

PHILOSOPHY

School counseling programs support a school's academic mission by integrating activities that enhance student academic, career and personal/social development, relative to their developmental stages. These programs establish goals and expectations, based on the school's academic goals and provide a support system and relevant experiences to help all students achieve success.

It has been researched that students that attend a school with a comprehensive developmental guidance program have higher achievement scores than students attending a school without a comprehensive developmental guidance program. This was evidenced through Sink & Stroh's research on raising achievement test scores of early elementary school students through comprehensive school counseling programs. Therefore, given these findings it is prudent for schools and counties to support the implementation of comprehensive developmental guidance programs.

School Counseling programs are data driven. School counselors use data to identify student needs, develop a prioritized school counseling program to address those needs, evaluate program success, and inform future practice. Besides the traditional school wide student data, (disaggregated test scores, GPA's, attendance, and discipline, etc.) school counselors use additional methods and resources to dig deeper into the data to generate appropriate solutions and/or interventions for inclusion in the school counseling program.

School counselors do not work in isolation. They initiate collaborative alliances with all stakeholders – educators, parents, students, and the community. Together they initiate and deliver a quality school counseling program to help all students meet the challenges and demands of the school system and prepare for life's transitions. School counselors are involved in every school activity to some degree.

School counselors strengthen an education team by contributing a mental health perspective to all discussions. By virtue of their theoretical education and training, school counselors are qualified to identify situations in schools that are defeating or frustrating students and hindering their success. By leading efforts for needed systemic change, school counselors serve as advocates for all students.

High quality school counseling services are essential for a thorough and efficient system of schools, wherein all students achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set appropriate career goals and realize their full academic potential to become productive, contributing members of the world community.

MISSION

The West Virginia School Counseling Program is based on the American School Counselor Association National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. The mission for West Virginia school counseling programs is to focus on **academic, career and personal/social development** to ensure that *every* student benefits from a program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative in design and developmental in nature. The majority of the school counselor's time is spent in **direct services** to students, imparting specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive manner. School counselors will **collaborate** with the full education team, **advocate** to improve student learning, and **lead** efforts for **systemic change**.

VISION

The vision for counselors in West Virginia is that all West Virginia students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to reach their fullest potential and successfully manage their lives as healthy, responsible, competent and productive citizens who respect themselves and others.