

What is a School Counselor?

A Resource for Students, Parents and School Staff

Who Are School Counselors?

- Professional school counselors, formerly referred to as “guidance counselors”, are professional educators with a master’s degree or higher in school counseling and are certified or licensed by the state in which they work.
- Professional school counselors possess the qualifications and skills necessary to address the full array of students’ academic, personal, social, and career development needs.
- Professional school counselors advocate for and care for students, and are important members of the educational team. They consult and collaborate with teachers, administrators and families to help all students be successful academically, vocationally and personally.
- School counselors are on the front lines helping all young people succeed, impacting their futures on a daily basis.

What Do School Counselors Do?

Professional school counselors provide a wide-range of services in the schools, based on individual student needs and student interests, including, but not limited to:

- Mental, emotional, social, developmental, and behavioral services to students and families;
- Academic guidance and support services, including organizational, study and test-taking skills for students;
- Collaborate on special education services, including serving as integral member of the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- Career awareness, exploration and planning services, including goal setting and decision making assistance for students;
- School crisis intervention and response services;
- Collaboration and coordination of more in-depth services needed through community agencies.

How Do School Counselors Contribute to Student Achievement?

- Counselors can help individual students do better in school and make better choices for life after school.
- Counselors facilitate intervention and prevention programs to stop students from turning to violence, drug, or alcohol abuse.
- School counseling increases students’ ability to concentrate, study, and ultimately learn. Students who attend schools with comprehensive counseling programs earn higher grades.
- Counseling decreases classroom disturbances. Counseling services support teachers in the classroom in order to enable teachers to provide quality instruction designed to assist students in achieving high standards.
- School counselors are trained to recognize “early warning signs” in at-risk youth. School counselors work with principals, teachers, and other staff to develop and implement school safety, and to prevent school violence.

Strategies used by School Counselors:

- Classroom guidance: study skills, test taking strategies, organizational skills, time management, test anxiety
- Individual / small group counseling
- Student Intervention Team
- Check in – Check out
- Assist with SOL tutoring resources
- Referral for school day interventions
- Parent Workshops: homework, study skills, time management, organizational skills
- HERE! – collaborating to ensure students are in school

School counselors connect learning to life!