

### Changes in the Counseling Profession

- Historically, community counselors were not licensed in Kansas (or any state) for private, independent mental health practice.
- Historically, counselors in the schools (sometimes were called *guidance counselors*) frequently were assigned administrative related, time-intensive duties that restricted the delivery of counseling services to students. Eventually, many counselors in schools were seen by schools and public as functioning more like an assistant administrator than counselor.
- **Counseling matured; School counseling matured.** National board certification in counseling available in early 1980's. Professional counseling recognized as a distinct profession of its own (all 50 states, 2009). Specific levels of professional counseling practitioners licensed for independent mental health practice. In Kansas, Professional Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, various Therapists licensed by the Behavioral Science Regulatory Board; clinical level across professions have similar independent practice authority to diagnose/treat. School counseling has a national and a KSDE comprehensive program for *professional school counselors* to deliver to all students involving national and Kansas BOE student curricular standards. School Counselors are KSDE licensed with national board certificates available (counseling, since ~1993; teaching ~2003).

### Preparation of Professional School Counselors

- Masters degree or higher in school counseling (or a substantial equivalent). Current school counseling degree programs in Kansas are 45-48 graduate hours.
- Degree program coursework in counseling theory, individual & group therapeutic counseling skills, social/cultural foundations, human growth & development, career development, psychological assessment/testing; program management, research/evaluation; professional orientation & ethics, practicum and internships.
- Adherence to ethical codes and standards of practice of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and American School Counselor Association (ASCA).
- Preparation similar but differing from the programs of other mental health professionals in the following ways: (~15 hrs. more needed for independent diagnosis/treatment)
  - Counseling profession focus on promoting healthy development, prevention, and early intervention
  - Educator training for instructional skills to facilitate age-appropriate development of all students, identify/meet needs students, & personalize school learning experiences
  - The professional school counselors' unique role providing counseling/instruction/activities/services across 3 developmental domains (personal/social, academic, career)
  - Adapting clinical therapeutic skills for students in non-clinical school setting to follow and implement the educational mission of schools

### Professional School Counselors Deliver Comprehensive Program

- State Program (KSDE, 2009) to organize and deliver proactive developmental, preventive activities and responsive counseling services
- Address academic, personal/social, and career domains of development for every student, at every level K-12 (decreasing risk and increasing resiliency)
- Licensed school counselors staff and deliver the program including responsive services to resolve immediate student needs.  
KSCA/ASCA recommends: Every student should have a school counselor, and that there be at least one school counselor for every 250 students (with fewer students per school counselor for optimal results). Carnegie Foundation study recommended no more than 100 students per high school counselor for college planning/placement.
- Deliver developmental, preventive curriculum to all students (KSBOE, 2006). National Standards endorsed by ACT, College Board, PTA, business associations (NAB)
- Deliver, coordinate, and facilitate group and individual activities that assist each student/parent to establish personal goals and develop future plans
- Deliver counseling services (information, peer support, individual or group counseling (short-term), consultation, crisis intervention, crisis response, or referral internally or to outside community to meet immediate needs/concerns interfering with success
- Advocate, collaborate, and facilitate efforts for system changes; Manage programs (coordinate, monitor, evaluate, enhance program structure/functions/outcomes)

#### Areas of School Counselor Developmental (Preventive) Focus

- Academic Success (effective learning, school success, success attitudes)
- Education (planning courses, explore postsecondary options, relate to work/life)
- Self-Awareness, Personal Safety, & Developing Personal Responsibility
- Respectful to Self and Others
- Interpersonal Relationship Skills/Responsiveness to Others
- Making/Implementing Decisions
- Careers (exploration, integrating options with self, employment readiness)
- Setting, Planning, Achieving Future Goals

#### Common Issues for Professional School Counselor Interventions

- Lack of academic success or failure, school attendance, potential school dropouts
- Stress reduction, non-suicidal self-injury, suicidal ideas/suicide crisis intervention
- Grief and loss, anger management, and violent behavior
- Intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, abusive relationships
- Relationships with peers, friendships, family, parents, teachers, and others
- Substance use/abuse interventions
- Other high risk behaviors or situational involvement in the school and community
- School support for students with a diagnosis and receiving non-school treatment
- Parenting training

## **WHY PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS?**

**Delivery of Vital Services for Kansans.** All Kansas students have the right to become effective learners, responsible and resourceful citizens, productive workers, and participants in mutually respectful and responsive relationships. As students develop they search for information about who they are, how they can relate to others and their environment, and what they will become. In today's world, all students need adequate information, skills, and assistance with these areas in order to reach their potential.

### **Kansas Professional School Counselors are:**

- **Cost-efficient.** *Professional school counselors* can deliver wide ranging services not easily outsourced or purchased (such as mental health support services, prevention, crisis intervention, & crisis response).
- **Effective.** Published studies have found that working within the framework of a comprehensive program, *professional school counselors* can have a major impact on students and their success. References are available from KSDE, the American Counseling Association and the American School Counselor Association.
- **Integral to educational mission of Kansas schools.** Essential to each student's total school experience; directly tied to the classroom; support/impact student success and learning; systematically assist and empower all students to learn and apply academic, personal and social, and career competencies needed for living, learning, and working.
- **Prepared as educator/counseling practitioner.** *Professional school counselors* focus on and address needs in context of the whole student rather than addressing separate issues as if they occur in isolation; can personalize learning experiences of school; instructionally skilled to facilitate age-appropriate development, and resolve issues.
- **Specialists in school operations, protocol, and delivering counseling services in a school setting.** *Professional school counselors* understand school protocol, policies, & procedures; operate differently than social workers, psychologists, therapists, or teachers to address student needs.
- **Consultants.** Provide relevant, practical recommendations to administration, teaching staff, and parents.
- **Leaders and advocates** for systemic changes that enhance student development, learning, and success.

### **Impact of Budget Reductions**

- **Elimination of School Counseling Positions/Programs.** Funding reductions often result in elimination of school counseling positions. In some cases entire programs are eliminated.
- **Students Directly Impacted.** Local funding reductions in both 2002 and 2009 resulted in the loss of a number of school counseling positions and directly impacted the delivery of needed counseling services to students.
- **Personal Loss and Impact to State of Kansas.** When school counselor positions are eliminated, these Kansans become jobless during a poor economy. In addition to the personal loss, the state impact is lost tax revenues & increased expenditures for unemployment benefits and other types of support.

### **Legislative Position**

- **K-12 Education should not be targeted for further reductions.** Further reductions in support for public education will harm Kansas students further, directly impact all school programs and personnel, and will involve the elimination of school counselors and school counseling programs that provide vital services to students.
- **Increase funding for K-12 schools.** Create additional state revenue sources as necessary. Currently, reduction and elimination of key essential school operations, programs, and services (including school counseling) is occurring. The result of reductions is harmful to Kansas students.
- **Retain and Strengthen School Counseling Programs.** Professional school counseling positions and the comprehensive programs and services they provide to students must be retained and strengthened.

## **Professional School Counselors in Kansas Schools**

### **Information for Legislators**



"A Branch of the American Counseling Association"

**A Joint Publication of the  
The Kansas Counseling Association  
The Kansas School Counselor Association  
2010**