

# Counselor reflection



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

School counselors are integral team members for any school staff. They help students make responsible decisions; mediate problems; deal with traumatic losses; develop a sense of respect for themselves and others; and plan for college, work, post-secondary training, and lifelong learning. As a school counselor, Nikki Williams has a desire to provide Miller Elementary school with an effective counseling program. This model has allowed her to be more accountable and given her the tools by which to assess the worth of my program and its services.

Her knowledge and skills have been expanded through implementation of this program but, more importantly, the tone has been set for who she is as a counselor and where her desire is to go as she journeys into helping students achieve success. Leadership Every effort is made to assert herself as a school leader by demonstrating accountability and sharing pertinent data with students, teachers, parents, administrators and the community. Needs assessments and outcomes from various guidance and counseling interventions are shared with staff.

Data from these needs assessments are used to set priorities, establish program goals and objectives, and assign activities. Meetings with teachers are ongoing in order to provide classroom guidance activities that meet students' academic, career, and personal/social needs. For instance, being an active member of our school leadership team, SST committee, and regularly attending IEP meetings allows me to provide leadership by being a guiding force in reviewing data, and designing and implementing ways to increase students' academic performance.

During these meetings, I contribute strong group facilitation and problem solving skills by keeping discussions focused on what benefits the student and contributing my knowledge of student growth and development. This year she has been an instrumental leader in such things as: \* Providing staff development training (child mandated reporting, guidance program orientation, etc. ) \* Conferencing, collaborating, and consulting with administrators, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders \* Planning school wide events (Career Day, Hipic Heritage Day, Red Ribbon Week, etc. \* Developing an Advisory Council \* Conducting a school needs assessment \* Designing a comprehensive school guidance program \* Maintaining contact with community organizations (DFCS, Rainbow House, HODAC, etc. ) \* Educating parents about school counseling curriculum

Collaboration Collaboration is an essential part of her school counseling program. She feels it is vital to collaborate with her staff. They meet regularly to review school data and identify obstacles to higher achievement. Through their collaborative efforts they problem solve and share their craft and knowledge.

She feels that this encourages more open staff relationships, promotes collegiality, and allows everyone to work towards a common goal. For example, she has been working closely with the teacher of the fifth grade special education group. She meets with this teacher regularly to put a plan in action to best meet the academic needs of these students. Her involvement in grade level and SST meetings give me the opportunity to partner with teachers, school psychologists, and other resource personnel by

collaborating to identify and resolve student problems by designing the most appropriate and innovative program or instructional modifications.

**Advocacy** To be seen as an advocate for “ all students” is important to her; for she is an advocate in numerous ways for students, particularly with regard to behavior, motivation, and achievement. Through collaborative efforts with her school’s leadership team, she advocates for all students by providing support to encourage them to obtain the best possible education. Additionally, data gathered from delivery of classroom guidance lessons is used to share with teachers and administrators, which seems to encourage a more positive mindset for achievement and success for all students.

**Systemic Change** Systemic change is an essential part of school reform. Ms. Williams feels that she presents herself as a leader in systemic change by delivering to all students an ASCA National Model Program that is aligned with state standards for academic personal/social, and career development. This effort is promoted through collaborative efforts with staff members as they assess and analyze data and review areas of concern. This year, she has come aboard the MES team to implement new ways to help students excel in all reas. She examines the risk factors, but also the strengths and potential that children bring to the counseling relationship. Consequently, this year Ms. Williams is playing an integral part of systemic change by working with her fifth grade special education students in an effort to close the achievement gap. The students failed the math portion of the CRCT test and through their school’s collaborative efforts; they hope to build success in these students.

Furthermore, through implementation of the National Model Program, Ms. Williams brings about change in my school by being an exemplary counselor representing the entire school community in an effort to eliminate barriers to student achievement. Her commitment to the process of change puts her in a position to effectively serve as a catalyst in students' lives and serve as a change agent in the school community.