

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
- Interpretation of assessment results
- One-on-one parent conferencing; facilitate parent/teacher conferences
- Parent education

Teachers

- Academic support to help students succeed academically
- At-risk student identification and implementation of interventions to enhance success
- Classroom guidance activities and lessons

Administrators

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

Students

- Academic support
- Bullying Prevention
- Career education (Academic and Career Plan Curriculum)
- Community service/ Service learning
- Crisis interventions
- Peer education
- Peer support (Peer Buddies)
- 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.