

Part One

# **Counseling Students with Disabilities**

## **The Basics**







## Chapter 1

# Possibilities and Practicalities

**M**any students with disabilities who are now grown have been in our thoughts while writing this book. One of them is a man, now a research scientist, whose attention deficit hyperactivity disorder resulted in his being described as “absolutely unmanageable and unwilling to listen.” We are also thinking about the man with Down syndrome who is an integral part of his community and a highly valued employee. Then there is the master’s-level therapist whose dyslexia posed major problems throughout her school years. All of these former students surprised many people. But it is very hard to predict outcomes when it comes to students with disabilities. What we can predict is that they will run into obstacles that hinder their possibilities and that this will usually occur far more often than for typical students. We can also predict that their capabilities often exceed what people commonly assume.

The title of this chapter embodies our overriding goal for this book. Our purpose for this book is to provide a resource that helps counselors understand what students with disabilities can achieve—their possibilities—and how school counselors can be a critical part of the team that helps this happen by understanding the realities and the challenges that these young people face—the practicalities. This book arose from the recognition that only a minority of school counselors receive course work in the area of disability in their graduate education, yet they are faced with great responsibility for these students. The issue of lack of training yet much professional involvement with students with disabilities is confirmed by the research study conducted by Milsom in 2002.<sup>1</sup> Anecdotally, a counselor we interviewed was pulled aside in her first week on the job and told that she would be handling all of the students with disabilities in the school. She had never taken one disability-related class and had never worked with a student with a disability up to that point.

Given this reality, we have worked to create a user-friendly resource that reflects the realities of the working roles of school counselors, which includes many more students with disability as part of their already large student caseloads. One school counselor remarked to us, “It seems as if 20 percent of my caseload are classified [with disabilities] and consume 80 percent of my time. There is never enough time to attend to everyone’s needs.” This reality is very consistent with the national data. Estimates are that approximately 7 million students in schools have disabilities. These students represent nearly 14 percent of all students in school.<sup>2</sup> The national average ratio, as reported by ASCA, is 479 students per 1 school counselor (the recommended ASCA ratio is 250:1 students per counselor).<sup>3</sup> When these data are extrapolated, this means that each school counselor will have at least 67 students with disability on his or her caseload. We know that this figure is actually a low estimate because the figure is higher in the general or adult population: estimates are that 1 in 5 adults, or 20 percent, for a total of 59 million individuals, have been identified with disabilities in the United States.<sup>4</sup> This makes the number of students with disabilities served by a school counselor much higher. Using these estimates, school counselors would serve nearly a hundred students with disabilities on their already extremely high caseloads.

Despite these pressures and constraints, the potential of school counselors to make a real difference in the lives of students with disabilities is far greater than is often realized. Not only can school counselors help individual students in meaningful ways, but they can have an impact on programming that can affect the millions of students with disabilities.

Putting this information in a historical context is important. It is easy to assume that students with disabilities have always been a part of our educational system. But this is not true. We have come a long way from the time in which children with disabilities had no right to an education. Before the Americans

with Disabilities Act (ADA) was implemented in 1990, the civil rights of children (and adults) with disabilities were not protected in general. For example, in 1988, Senator Lowell Weicker made the following statement when he introduced the ADA before Congress:

People with cerebral palsy are turned away from restaurants because proprietors say their appearance will upset other patrons. People who use wheelchairs are blocked by curbs, steps and narrow doorways from getting into many arenas, stadiums, theatres and other public buildings; many facilities have no provisions for people with hearing and visual impairments. It has been over 30 years since the zoos and parks were closed to keep blacks from visiting them at the height of the civil rights demonstrations and boycotts. Yet it was only last month that *The Washington Post* reported the story of a New Jersey zookeeper who refused to admit children with Down's syndrome because he feared they would upset the chimpanzees.<sup>5</sup>

Before the passage of PL-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act (later renamed IDEA), in 1975, all children with disabilities were placed in the same classroom despite their abilities or at times totally excluded or denied entrance to school. For example, "A 1989 Commission on Disability report from the California Attorney General noted that 'In one town, all disabled children are grouped into a single classroom regardless of individual ability.' A bright child with cerebral palsy was assigned to a class with mentally retarded and other developmentally disabled children solely because of her physical disability."<sup>6</sup> This actually occurred more than eight years after states were required to comply with the federal mandate to provide a free, appropriate public education, consistent with the student's individual needs and provided in the least restrictive setting.

Although such blatant examples of discrimination do not occur as routinely today, students with disabilities are still sometimes seen as less important than other children. This shows up in many ways. One mother recently mentioned that in her school, "The special education students were all grouped together at the end of our graduation ceremony. It was like they were the caboose on a train." Examples abound. These include the report of a teacher in Florida who allowed the classmates of a five year old, who was being evaluated for Asperger's syndrome, to vote him out of class after he had been sent to the principal's office twice for discipline problems.<sup>7</sup> To a large extent, what these situations have in common is an "us" and "them" mind-set—a dividing line between children and children with disabilities.

Students with disabilities have a right to a school environment in which "disabilities are viewed as neither bizarre nor embarrassing, nor unduly burdensome, but rather as natural expected and even welcomed."<sup>8</sup> School counselors have an important role in realizing this ideal.

# The Role of the School Counselor

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The role of the school counselor in the lives of students with disabilities is often not clearly understood, and this ambiguity can lead to role confusion for practicing school counselors. We believe that it is important to address this issue and clarify the school counselor's role in helping the student with disabilities.

Before we look at some of the specifics, we present two common and problematic viewpoints that frequently define the role of the school counselor:

- Problematic view 1: Students with disabilities are not the school counselor's responsibility.
- Problematic view 2: School counselors work with all children. In so doing, they are responding to the needs of children with disabilities.

These outdated viewpoints limit school counselors' contact with students with disabilities and decrease the potential effectiveness of their place in those students' lives.

The first problematic view is that the responsibility for addressing the needs of students with disabilities is a matter for the special education department, not the school counselor or school counseling program. One mother of two children with disabilities spoke of this reality:

Our school district had a policy that if you were a student with a disability that had an IEP [individualized educational program] attached, you didn't really work with the school counselors at all. . . . If you tried to talk to the school counselors, they would always say, "I'm sorry, you have to go through the office of special education." I tried to tell them that the counseling department needed to be heavily involved with all students who had disabilities. . . . I tried to let them know that it was a really important issue, especially for career counseling [when it came to that point], but it just did not change.

The widespread belief that students with disabilities belong to the special education department further marginalizes them and does not allow them to benefit from the school counselor's expertise or the school counseling programs. This is just one of many ways in which the false dichotomy between children and children with disabilities results in separate services that diminish their potential.<sup>9</sup> It is easy to see how this resulting marginalization is the antithesis of the philosophy of school counseling. However, this often represents the day-to-day reality of many school counselors. Given this reality, it is helpful and important that special education is considered a service, not a place.<sup>10</sup> Viewed as a service, it is much easier to see how it can and should dovetail with the school counseling programs. This collaborative mind-set fosters a

tremendous synergy in meeting the needs of children with disabilities. According to Snow, “It’s [special education] supposed to be a method of helping a child become successful in the same world the rest of us are in.”<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly school counseling personnel, programs, and services are an essential part of that process.

The second role viewpoint that undercuts the potential of school counselors to make a difference for these students is the belief that students with disabilities are just like all the other students in a school. School counselors with this mind-set believe that their role is to serve the developmental needs of all children. Subsumed within this role is the mistaken belief that the developmental needs of students with disabilities are the same as those of their peers who do not have disabilities. Thus, they mistakenly believe that they are indeed serving the students with disabilities. Despite the good intentions of school counselors with this view, this strategy has not worked because the lives of students with disabilities in the school setting are not like those of the other children, and their developmental needs are often amplified and distinctive. They face very different obstacles, and often their developmental transitions are more complicated for logistical and personal reasons.

Throughout this book, we present the developmental reality of students with disabilities and seek to inspire school counselors to do right by these students by recognizing them and addressing those amplified needs. We present these amplified developmental differences within the context of the ASCA National Standards for academic, personal/social, and career development.

The best starting point for gaining clarity and understanding the role of school counselors with students with disabilities is ASCA’s position statement, *The Professional School Counselor and Students with Special Needs*. The foundational belief on which the school-stated role is based reads, “Professional school counselors are committed to helping all students realize their potential and make adequate yearly progress despite challenges that may result from identified disabilities and other special needs.”<sup>12</sup> Specifically, this commitment to students with disabilities translates to the actual role that ASCA defines for them as follows:

When appropriate, interventions in which the professional school counselor participates may include but are not limited to:

- Leading school counseling activities as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program
- Providing collaborative services consistent with those services provided to students through the comprehensive school counseling program
- Serving on the school’s multidisciplinary team that identifies students who may need assessments to determine special needs within the scope and practice of the professional school counselor
- Collaborating with other student support specialists in the delivery of the services

- Providing group and individual counseling
- Advocating for students with special needs in the school and in the community
- Assisting with the establishment and implementation of plans for accommodations and modifications
- Providing assistance with transitions from grade to grade as well as post-secondary options
- Consulting and collaborating with staff and parents to understand the special needs of those students
- Making referrals to appropriate specialist within the school system and the community

The professional school counselor advocates for students with special needs and is one of many school staff members who may be responsible for providing information as written plans are prepared for students with special needs.<sup>13</sup>

This position statement is an important starting point. We believe that school counselors need to play many additional instrumental roles. They are critical school professionals who can have a tremendous impact on the quality of school life for students with disabilities by facilitating their academic, personal and social, and career achievement and success.

## **Promoting Genuine Inclusion**

One of these vital roles is to help students with disabilities to be genuinely included. Despite the passage of valuable federal legislation, students with disabilities often do not experience genuine inclusion. There is a difference between presence and participation in educational opportunities. Murray described the common occurrence of “exclusion wearing the face of inclusion . . . of being there without in any real sense belonging.”<sup>14</sup> Illustrations of this phenomenon are all too plentiful, like the example taken from the recent experience of a mother of a young daughter with Down syndrome. She was very happy that her daughter was included in a regular kindergarten and met with the teacher before the school year began. She found her to be warm and welcoming. However, when she attended the first parents’ night, her daughter’s artwork was not displayed on the wall with the other children’s and her daughter did not appear in the videotaped class performance of a dance routine. This dramatic exclusion was done by a kind-hearted, well-intentioned teacher. The teacher thought that somehow masking this little girl’s differences was better for everyone. Done under the guise of inclusion, such exclusion can be the most harmful for the child and, as in this case, for the parent as well. School counselors must take a leadership role and work to ensure that professional educators fully embrace inclusion. More important, schools

must strive to create an overall, genuine inclusive attitude. “Inclusion,” however, “requires more than allowing the other in.”<sup>15</sup>

School counselors play a critical role in advocating for genuine inclusion and finding ways to help this happen. They consult with teachers, help create welcoming social environments, and solve logistical problems that present barriers to inclusion. There is an exception that is important to note: occasionally parents do not want inclusion because it is not in the best interests of their child. An example might be when a child’s autism is so severe that his needs cannot be met in a public school setting that can offer only an approximation of the intense specialized educational and therapeutic interventions that are needed throughout the day. The best interest of the child always supersedes the emphasis on inclusion.

## Looking Out for Students

Protecting the rights of children with disabilities in the school environment is another key aspect of the school counselor’s role. Parette and Hourcade identify one important role as addressing the many instances of intentional and unintentional discrimination against students with disabilities that occur in the school environment.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to fostering more genuine inclusion and protecting these students’ rights, school counselors can help students with disabilities manage the complexities of school that are introduced by virtue of having a disability. There is no doubt that school is harder for those with a disability; in addition, others are not always aware of some of these difficulties. For instance, we may not be aware of the fears of some students with physical disabilities of being knocked down in crowded halls filled with students changing classes or the unusual levels of fatigue that accompany some disorders. Other difficulties for those with physical or nonvisible disabilities such as learning disabilities include embarrassment, being accused of not trying hard enough, not fitting in, needing help but being embarrassed to ask, being bullied, and falling behind due to illnesses or learning difficulties despite trying hard to keep up. In different ways, many view the role of the school counselor as making school easier and safer. For example, one principal described how she views the role of school counselors: “We need to help children with disabilities navigate through the mainstream. They tend to fall through the cracks.”

Along similar lines, Milsom sees school counselors as needing to play a role in helping other educators “create more positive school experiences that promote their academic, career, and personal/social growth.”<sup>17</sup> Rutter (1985) underscored the importance of positive school experiences: “The long-term educational benefits from positive school experiences probably stem less from what children are specifically taught than from effects on children’s attitude to learning, on their self-esteem, and on their task orientation and work strategies.”<sup>18</sup>

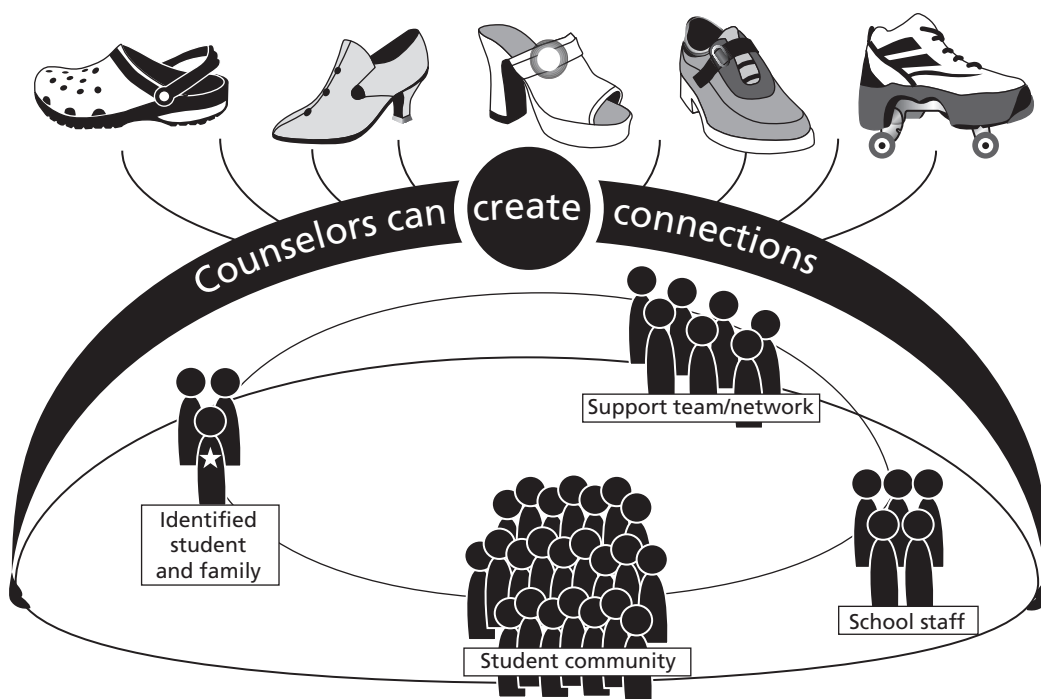
## **Addressing the Needs of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, and Students**

Many school counselors view their role as being in a unique position to assist students with disabilities, their parents, and teachers. School counselors work collaboratively with parents and school professionals to provide meaningful and appropriate opportunities for each child's academic, personal and social, and career development needs. It is highly important that school counselors stand as strong advocates for these needs. A counselor who responded to our survey exemplified this advocacy: "I'm passionate about getting everything for my children and their families but I've been criticized by upper-level administration for going the extra mile for them. I've dared to tell their parents about their rights and to ask hard questions even when I get into trouble for mentioning things like 504, ADHD, etc. If I'm going to get in trouble, I want it to be because I've stretched the rules to help a child."

Deck, Scarborough, Sferrazza, and Estill emphasize the role of the school counselor with other stakeholders: "When planning school counseling programs, school counselors need to identify the specific guidance and counseling needs of students with disabilities, as well as the related needs of these students' parents and teachers."<sup>19</sup> Another school counselor elaborates on this multifaceted role:

I believe that school counselors' skills in empathy and communication put them in the natural position of being able to empathize with all stakeholders involved in the inclusion process. As a school counselor, I see my role as the professional who looks out for the social and emotional health of the school community. You are not a special education specialist. But you are a specialist in dealing with the emotions of children and adults. As school counselors, we can help schools hear what parents' hopes and dreams are for their child and we can facilitate communication between the school and the parents. We are also in a position to empathize with and support teachers. We need to be able to imagine what it is like to be in someone else's shoes. For the student: "What is it like to be in this environment? What is it like to be in the hallways?" We also need to understand what it feels like to be the teacher in a classroom with challenging students.

This counselor's view of her role and her guiding philosophy is clearly reflected in her work. Once a school counselor has walked in the shoes of everyone involved, he or she can assimilate all of those needs into a plan that will bring everyone together and meet the needs of the identified child. An example is shown pictorially in Figure 1.1 and as a narrative in "My Role as a Counselor in Eliza's World."



**Figure 1.1 Counselors Create Connections**

### **My Role as a Counselor in Eliza's World**

Even before I transferred to my new job as the school counselor in an elementary school across town, I was a part of the team. A first-grade student, previously placed in an out-of-district classroom for children with hearing impairments, would be starting in our school in the fall. We needed to prepare. Our team consisted of the school principal, special education team chair, school nurse, special education teacher, speech and language pathologist, classroom teacher, classroom aide, and the school counselor. We met with our new educational audiologist. We trained, discussed, negotiated, brainstormed, and unified as a support network for this young girl—I'll call her Eliza—who has a cochlear implant.

The classroom teacher, as well as all staff, would need to use an FM system to directly connect to Eliza's cochlear implant. She would also need to be pretaught all instruction and vocabulary before school each day so she would be able to access the curriculum in the

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### **My Role as a Counselor in Eliza's World** *(Continued)*

regular classroom. Her classroom was carpeted, and sound-reducing feet were placed on chairs in the resource room. We were taught that when communicating with Eliza, we needed to get her attention and talk face-to-face so she could speech-read [read our lips]. As we discussed these needs, my thoughts began to center on how to widen Eliza's world. We should not be the only ones in the school to get this training. Playground aides, lunch staff, custodians, secretaries—all needed this information. What about her future friends? How could we help all of our student population to understand how to be friends with this sparkling, vibrant, eager first grader?

As a school counselor, I see my role as the professional who looks out for the social and emotional health of the school community. Eliza needed the road to relationships paved with the education of her peers. We needed to teach her typically developing peers and their parents about her learning differences. In my counseling program, I provide biweekly lessons in all of our classrooms. Every time I visit a classroom, I send home a brief newsletter to parents outlining my lesson for that day. This lesson would be called "Hearing in a Different Way." I felt the best method of instruction would be to use a story for young children that would spark discussion, allow modeling, and eliminate barriers to friendships. After researching many Web sites and libraries, I discovered that there was nothing available that met my needs. So I wrote Eliza's story. The book speaks directly to the audience about Eliza's life story in a nontechnical, down-to-earth, kid-to-kid manner.

It addresses the skills peers need to get a friend's attention, talk face-to-face, speak slowly and clearly, and keep trying to get a friend's attention even if they don't hear the first time. It goes on to describe how the teacher uses an FM system and what students can do in situations where it may be more difficult to understand spoken language: in cafeterias, playgrounds, assemblies, and so forth.

I needed to be sensitive to Eliza and her family, so they were my first audience to read and hear the book. Through our tears, I realized the parents were put at ease, and Eliza was thrilled to have her story told in such a developmentally appropriate manner. Eliza

even agreed that when I shared the story with the other classes, she would like to help to teach that lesson! Eliza trusted her new school and felt safe enough to not only share her story but demonstrate how her implant worked, show what face-to-face discussion looks like, and teach others how to get her attention.

At school, our ongoing struggles include how to make sure all of the students know how to use the microphone to the FM system throughout the school day. Our team must ensure safety protocols that consider Eliza's needs in an evacuation drill, bus drill, or lockdown drill. My recent discussions with Eliza have been about meeting other students who use special technology to hear, see, or even touch (one of our students uses a prosthesis on her arm). Now Eliza and I can help other students to understand if they have questions or point and whisper, wondering, "What is *that* on her ear?"

Eliza is now viewed as a happy first-grade student, running on the playground with her friends, talking and laughing at lunch, and learning reading, writing, and math. More important, she has taught me that school counselors can truly make a difference.

Kari S. Hoffmann, elementary school counselor (November 2007).

## Fostering Resilience

School counselors can also play a critical role in fostering resilience. As Werner stated, "Resilient children have at least one person who accepts them unconditionally, regardless of temperamental idiosyncrasies, physical attractiveness or intelligence."<sup>20</sup> School counselors are often in a better position than some other educators to be that person. Segal described the importance in the school environment of a "person with whom they identify *and from whom they gather strength*."<sup>21</sup> One example of why this is so important can be found in the comments of a student with a learning disability who reflected back on her childhood school memories: "I was constantly told to sit down, to stop talking; if the teacher gave instructions, I was always one step behind everyone; if we were supposed to hang up our coats, I would be easily distracted by something else. I was constantly yelled at for being disruptive, and I remember feeling guilty, but also confused: I did not mean to disrupt my class, and I often didn't even realize I was doing anything wrong."<sup>22</sup>

Resiliency development helps foster the persistence and hope that all students need to achieve and succeed in school and in life. As important as this is for all students, we believe students with disabilities have a heightened need for resiliency. Werner described resilient individuals as having a “a feeling of confidence that odds can be surmounted.”<sup>23</sup> They can often bounce back from difficulties and retain a hope for the future in the face of problems. They face rather than avoid problems and appreciate their personal strengths. Hope is also an important component of resiliency that enables students with disabilities to persist even when they are feeling worn down by obstacles. The concept of fostering resilience encapsulates much of our approach to working with students with disabilities. It provides some of the scaffolding that undergirds their success in achieving academic, career and personal and social competencies.

Neill offers a basic formula for thinking about fostering resilience:<sup>24</sup>

Growth = challenge and support.

We build on this basic approach to fostering resilience, and readers will find discussions of resilience throughout the book, especially as it pertains to the different domains of functioning. In short, we believe that school counselors should help students with disabilities:

- Acquire the resiliency attitudes, knowledge, and skills that will help them deal with life’s challenges
- Understand that positive growth in all areas of life comes from being challenged
- Learn to appreciate the value of support and assistance and use it to enhance their growth

## Amplified Needs

The overall purpose of the school counseling program is to help student achieve the personal and social, career, and academic competencies defined in the ASCA standards.

As we discuss throughout this book, students with disabilities generally have amplified needs in each of the three domains. We use the term *amplified* to denote needs that are intensified or more complex (although not necessarily unique). We are only introducing this concept at this point. Each of the remaining chapters contributes to understanding what is meant by these amplified needs and how to address them productively. It is important to clarify that many of these amplified needs are due to the circumstances surrounding living with a disability and do not reflect inherent limitations. Examples include higher rates of sexual abuse, restricted opportunities to develop interests and hobbies, and heightened needs

for self-advocacy due to environmental and social barriers. Certainly some disabilities also directly have an impact on these competencies apart from any environmental considerations. For example, children and youth with disorders such as Asperger's syndrome have a harder time acquiring competencies in the personal and social domain, yet these are critical. Therefore, we believe one of the most important roles of school counselors as they work with students who have disabilities is to address these amplified developmental needs in a manner that helps these young people achieve the possibilities in their lives.

Blum's discussion of the transition of adolescents with disabilities into adulthood reflects our concern: "There is substantial evidence that young adults with disabilities are less likely than their peers to realize their future. They are less likely to marry—though their marital aspirations are not different from their peers—and they are less likely to be employed. They are less likely to achieve higher education and independent living."<sup>25</sup> When we address the needs of students with disabilities in this deliberate and purposeful fashion, we are realizing our mission to fully serve all children and doing so without losing sight of their amplified needs.

## The ASCA National Standards Amplification of the Needs of Students with Disabilities

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Exhibits 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 present an overview of the amplified developmental needs within the context of the ASCA standards. In-depth information about these needs is provided in Chapters Six through Nine.

### Exhibit 1.1 Amplified Academic Domain

#### Academic Domain

Amplified: Academic developmental needs are particularly amplified for students whose disabilities interfere with the many aspects of learning. This includes students with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, mental health disorders and cognitive disabilities (mental retardation), and traumatic brain injuries.

#### Standard A

Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

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## **Exhibit 1.1 Amplified Academic Domain** *(Continued)*

### **A: A1—Improve Academic Self-Concept**

Amplified: For many students, academic struggles can result in a domino effect in which difficulties affect academic self-efficacy and academic self-esteem. This becomes manifest in the mind-set, “Other kids can do it, and I can’t.” Simply being placed in “special education” can be internalized as being “less than” and deficient. These students need to be able to retain a sense of academic self-esteem even if their learning styles differ from more typical classmates.

### **A: A2—Acquire Skills for Improving Learning**

Amplified: Students who frequently face academic disappointments need additional skills to bounce back and persist.

### **A: A3—Achieve School Success**

Amplified: Students with disabilities often face an uphill battle because they are dealing with unremitting challenges throughout school. Some of the challenges stem directly from disabilities, and many others stem from physical, social, and attitudinal barriers in school environments. In order to achieve school success, students need to manage potential problems ranging from academic accommodations to social exclusion.

## **Standard B**

Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.

### **A: B1—Improve Learning**

Amplified: For students with disorders that affect learning, academic standards are often lowered. These students have a need for educators to accept their differences and find the best instructional strategies to help them improve their learning.

### **A: B2—Plan to Achieve Goals**

This is not an amplified need due to the fact that federal regulations mandate academic planning with Individualized Educational

Programs (IEP) or 504 plans. (IEP and 504 plans are defined and detailed in Chapter Four.)

### **Standard C**

Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

#### **A: C1—Relate School to Life Experiences**

Amplified: Some students with disabilities have limited exposure to a broader range of life experiences. There is a need to be proactive in making sure school-based after-school activities are accessible to them. Students with disabilities have a much higher dropout rate than typical students. Therefore, they have an amplified need to connect academics to the real world. This provides them with a reason to persist.

## **Exhibit 1.2 Amplified Personal and Social Domain**

### **Personal and Social Domain**

Amplified: Personal and social developmental needs are particularly amplified for students whose disabilities interfere with their acquisition of interpersonal skills. This includes students with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, mental health disorders, cognitive disabilities (mental retardation), and brain injuries.

### **Standard A**

Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

#### **PS: A1—Acquire Self-Knowledge**

Amplified: Students with disabilities are often prone to internalizing societal stereotypes and being devalued, resulting in a negative

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## **Exhibit 1.2 Amplified Personal and Social Domain** *(Continued)*

self-image. Students need to recognize their many attributes along with understanding their disability.

### **PS: A2—Acquire Interpersonal Skills**

Amplified: Some disabilities have a direct impact on the acquisition of interpersonal skills. Social skills deficiencies can often jeopardize their ability to be an included member of the classroom and the school community. Some students with disabilities need intentional fostering of social skills as part of their general education. In addition, students with disabilities have a higher need for self-advocacy skills.

### **Standard B**

Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals. This standard is particularly amplified for students who have grown accustomed to high levels of assistance and direction. These students need educators to provide opportunities for self-determination so that they may take a more active role in formulating and achieving their goals.

### **PS: B1—Self-Knowledge Application**

Amplified: Students with disabilities generally have experienced relatively fewer opportunities to make their own decisions. This is a consequence of being the recipients of high levels of professional and parental help. They often have an amplified need to practice making decisions, setting personal goals, and acting on their own behalf.

### **Standard C**

Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Amplified: Students with disabilities experience shockingly high rates of sexual and other forms of abuse, including drug abuse. This creates many amplified needs for safety. Also, certain medical disabilities carry an inherent survival risk.

**PS: C1—Relate School to Life Experiences**

Amplified: Some students with disabilities have limited exposure to a broader range of life experiences. There is a need to be proactive in making sure school based after-school activities are accessible to them.

**Exhibit 1.3 Amplified Career Development Domain**

**Career Development Domain**

Amplified: Of the three domains, career development needs are amplified for the majority of students with disabilities. The context in which career development occurs is different from that of many other students. There is simply more to figure out about how one fits into the world of work. Students with disabilities face formidable attitudinal and logistical barriers that result in a high unemployment rate nationwide for this population. These students have more to consider and explore, such as the potential impact of accommodations and technology, logistical concerns, and handling the doubts of others who do not have insight into how disability-related obstacles can be surmounted.

**Standard A**

Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

**C: A1—Develop Career Awareness**

Amplified: Students with disabilities often lack readily accessible role models of successfully employed adults with similar disabilities. There are fewer opportunities to develop interests and hobbies because of competing medical or therapeutic activities or other obstacles. Also, standardized career assessments that are used for self-awareness often provide a skewed picture of self.

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## **Exhibit 1.3 Amplified Career Development Domain** *(Continued)*

### **C: A2—Develop Employment Readiness**

Amplified: Student with disabilities experience employment readiness needs that are complex and include being knowledgeable about legal protections such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and handling financial disincentives that result in a perspective that they might be “better off not working.” Even interviewing is more complex because they are faced with having to decide whether to disclose a nonvisible disability.

### **Standard B**

Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.

### **C: B1—Acquire Career Information**

Amplified: Access to career information is readily available. However, career materials rarely depict individuals working in a wide variety of occupations. Students may need to see how career information is pertinent to their career planning.

### **C: B2—Identify Career Goals**

Amplified: Students with disabilities have a high risk of early career foreclosure due to lowered career expectations they and others hold. Lowered expectations can be exacerbated by inappropriate use of standardized testing or assessments and poor school performance.

### **Standard C**

Students will understand the relationship of personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

### **C: C1—Acquire Knowledge to Achieve Career Goals**

Amplified: The success of students with disabilities in achieving career goals is contingent on understanding the laws and rights related to their disability and knowledge of resources, such as state-federal vocational rehabilitation services.

**C: C2—Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals**

**Amplified:** In order to navigate the post-K–12 experience, students with disabilities need to learn self-advocacy skills. Services that were readily available before now need to be procured through independent efforts.

We highlighted the roles that school counselors need to play with respect to students with disabilities because it is through their efforts that school counseling programs will be modified to fully include students with disabilities. These program modifications can happen only if school counselors are the advocates, leaders, and collaborators who make the systemic change happen.

