

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

ACPS commits to providing each student with a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate school counseling program that is aligned with the state and American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. Through individual, small group, and classroom guidance, ACPS counselors assist students in their academic, personal-social, and career development. In addition, ACPS is committed to a student:counselor ratio that meets or exceeds the ASCA National Model.

The Alexandria City School Board affirms that parents are the student's first teachers and that the public schools should serve to strengthen family and parental support. No student will be required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parents object.

Each school ~~will make reasonably available~~ provides the following counseling services to all students:

- a) **Academic Counseling (Academic Advising)** – Advice which assists students and their parents to acquire knowledge of the curricula choices available to students, to plan a program of studies, to arrange and interpret academic testing, and to seek post-secondary academic opportunities.
- b) **Career Counseling (Career Advising)** – Advice which helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships, and post-secondary educational and career opportunities;
- c) **Personal/Social Counseling** – Counseling which assists a student to develop an understanding of themselves, the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflict and to define individual goals, reflecting their interests, abilities and aptitudes. Information and records of personal/social counseling will be kept confidential and separate from a student's educational records and not disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent or as otherwise provided by law. Parents may elect, by notifying their child's school in writing, to have their child not participate in personal/social counseling (optout). Such counseling may be provided either (i) in groups in which generic issues of social development are addressed or (ii) through structured individual or small group multi-session counseling which focuses on the specific concerns of the participants.
- ~~d) **Employment Counseling and Placement Services** – The School Board provides to secondary students employment counseling and placement services to furnish information relating to the employment opportunities available to students graduating from or leaving the schools in the school division. Such information includes all types of employment opportunities, including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, the military, career education schools and the teaching profession. In providing such services, the School Board consults and cooperates with the Virginia Employment Commission, the Department of Labor and Industry, local businesses and labor organizations and career schools.~~

At least annually, ACPS will notify parents in writing about the academic, career, employment, and personal/social counseling programs which are available to students within the school division. Parents or guardians will be advised concerning the purpose, general description of the programs, how parents/guardians may review materials to be used in the programs, and procedures by which parents/guardians may limit the students' participation in the programs. No

student is required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parents or guardians object.

Counseling techniques which are beyond the scope of the professional certification or training of counselors, including hypnosis, or other psychotherapeutic techniques that are normally employed in medical or clinical settings and focus on mental illness or psychopathology, are prohibited.

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §sections 22.1-209
Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools, January 2004
8 VAC 20-620-10

Cross Refs.: IGAD Career and Technical Education
JO Student Records