling Advisory Council: How to Implement it Successfully and Gain Critical Support for Your School Counseling Program

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New York State School Counselor Association Annual Conference 2016
Tarrytown, New York
Purpose of workshop

• Share recent history of departments
• Focus on the actual details of formulating and running a fully functioning ADVISORY COUNCIL
• Talk about the ADVISORY COUNCIL as a critical component of the Management System of the ASCA National Model
• Provide an opportunity to discuss our experience and answer questions
• Give participants access to practical samples of what you need to form and run your own advisory council!
• Designed for easy implementation
BRIEF HISTORY

Lindenhurst Public Schools in 2001
Poor public perception
Inadequate staffing
No coordinator
Low morale
Confrontational relationship with teachers
No supporters on Board of Education
Lack of understanding of WHAT COUNSELORS DO!
Terminology

ASCA NATIONAL MODEL: “Advisory Council”

NYSSCA COMPREHENSIVE MODEL: “School Counseling Advisory Committee”

LINDENHURST PUBLIC SCHOOLS: “Guidance Advisory Board”

SOUTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: “School Counseling Advisory Council”

Your group name will reflect your unique school identity

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EARLY PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIONS

New Coordinator in 2001

• (NO COORDINATOR FOR 4 MONTHS!)

Board Presentation in October 2002 to educate about
WHAT COUNSELORS DO

Ongoing dialogue with community...administration...teachers

Board Presentation in March 2004 with data, needs analysis and future plans, including the GUIDANCE ADVISORY BOARD

Three year ACTION PLAN presented in February 2005 to Superintendent, including the GUIDANCE ADVISORY BOARD
More public relations efforts

Regular Advisory Council meetings
Additional parent night meetings
Attendance at Board of Education meetings
Use of district website to create eBoard
Publication of middle and high school newsletter
High School Twitter Account
High School Facebook Account
Remind App for counseling events and deadlines
Share results of counseling programs in annual reports
Advocacy for department at administrative meetings at all levels

Activities:

- Membership includes administrator and representatives of school and community stakeholders
- Meets at least twice a year and maintains agenda and minutes
- Advises on school counseling program goals, reviews program results and makes recommendations
- Advocates and engages in public relations for the school counseling program
- Advocates for school counseling program funding and resources
ASCA NATIONAL MODEL (2012): Value of the advisory council

Review counseling program goals, competencies and results

Participate in making recommendations to counseling department, principal and superintendent

Provide a forum for open dialogue between schools and community

Provide information on community and parental expectations for the counseling program

Act as a resource and support for the program
NYSED PROPOSED AMENDMENTS UPDATE:

School Counseling Advisory Council is required in the proposed regulation!

Earliest date of implementation September 2019, but you should start NOW!

Must meet **two times** per year

Must report to the Board of Education each year
TIMELINE FOR NEW REGS:

- Board of Regents Presentation in November 2016.
- Will go out for public comment in the Federal Register for 30 days.
- Earliest date for return to the Board of Regents for a vote is Feb. 2017.
- Full implementation would take place in 2019-2020 school year.
Benefits of an advisory council

Role definition for school counselors

Opportunity to talk to stakeholders about what we are doing

It is a mechanism for stakeholder input about proposed changes

Chance to find out what method of communication works best

Gain insight about ways to increase parent participation in counseling programs

PURPOSE IS HONEST COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL PARTIES ABOUT THE IMPORTANT WORK OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELORS AS IT RELATES TO THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT MISSION AND GOALS!!!
Planning the first meeting

Who will be on your council and how will you invite them?

What kind of meeting will you have and what will be on the agenda?

Where will you hold your meeting?

What time of day and what day of the week is best for your meeting?

What materials will you provide for your members?

Will you serve refreshments?

How will you share what you have discussed?
Who will be on your council and how will you invite them?

Refer to the ASCA National Model for “Who”

Look to your personal contacts in the local and professional community

Remember to search for people who are interested in what school counselors do

Construct a letter of invitation

Ask students to invite other students

Recommend US Mail not email for invitation

Seek suggestions from people in your organization

Give the invitees information about your council
Advisory council membership can include:

- Parent
- Teacher
- School Counselors
- Administrator
- Community Member
- Business/Industry/Labor Representative
- School Board Member
- Student(s)
- College Representative: Admissions, HS Liaison
- Mental Health Professional
- University-level Counselor Educator
What kind of meeting will you have?

Determine the setup of your meeting

Make sure people are able to see one another and that the meeting can be facilitated easily

Look for a notetaker such as a school counseling intern, someone without a stake in the discussions

Chairperson needs skills in planning and conducting meetings, developing an agenda and facilitating group discussion
What will be on the agenda?

Agenda items should include introductions, explanation of the purpose of the board, counselor programs and activities, suggestions for future programs.

Data should be presented on student achievement.

The agenda should be brief but relevant.

Meetings should be kept on schedule and meeting times should be consistent and predictable.

Consider a guest speaker if it meets your goals.
Where will you hold the meeting?

Seek out a comfortable and easily accessible venue

Make sure it is a private meeting space not being used by others

Search out a neutral space where the various parties will feel safe to speak

Suggestions include the school library, large conference room, special classroom space or music room.

If you are serving refreshments, make sure this is allowed in your meeting space
What is the best time and day for the meeting?

Be sensitive to district and school building calendars

Steer clear of holidays and popular travel times, such as Friday afternoons

Consider the time of day most of your members could be available

Keep your meeting day and time consistent so members can plan to attend

Think about ways to be flexible

Don’t make too many changes to the schedule
What materials will you provide?

• GIVE ALL MEMBERS A COPY OF THE “ADVISORY COUNCIL” SECTION IN CHAPTER 5 OF THE ASCA NATIONAL MODEL
• SEE PAGE 89 OF THE ASCA MODEL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Agenda
List of members
Contact information for the chair
Artifacts of counselor programs
Reports on counseling interventions that include data
Relevant articles about school counselors

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Will you serve refreshments?

Inviting your members to share in food and drink adds to the social interaction and comfort level of the event.

Consider such factors as time of day and your budget for providing refreshments.

See what other groups do who meet in your district or school building.

If you do decide to offer refreshments tell the members so they can plan their day.

Be sure to clean up after your group to maintain positive perceptions of the counseling department!
How will you share what was discussed?

Decide who will receive your meeting minutes or reports

Be aware of the need to be prudent about what goes into the minutes

Ask someone else to review your minutes or reports before distributing

Give the members an opportunity to review the minutes or reports and to make changes if needed

The usual channels of communication apply, such as US Mail and/or email distribution list

Offer to present on it at district level meetings
Past experiences with advisory groups

Adelphi University Admissions Advisory Board
Hofstra University Center for Secondary School Education Advisory Board
Long Island Works Advisory Board
Long Island University School Counseling Advisory Board, Chair
Business Advisory Board of Lindenhurst Public Schools
Site Based Team
NYIT Counseling Program Advisory Board

How about you?
Lindenhurst process
2005 to 2016

Mailed and emailed invitations and reminders

Refreshments and gifts from our university colleagues

Name place cards

Minute taker and mailed distribution of minutes after each meeting

Two meetings per year since March 2005 = 20+ MEETINGS!!

Three-year action plan played a key role

Results include great public perception, increased staff, permission to engage in new programs and professional development activities

Example of new programs as outgrowth of discussion:

• College Scholarship Workshop & Middle School College Awareness Night
• Naviance Classroom Presentations & College Application Workshop
• College Bus Tours
Southampton process
2014 to present

Sent email to all district employees about the development of a new Advisory Council

Created an EventBrite event through which interested people could register to participate

Mailed letters of invitation to targeted stakeholders

Presentation to all members about the newly implemented programs over the previous three years

Open dialogue with members and new ideas generated

Minutes taken and distributed to members, school counselors, Board members and Superintendent

Presentation to Board of Education
Where are we going next?

Enhance our meetings by including more “virtual members”
Expand participation to other stakeholders
Rotate counselor membership on the council regularly
Survey members regarding changes
Continue to report to the Advisory Board/Council on our programs and plans for the future
Increase use of technology for communication
Provide the information in this workshop around the state.
Think positively about your advisory council!

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.”

Abraham Lincoln

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Resources

• Colleagues
• American School Counselor Association
• State school counselor associations
• Local professional counseling associations
• University school counseling training programs
• Bibliography from this workshop
• Best practices from other schools
• SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FROM THIS WORKSHOP
  • See Google link on last slide
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR REQUESTS FOR HELP!

We welcome reports about how your ADVISORY COUNCIL takes shape...

Follow updates on the new regulations at www.nyssca.org!

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RESOURCES

The google drive can be accessed using the following:

Go to https://www.google.com/drive/ and enter the following:

Email: nyssca2016advisorycouncil@gmail.com

Password: nyssca2016