

Lessons Learned



Exploring The Link Between School Counseling and School Success

There are three sets of skills identified in extensive reviews of educational research as being critical to school success: cognitive, social, and self-management skills.¹ School counseling positively addresses each of these skill sets.

To improve academic achievement, the social and emotional dimensions of the child must be addressed along with the academic or cognitive aspect². “Mental health and psychological services are essential to enabling many students to achieve academically, these [services] should be considered mainstream, not optional services.”³

School counseling activities have a positive influence on academic achievement scores

Guidance Curriculum Activities

- Although one self-esteem intervention did not affect the self-concept level of students who received the program, it did improve their reading scores.⁴
- Students who participated in the *Succeeding in School* program had higher achievement in math than the control group.⁵
- A study skills elementary school program designed to increase self-efficacy, awareness and control of thoughts (metacognitive skills), and knowledge of learning styles, resulted in improvements of 3.1 grade equivalents (in terms of academic achievement) for participants.⁶

Group Counseling and Guidance Curriculum

- One study evaluating the impact of a school-counselor-led intervention found that those students receiving the program had an 82% improvement in math and a 61% improvement in reading on the statewide annual achievement tests. In both academic subjects, there was a significant difference between those students who received the program and those who did not receive the program.¹

Lesson Learned: School counseling increases students' ability to concentrate, study, and ultimately learn.

References

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Components of a comprehensive school counseling program as identified by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA)¹¹:

-Foundation: Identify beliefs and philosophies to address how each student will benefit from the program. Use these to guide the program's development, implementation, and evaluation.

-Delivery System

-School Guidance Curriculum: structured lessons designed to assist students in achieving desired competencies.

-Responsive Services: Preventive and/or **intervention** activities that meet students' immediate and future needs. Examples include individual or group counseling, consultation with parents or teachers, referrals, information, and peer helping.

- Individual Student Planning: Assist students in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.

-System Support: Management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the program, and include professional development, consultation, collaboration, program management and operations.

-Management System: Incorporate organizational processes and tools that are delineated and reflective of school's needs. For example, agreements, advisory councils, use of student data, and action plans.

-Accountability: Report on immediate, intermediate, and long-range results showing how students are different as a result of the program.

To achieve maximum program effectiveness, the American School Counselor Association recommends a professional school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 and that counselors spend 80 percent of their time in direct service to students¹¹.

School Counselors have a positive impact on classroom behavior, management and teaching.

- In the school-counselor-led intervention, seven out of ten treatment students also improved their behavior as measured by the School Social Behavior Scale, which assesses student behavior in the three skill areas identified as critical to school success. The average amount of improvement was 22 percentile points.¹
- Students in schools that simply provide counseling services reported that their classes were less likely to be interrupted by other students, and that their peers behaved better in school.⁷ Thus, enabling teachers to provide more effective instruction and students to learn better.

Comprehensive school-based social service programs demonstrate positive effects on cognitive, social, AND self-management skills, the three skill sets that are necessary for school success.

- A comprehensive intervention that combined teacher training, parent education, and social competency training for children had a significant and positive impact including enhanced student commitment and attachment to school, less social misbehavior, and improved academic achievement.⁸
- A school-based social services program targeting students at risk for dropping out of school produced the following results: students improved their grade point average, reported feeling a closer bond to their school, and indicated improved self-esteem.⁹

School counseling activities also contribute to schools and learning by helping youth deal with personal, community, or national events.

- Personal problems, and community or national events like violent incidents may negatively affect academic achievement. Counselors trained to respond to the mental health needs of students can provide assistance to aid individuals in overcoming or dealing with these events.¹⁰

“Over 20 years of research demonstrates that school counseling and mental health services can significantly improve student achievement and school attendance, and reduce disruptive behavior”¹⁰.



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