



COUNSELING FOR CAREERS

IMPROVING STUDENT
OUTCOMES



The world of work is changing: Technological jobs are increasing. Soft skills--such as teamwork, work ethics, leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving—are critical for success. And now, virtually all jobs require basic math and computer skills. Within this changing environment, the parameters of school counseling are changing as well.

School counselors traditionally were relegated to the role of helping students work out their schedules and handling disciplinary issues, now school counselors are expected to actively guide students in planning for steps forward after graduation, whether they are postsecondary education or training, or a direct pathway to work. School counselors are also being asked to play a pivotal leadership role in supporting the work of other educational staff so they can be equally effective in the classroom in providing career information to students (Ray, n.d.).

Without a strong career counseling program, students remain unaware of what they need to succeed—such as math and technical proficiencies—and either make career decisions in a “vacuum of information” or table making career decisions at all. Exceptional career counseling directly affects student success in postsecondary settings, and ultimately in job placements (Wake Forest University, 2021).

School counselors create clarity for students through assessment of interests and goals, and guidance to ensure that capabilities match interests, maximizing future success. From these initial assessments, counselors and students can work together to develop career pathways that include an awareness of what jobs require at different career levels, what classes can prepare students for these jobs, and what level of education or training they require to meet their goals. The role of school counselors becomes increasingly more student-centered, as they work with administrators to resolve issues, inform practice, and promote equity for all students (Hines et. al, 2011). Strong, well-built career pathways, supported by

well-informed school counselors, are fundamental in providing a “college-going” culture, where students feel supported, empowered, knowledgeable, and motivated. When this occurs, students are more likely to continue with postsecondary education and become better-prepared for future careers (Cruce, Mattern, & Sconing, 2015).

Counseling for careers can give students a picture of what they need to succeed in education and life; counseling ensures students take the right courses to prepare for future studies and careers and teaches the habits of success essential to achieve their goals. (SREB, 2013).

To navigate the complex workplace of the 21st century, students need the services of many qualified professionals to engage them in the career decision-making process. Along with the counselor, this may include teachers, administrators, or career coaches within the school (ACTE, 2008). Reaching outside the school, career counselors should form networks with colleges, business and industry, and community organizations to further enlighten students about options and opportunities.

NOSCA (National Office of School Counselor Advocacy) outlines eight areas that should be addressed in career counseling. They include development of student dreams and aspirations from K-12; engaging students in planning, enrichment, and leadership activities; motivating students to enroll in challenging courses; encouraging students to engage in college exploration



Technological jobs are increasing



Soft skills are critical for success



More careers require math and computer skills

activities; providing students and families with college information and resources; collaborating with students and families to educate them about costs and financial aid, including scholarships and grants; and helping students understand the college enrollment process (Lee, n.d.).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for College and Career Readiness have been adopted by most states along with aligned assessments. These standards, having operationalized NOSCA's eight areas within school curricula, also define the expectations that every student—regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or gender—can be prepared for college and careers through comprehensive, coherent preparation to work in the real world (US Dept. of Education, 2021).

When students are exposed to careers while learning math skills, they discover how it is used in real workplace settings. Minority and economically disadvantaged students, who are less likely to have

exposure to well-paying careers, are given the same tools to engage in career exploration and then can turn to school counselors to build career pathways.

Pathway2Careers™ Curriculum puts careers at the center of math learning giving all students equal access to career exploration. NS4ed supports counselors with career counseling professional development, as a stand-alone course or linked to Early College High Schools and Career and Technical Education programs in districts across the country. With this training, school counselors can assume the leadership role to better serve as college and career advocates.

Note: COVID-19 has posed many seemingly unsurmountable challenges to counselors and students as they continue to build career pathways virtually. It has been important that school counselors have the training and tools to support students both onsite and virtually and help them envision a fulfilling academic and professional life in their future (St. Bonaventure University, 2020).

NOSCA's COMPONENTS OF COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS



Dreams & Aspirations



Enrichment & Extracurricular Activities



Academic Planning



College Exploration



College & Career Assessments



College Affordability



Admissions Process



Transition from High School

About NS4ed

NS4ed is a rising leader in technology-based career and college education services and actionable research. Our revolutionary Pathway2Careers program provides straightforward tools that identify high-value careers and effective resources and materials that can sustain progress on the pathway to career readiness.



Other Articles of Interest

These articles and more are available at www.pathway2careers.com



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