

**STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS IN  
VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**PREFACE**

The Virginia Board of Education has implemented state Standards of Learning for students to ensure that all graduates of Virginia high schools have the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue higher education, compete in a technologically oriented workforce, and be informed citizens. Effective school counseling programs are staffed by licensed school counselors and designed to complement and support the state standards, ensuring that all students, in pre-K through grade 12, receive support in academic, career, and personal/social development. Professional school counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other school and community members to foster, promote, and improve student success and achievement in schools. The counselor's role is to provide the leadership necessary to manage the school-counseling program and ensure effective strategies to implement counseling standards.

Regulations of the Virginia Board of Education, Chapter 620, Section 10 (based on 221-16 of the Code of VA), state that, "*school guidance and counseling are support services designed to promote the academic mission of public education and exist primarily to aid student's academic achievement in elementary and secondary education.*"

At its September 2001 meeting, the Board of Education authorized the Department of Education to prepare revised Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools. The department convened a writing team that included representation from the Board of Education, the Department of Education, and school counselors across the Commonwealth. State standards adopted in 1984 were used to provide the basis for this revision.

These standards are consistent with Board of Education regulations in that they are comprised of three domains: academic, career, and personal/social. Specifically, the Board regulations provide the following description of guidance and counseling services across these domains:

- a.) *Academic guidance, 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 Guidance, which helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships, and post-secondary educational and career opportunities;*
- c.) *Personal/social 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*

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### INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive school-counseling program is a shared and collaborative effort with other educators and parents that focuses on all aspects of student learning. Recognizing that there are multiple variables that affect a student's success throughout the school years, and that the school-counseling program is one important variable that affects all areas of growth, a well-planned school-counseling program will provide a collaborative effort and will function as an integral and essential part of the school structure and organization.

The *Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools* reflect the progression of student growth throughout the school experience and ensure that, at all grade levels, students continue to develop appropriate knowledge and skills. Desired student learning outcomes are identified; however, they are not intended to be all-inclusive. School counselors should develop programs that may extend beyond these Standards to meet individual needs of students and foster academic success.

The standards are based on the premise that a student will acquire an understanding of the knowledge and skills that contribute to effective lifelong learning and offer a foundation for what a well-planned school-counseling program should address and deliver. The Academic Development component encourages the use of strategies and activities to help students succeed academically and to meet local, state, and national standards. The Career Development component helps students build a foundation for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary to make a successful transition from school to the world of work and/or further training and education. The Personal/Social Development component supports personal and social growth and the development of civic responsibility as students successfully progress through the public schools.

### ORGANIZATION

The *Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools* are organized by grade level under the following goals:

#### **Academic Development**

Students will acquire the academic preparation essential to choose from a variety of educational, training, and employment options upon completion of secondary school.

#### **Career Development**

Students will investigate the world of work in order to make informed career decisions.

#### **Personal/Social Development**

Students will acquire an understanding of, and respect for, self and others, and the skills to be responsible citizens.

Although the *Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools* are defined at certain grade levels, school counseling programs should reinforce previously acquired knowledge and skills as defined by these standards throughout the course of a student's subsequent educational experience.

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# STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Academic Development

### Goal

Students will acquire the academic preparation essential to choose from a variety of educational, training, and employment options upon completion of secondary school.

### Grades K-3:

#### Students will:

- EA1. Understand the expectations of the educational environment,
- EA2. Understand the importance of individual effort, hard work, and persistence,
- EA3. Understand the relationship of academic achievement to current and future success in school,
- EA4. Understand that mistakes are essential to the learning process,
- EA5. Demonstrate individual initiative and a positive interest in learning,
- EA6. Use appropriate communication skills to ask for help when needed,
- EA7. Work independently to achieve academic success,
- EA8. Work cooperatively in small- and large- groups towards a common goal, and
- EA9. Use study skills and test-taking strategies.

### Grades 4-5:

#### Students will:

- EA10. Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses related to learning,
- EA11. Demonstrate time management and organizational skills,
- EA12. Apply study skills necessary for academic achievement,
- EA13. Use critical thinking skills and test-taking strategies, and
- EA14. Understand the choices, options, and requirements of the middle school environment.

### Grades 6-8:

#### Students will:

- MA1. Understand the relationship of personal abilities, goals, skills, interests, and motivation to academic achievement,
- MA2. Understand the relationship of dependability, productivity, and initiative to academic success,
- MA3. Understand the importance of high school course and/or program selection in relation to future academic and career options,
- MA4. Understand high school graduation requirements,
- MA5. Understand individual assessment results in relation to educational progress,
- MA6. Demonstrate the skills needed to develop a high school educational plan based on ability, interest, and achievement, and

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MA7. Demonstrate responsibility for actions to ensure a successful transition from middle school to high school.

**Grades 9-12:**

**Students will:**

HA1. Understand their academic status toward meeting the graduation requirements,

HA2. Understand the variety of post-secondary options available to them and the requirements of those options including the relationship of academic status and scholastic record,

HA3. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a successful transition from high school to post-secondary options, and

HA4. Demonstrate the skills needed for independent learning.

## DRAFT

### Career Development

#### **Goal**

Students will investigate the world of work in order to make informed career decisions.

#### **Grades K-3:**

##### **Students will:**

- EC1. Understand the concepts of job and career,
- EC2. Understand that behaviors such as punctuality, courtesy, proper dress and proper language are essential to current and future success,
- EC3. Understand the relationship of individual effort, hard work and persistence to achievement,
- EC4. Understand the importance of teamwork in working towards a common goal,
- EC5. Demonstrate the decision-making process, and
- EC6. Demonstrate goal setting.

#### **Grades 4-5:**

##### **Students will:**

- EC7. Recognize the benefits of both individual initiative and teamwork,
- EC8. Recognize that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning,
- EC9. Identify hobbies and interests, and
- EC10. Identify career choices through exploration.

#### **Grades 6-8:**

##### **Students will:**

- MC1. Identify the relationship of course content, educational achievement, and career choices,
- MC2. Identify personal preferences, skills, and interests that influence career choices and success,
- MC3. Understand the effect of career choices on quality of life,
- MC4. Understand that behaviors such as punctuality, courtesy, proper dress and language, and hard work are essential to success in the job market,
- MC5. Demonstrate understanding of the education and training needed to achieve career goals,
- MC6. Demonstrate employability skills such as individual initiative, teamwork, problem solving, organization, and communication,
- MC7. Use research skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career and educational information, and
- MC8. Demonstrate awareness of educational, vocational, and technical training opportunities available in high school.

#### **Grades 9-12:**

##### **Students will:**

- HC1. Understand the value of ethical standards and behaviors in education and the workplace,

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- HC2. Understand how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training,
- HC3. Understand how work and leisure interests can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction,
- HC4. Understand how the changing workplace requires lifelong learning, flexibility, and the acquisition of new employment skills,
- HC5. Understand that behaviors such as punctuality, courtesy, proper dress and language, and hard work are essential to success in the job market,
- HC6. Understand that self-employment is a career option and demonstrate knowledge of the variety of professional, technical and vocational skills necessary for self-employment,
- HC7. Demonstrate employability skills such as individual initiative, teamwork, problem solving, organization, and communication,
- HC8. Demonstrate skills involved in locating, using, and interpreting a variety of career and educational resources, including the Internet,
- HC9. Develop and utilize time and task management skills,
- HC10. Demonstrate knowledge of the current job market trends, and
- HC11. Apply decision-making skills to career planning.

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**Personal/Social Development**

**Goal**

Students will acquire an understanding of, and respect for, self and others, and the skills to be responsible citizens.

**Grades K-3**

**Students will:**

- EP1. Exhibit the principles of character, including honesty, trustworthiness, respect for the rights and property of others, respect for rules and laws, taking responsibility for one's own actions, fairness, caring, and citizenship,
- EP2. Understand how to make and keep friends and work cooperatively with others,
- EP3. Understand that Americans are one people of many diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and national origins who are united as Americans by common customs and traditions,
- EP4. Demonstrate good manners and respectful behavior towards others,
- EP5. Demonstrate self-discipline and self-reliance,
- EP6. Identify resource people in the school and community and understand how to seek their help, and
- EP7. Understand the importance of short- and long-term goals.

**Grades 4-5:**

**Students will:**

- EP8. Understand change as a part of growth,
- EP9. Understand decision-making and problem-solving strategies,
- EP10. Identify the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse,
- EP11. Use strategies for managing peer pressure, and
- EP12. Use strategies for handling conflict in a peaceful way,

**Grades 6-8:**

**Students will:**

- MP1. Recognize the effect of peer pressure on decision-making,
- MP2. Understand the consequences of decisions and choices,
- MP3. Understand the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse,
- MP4. Use appropriate decision-making and problem-solving skills,
- MP5. Demonstrate appropriate skills for interactions with adults and developing and maintaining positive peer relationships,
- MP6. Use appropriate communication and conflict resolution skills with peers and adults, and
- MP7. Understand how character traits, interests, abilities, and achievement relate to attaining personal, educational, and career goals.

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**Grades 9-12:**

**Students will:**

HP1. Understand the relationship among, and importance of respecting rules, laws, safety, and the protection of individual rights,

HP2. Understand when and how to utilize family, peer, school and/or community resources,

HP3. Use appropriate communication and conflict resolution skills with peers and adults, and

HP4. Apply problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices.



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