

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.** National board certification in counseling available in early 1980's. Professional counseling recognized as a distinct profession of its own (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 levels across professions have similar independent practice authority to diagnose & treat mental disorders.
- **School counseling matured.** 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 includes 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/internships.
- Adherence to ethical codes and standards of practice of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and American School Counselor Association (ASCA).
- Preparation similar to 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 of students, personalize school learning experiences
 - The professional school counselor's unique role providing counseling, instruction, activities, and services across personal-social, academic, career developmental domains
 - Adapting clinical therapeutic skills for students in non-clinical school setting to follow and implement the educational mission of schools

Delivering *The Kansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program* (KSDE, 2009)

- Structure to organize and deliver proactive developmental (preventive) activities, future focused planning, and responsive counseling services to resolve immediate needs
- Addresses academic, personal/social, and career domains of development for every student, at every level K-12
- Efficient/Effective coordination of efforts and resources of the school, family, and community
- Licensed school counselors staff and deliver the program (100% of professional school counselor time is dedicated to program delivery duties)
- **Deliver School Counseling Curriculum Component to ALL Students.** (Kansas Curricular Standards for School Counseling, 2006, KS Bd. of Ed.) (decreases risk and increases resiliency)

Use instructional skills and coordinate activities to deliver the curriculum to ALL students. National Standards endorsed by: NASSP, NAESP, PTA, ACT, College Board, NACAC, and NAB

<u>Academic</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills that contribute to effective learning in school/ across life span (positive academic self-concept; achieve school success) 2) Complete school with the academic preparation to choose from postsecondary options (plan to achieve goals) 3) Understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life (relate school to life experience)
<u>Career</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Acquire skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and make informed career decisions (career awareness; employment readiness) 2) Employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction (career information; identify career goals) 3) Understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and work (acquire knowledge & apply skills to achieve career goals)
<u>Personal-Social</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Acquire knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others (acquire and use self knowledge & interpersonal skills) 2) Make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals (acquire and use self-knowledge, personal safety & interpersonal skills to make decisions set goals) 3) Understand personal safety skills (acquire and use personal safety skills)
- **Deliver Individual Student Planning Component.** Coordinate and facilitate group and individual activities that guide and assist each student/parent to make decisions, set personal goals, and develop future plans. Involves the processes of planning monitoring and managing their own learning, academic and career advising, course /program planning, interpreting interests or testing results, exploring and selecting among post-secondary options, assistance in college or career admissions/financial aid processes, making transitions from school to school, school to post-secondary education, and school to work
- **Deliver Responsive Services Component.** Provide information, peer support, individual or small group counseling (short-term), consultation, crisis intervention, crisis response, or referral internally or to outside community to meet immediate needs/concerns interfering with student success
- **Deliver System Support Component.** *Manage programs* (coordinate, monitor, evaluate, enhance program structure/functions/outcomes); *analyze/use data*; *consult, collaborate, partner with staff, parents, systems, advisory and building/district committees. Advocate, collaborate, and facilitate* efforts for systemic changes

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
- Career Development (explore, integrate 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, 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

Recommended Staffing for School Counselors

Schools need school counselors in sufficient numbers to implement the various facets of a comprehensive program. The American School Counselor Association and the Kansas School Counselor Association recommend every student should have a school counselor, and that there be at least one school counselor for every 250 students (fewer students per counselor preferred for optimal program implementation). A Carnegie Foundation study recommended no more than 100 students per high school counselor for college planning/placement.

ADVANTAGES OF EMPLOYING AND RETAINING PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Delivery of Vital Services to Students and Schools. 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.

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, and 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, and procedures. They 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.

Professional School Counselors in Kansas Schools

Information for School Board Members



"A Branch of the American Counseling Association"

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