

## **The Role of the Elementary School Counselor**

### **Elementary School Students' Developmental Needs**

The elementary years are a time when students begin to develop their academic self-concept and their feelings of competence and confidence as learners. They are beginning to develop decision-making, communication and life skills, as well as character values. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups and family. Comprehensive developmental school counseling programs provide education, prevention and intervention services, which are integrated into all aspects of children's lives. Early identification and intervention of children's academic and personal/social needs is essential in removing barriers to learning and in promoting academic achievement. The knowledge, attitudes and skills that students acquire in the areas of academic, career and personal/social development during these elementary years serve as the foundation for future success.

### **Elementary School Counselors implement the Counseling Program by providing the following:**

#### ***School Guidance Curriculum: LCPS Elementary School Counselors provide classroom lessons, twice per month, to each class, K-5***

- Academic support, including organizational, study and test-taking skills, goal setting and decision-making
- Bullying prevention and awareness
- Career awareness, exploration and planning
- Character Education
- Communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution
- Education on understanding self and others, including peer relationships, coping strategies and effective social skills
- Multicultural/diversity awareness

#### ***Individual Student Planning and Assistance***

- Academic planning and support
- Crisis Interventions
- Education on understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses
- Goal setting/decision- making
- Transition plans

#### ***Responsive Services***

- Conflict resolution
- Consultation/collaboration with administration, faculty and parents
- Individual/family/school crisis intervention
- Individual and small-group counseling
- Referrals to other school and community resources

#### ***System Support***

- Consultation, collaboration and teaming
- Program management, operation and outreach, and professional development

## **Meeting the Challenge**

Elementary school counselors are professional educators with a mental health perspective who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. Elementary school counselors don't work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. They provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help students achieve school success.

## **Elementary School Counselors and the School Community; Working Collaboratively with all Stakeholders**

### **Parents**

Academic and career planning  
Communication/Networking (School newsletter, Doughnuts with Dads, Muffins with Moms, etc.)  
Interpretation of assessment results  
One-on-one parent conferencing; facilitate parent/teacher conferences  
Parent education and presentations (Bullying Prevention, Homework Help, etc.)

### **Teachers**

Academic support to help students succeed academically  
At-risk student identification and implementation of interventions to enhance success  
Classroom guidance activities and lessons  
Faculty presentations on counseling initiatives (Bullying Prevention, Academic and Career Plan, etc.)

### **Administrators**

Child Study/IEP Teams  
School climate  
School-wide needs assessments  
Student data and results (School Improvement Plan, etc.)  
Student recognition programs (PBIS, etc.)

### **Students**

Academic support  
Bullying Prevention (BP-PBIS Construct)  
Career education (Academic and Career Plan Curriculum)  
Community service/ Service learning  
Crisis interventions  
Leadership development (SCA Sponsors, etc.)  
Peer education  
Peer support (Peer Buddies, Circle of Friends, etc.)  
School climate  
Small groups (Anger Management, Changing Families, Friendship, Grief, Self-Esteem, Social Skills)

\*These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive. The role and responsibilities are driven in part by the needs of individual schools and may therefore naturally vary as a result.

## **Elementary School Counseling**

Elementary school years set the tone for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skill necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners. Through a comprehensive developmental school counseling program, school counselors work as a team with the school staff, parents and the community to create a caring climate and atmosphere. By providing education, prevention, early identification and intervention, school counselors can help all children achieve academic success.