International Model for School Counselors

Fact Sheet

Purpose of the International Initiative
The purpose of this project is to develop an International Model for School Counseling programs that addresses the needs in international schools which will benefit the students, counselors and administration. The goals of the project are the following:

- To consolidate best practices in the school counseling field to develop a comprehensive and preventative international model for school counseling programs.
- To equip counselors with the skills to modify the existing school counseling program, so that the needs of international students are properly addressed.
- To produce an effective International Model for School Counseling Programs that is replicable across international schools.
- To educate school counselors on how to develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program internationally.

Why Create an International Model?
It is not uncommon for an international/third-culture kid (TCK) to vividly recall experiences from several international schools: a kind teacher in chaotic Lagos, Nigeria, a small boarding school in rural Switzerland, a large American-style college-preparatory school in Singapore, a couple years in a public school in Washington, D.C., and a memorable graduation ceremony in front of the pyramids in Cairo, Egypt. At the core of each move are the academic programs and school structures that provide the international student with a sense of familiarity. Every school has an English, Math, Science, Foreign Language and World Studies program. Not to mention, all schools have a college preparatory focus: to prepare the international student for a future of their choice. International schools and their embedded programs provide students and their families with an essential foundation in their educational career. Parents know what to expect; therefore, these transitions, from Nigeria to D.C., are eased with the knowledge that their child will be educated on the core topics, no matter the size or location of the school.

Nearly 200 schools are currently supported by the United States Office of Overseas Schools at the U.S. State Department, and hundreds more independent international schools exist worldwide.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:
- 57% of international school counselors are already using the ASCA National Model in some form.
- Over 225 International School Counselors have participated in the creation of the International Model.
- For over 90 years, the school counseling profession lacked direction and focus until the creation of the ASCA National Model in 2003.
- There are over 25 Counseling Organizations worldwide but only one (1) provides guidance and direction for school counselors.
- There are over 400 counselors working in A/OS - supported international schools. And the numbers are higher for all international schools around the world.
- This project is supported and endorsed by the United States Office of Overseas School at the U.S. State Department, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Association of American Schools in South America (AASSA).
- In Fall 2009, this project became an official A/OS Grant of AASSA.
These various schools serve over a thirty-thousand (30,000) expatriate American students as well as over eighty-eight thousand (88,000) more students of other nationalities; and as the borders of business expand, so do the number and scope of these international schools. International schools are staffed with professional school counselors from all over the world, and these counselors need a framework by which to operate their school counseling programs to ensure student success. And while the ASCA National Model is in prime position to be the framework utilized by international counselors, it has two fundamental flaws that make its implementation difficult: first, it is “American,” and second, it doesn’t fully account for the international context in which international counselors work.

International students/TCKs and families cannot rely on the consistency of services rendered by counselors or counseling programs. A comprehensive counseling program should provide guidance for the international student to develop her academic, career, transitions, and personal/social self so she achieves success in school and is prepared to lead a fulfilling life as a responsible member of society.

Without such a counseling program the international student/TCK is at risk for not acquiring essential life skills. Novels taught in an English course can elicit discussion in a class about relationships, but does the 9th grade English program ensure that their students know how to manage the changing relationships in their lives? Does the Math program focus on the individual career path of each student? Does the Science program guarantee that students will have the skills necessary to manage transitions? No, nor should they. But, a comprehensive counseling program would.

Worldwide there are over 25 counseling organizations with the sole purpose to promote the quality of the profession and uphold the ethical integrity of its practitioners. Of those 25 counseling organizations, three are relevant to school counselors, and only one (1) provides clear guidance and organization to school counselors: the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supported by the U.S. Department of Education and The Education Trust. In preliminary research we learned that 113 international school counselors (57% of the counselors who responded to a survey sent out to all ISS schools in October 2008) use the ASCA National Model as a framework for their counseling program.

The ASCA National Model is just that—a national model. Designed with the needs of U.S. students in mind, particular international needs were not the focus of the program at its inception. For example, while ASCA acknowledges the need to work with students transitioning from one grade level to another, or from one school to another, international students are both more mobile and at more risk in the transition process. International schools vary dramatically in educational efficacy, and with no internationally-adopted curriculum standards, students often encounter great difficulty moving not only from one country to another, not only with social and emo-
Additional transitions, but also with academic expectations from one school to another. Additionally, the frequency of transitions within international schools is dizzying. U.S. government institutions such as embassies and major federally-sponsored NGOs and multinational corporations require their employees to uproot their families, sometimes, every three years. As a result, schools need accountable programs to ensure international students/TCKs are successful by having programs that have defined goals and objectives. The main program in a school that is in prime position to support all students in their academic, career, persona/social development is a counseling program. Additionally, what counselors gain professionally by using a common model, will further strength and unify us. We gain a common vision and language, direction for the profession, authentic collaboration and a community of learners.

Finalizing the International Model — Timeline

We have embarked on a journey in collaboration with international counselors to create an International Model for School Counseling. Also planned in this project is the opportunity to build on collaboration and consultancy with Dr. Judy Bowers, the co-author of the ASCA National Model., and ASCA. Dr. Bowers and ASCA Executive Director, Kwok-Sze Richard Wong and the ASCA Board are enthusiastically supportive.

Presentations and work sessions have been held at the following conferences where we have received invaluable input and views from fellow international school counselors. Over 225 counselors have participated in the creation of the model:

- November 2008 at ECIS in Nice, France
- April 2009 at the International School Counselors Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia
- July 2009 at OACAC in Los Angeles, CA
- October 2009 at AASSA in Santiago, Chile
- November 2009 at ECIS in Hamburg, Germany
- March 2010 at EARCOS in Manila, Philippines
- July 2010 at ASCA in Boston, MA

Upcoming events include:

- November 5-6, 2011, Dubai, U.A.E.—NESA Fall Institute, Critical Issues for International School Counselors
- November 19th (1:30pm) and November 20th (3:15pm) —ECIS 2010 in Nice, France
- Preview of the new international model will be launched at the AASSA conference in March 31– April 1, 2011 in Campinas, Brazil

Creation of the International School Counselors Association (ISCA)

Many counselors have commented that there needs to be an association that addresses our unique needs as international school counselors. And we are planning to do just that! Over the past nine months, we have been in close discussions with ASCA’s Executive Director Richard Wong. ASCA is very excited about the work that is being done internationally and they are very supportive in helping to create an International School Counselors Association. We will need your feedback about what needs you have from this new association that will focus on K-12 counselors in international schools. Please stay tuned for more information about the creation of the International School Counselors Association (ISCA).
Understanding the ASCA National Model—An Overview

So that you are familiar with the ASCA National Model, the following information are excerpts from the Executive Summary — The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. The complete summary can be viewed at the following website: http://www.ascanationalmodel.org/

School counseling programs should be an integral part of students’ daily educational environment, and school counselors should be partners in student achievement. The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs keeps the development of the total student at the forefront of the education movement and forms the needed bridge between counseling and education. Moreover, the National Model helps answer the important question: “How are students different because of what school counselors do?” The National Model supports the school’s overall mission by promoting academic achievement, career planning and personal/social development. It consists of four interrelated components:

**FOUNDATION** — The foundation determines how every student will benefit from the school counseling program. At the foundation of a school counseling program, Beliefs and Philosophy as well as a Mission Statement must be created.

**DELIVERY SYSTEM** — The Delivery System describes the activities, interactions and methods necessary to deliver the program. Essential items are the following: Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services and Systems Support.

**MANAGEMENT SYSTEM** — Intertwined with the delivery system is the management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure the program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school’s needs. To ensure success the following is needed: Advisory Council, Use of Data, Action Plans, Use of Time, and Use of Calendars.

**ACCOUNTABILITY** — To evaluate the program and to hold it accountable, school counselors must collect and use data that link the program to student achievement. This will allow others to understand the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms. Tools to be used to accomplish this — Results Reports, School Counselor Performance Standards and Program Audit.

**Next Steps — How You Can Get Involved**

We want to hear from you! For the international school counseling model to be a success, we need your feedback and participation. So how can you get involved?

1. Join our Google Group to stay up-to-date on the International Initiative. Send an email to us:
   Cheryl Brown and Brooke Fezler
   internationalschoolcounselor@gmail.com

2. Continue brainstorming ways to improve the ASCA Model for international schools.

3. Continue to educate yourself and others on the ASCA National Model.

4. Attend future conferences (AASSA, EARCOS, ECIS, NESA, ASCA) to be a part of the continued discussions.