What should school counselors do to prepare students for the world of work? Principals, business and community leaders, teachers, and parents are all seeking to develop effective school-to-work programs.

The American School Counselor Association's National Business Advisory Board recently released a statement that views the emerging role of the school counselor in a much more assertive light.

"Any substantive reform of the educational system must include changing the role of the counselor from predominantly an academic advisor to predominantly a career planner." They assert that "while the talent exists in many schools, most school counselors do not have the time, the resources, the training, or the support of their school systems to better advise students about career and educational opportunities. Until and unless these requirements are met, the goals of school reform, especially of school-to-work transition programs, will not be met."

They recommend that school counselors have such expanded competencies and characteristics as:

- Career development specialization
- Competent communication skills
- Experience in both school and business environments
- Cognitive skills that enable them to recognize the potential in every student
- Teaching and counseling skills
- Knowledge of all disciplines within the school curriculum.

As the theme section in this Bulletin points out, many middle level and high school counselors do not have the training or resources to be effective advocates for students. We need to make resources available to counselors to develop such school-to-work transition activities as mentoring, apprenticeships, and summer jobs.

Counselor training is vital. The position statement closes with the following admonition: "If the United States is to compete effectively we must have a highly skilled, technically proficient, and knowledgeable work force. Such a work force is dependent upon a strong, viable, and effective educational system where competent and effective professional school counselors play a leading role." The expectations are critical to the future of our country. If these goals are to be attained, we must provide the commitment at the local, state, and national levels.

Please send your comments on the role of the school counselor to Maryellen Parker, Director of AP Services, NASSP, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Va. 22091-1537.

—Robert Mahaffey