



## A Spotlight on Counselor Leadership

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As indicated in our Professional Standards and Competencies and ASCA National Model, school counselor leadership is an essential component of our profession and necessary in order to develop and maintain comprehensive school counseling programs (Streer, Van Velsor, DeCino, 2018). But what does leadership in school counseling actually look like? Dollarhide, et al (2008) discovered that school counselors engaged in leadership “took responsibility for leadership; had clear, focused goals; self-defined their roles as a counselor; secured support from others, demonstrated the ability to grow from resistance; and were willing to expand their leadership skills”. International schools are exceptionally diverse and as counselors we may find ourselves navigating new barriers and opportunities with each move (or just each school year). As such, the importance of enhancing our leadership skills via professional development and professional support has never been more acute.

With this in mind, the Counselor Education & Leadership Committee at ISCA endeavors to create a platform within the international school counseling community to empower counselors to be leaders. Our committee will focus on building connections between graduate-level counseling programs around the world so that new counselors are equipped to face the unique challenges and joys that are innate to international schools, as well as engaging with seasoned school counselors who are looking for different ways to grow professionally. One aspect of this growth and leadership that we will probe specifically is that of **supervision**: both in terms of helping school counselors become supervisors that effectuate positive change and growth in others, as well as in learning how receiving supervision can be a buoying experience no matter the number of years on the job one may have.

So why leadership? If the last few years have been an indication, the role of counselors in advocating for the mental health needs of the communities we serve, including the work in our schools on diversity, equity and justice, is imperative. School counselors are uniquely positioned to have close ties with families, local professionals, the educational leadership team, faculty, staff and, of course, all students. These connections are powerful and can and should be nurtured, encouraged and promoted. Over the course of the next two years, our hope is that this committee can be a springboard for not only learning, but action.

In order to start this process of thinking more about yourself as a leader, we encourage you to take some time to be mindful - to think of all of the different ways you are impacting students every day. In the coming weeks, ask yourself:

- 1) What do you believe are essential attributes of a leader?
- 2) Are you part of the decision making at your school?
- 3) How are you currently demonstrating leadership?



We believe that as you start to think about these questions, you will find that you are doing many great things that fit under the category of leadership. If you find that you are not, then it might be a good time to look more closely at your counseling practice and follow some of the tips suggested in [this article](#), the [ISCA Counseling Leadership and Degree Program](#) resources and the Leadership workshop at the [ISCA Collaborative](#) to help gain confidence as a school counselor leader.

## References

Dollarhide, C. T., Gibson, D. M., Saginak, K. A. (2008). New counselors' leadership efforts in school counseling: Themes from a year-long qualitative study. *Professional School Counseling*, 11, 262–271.

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