

Effectiveness of School Counseling : Research

By the [American School Counseling Association](#) for [The Guidance Channel](#)

Many states have made important strides in class-size reduction, higher academic standards, greater accountability and improved teacher preparation. The important missing link in these initiatives to improve student learning is the need for more school counselors and other student support services, such as school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses. In many states, students' access to counselors varies by grade level, and some school districts have no counseling programs at all. When counseling programs exist, counselors are often asked to add administrative duties such as testing, supervising and class scheduling.

School counselors provide counseling programs in three domains: academic, career and personal/social. Their services and programs help students resolve emotional, social or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction. Effective counseling programs are important to the school climate and a crucial element in improving student achievement.

Following is a collection of sources addressing the effectiveness of school counseling and other student support services, including their contribution to the personal and academic success of students.

Reviews of the research on school counseling show that the services of school counselors have a positive effect on children.

Mosconi, J. & Emmett, J. (2003). Effects of values clarification curriculum on high school students' definitions of success. *Professional School Counseling, 7*(2), 68-77.

Brigman, G. & Campbell, C. (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling, 7*(2), 91-98.

Schlossberg, S.M., Morris, J.D., & Lieberman, M.G. (2001). The effects of a counselor-led guidance intervention on students' behaviors and attitudes. *Professional School Counseling, 4*:3, 156-164.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Petroski, G.F. (2001). Helping seventh graders be safe and successful: A statewide study of the impact of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 79*, 320-330.

Riley, P.L. & McDaniel, J. (2000). School violence, prevention, intervention, and crisis response. *Professional School Counseling, 4*:2, 120-125.

Whitson, S.C., & Sexton, T.L. (1998). A review of school counseling outcome research: implications for practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 76*, 412-426.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 75*, 292-302.

Borders, L.D., & Drury, S.M. (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policymakers and practitioners. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 70*, 487-498.

St. Clair, K.L. (1989). Middle school counseling research: A resource for school counselors. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling, 23*, 219-226.

Gerler, E.R. (1985). Elementary school counseling research and the classroom learning environment. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling, 20*, 39-48.

Gerler, E. R., Kinney, J., & Anderson, R. F. (1985). The effects of counseling on classroom performance. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 23*, 155-165.

Quantitative analyses of research (meta-analyses) also substantiate the beneficial effects of school counseling programs.

Baker, S.B., Swisher, J.D., Nadenicheck, P.E. & Popowicz, C.L. (1984). Measured effects of primary prevention strategies. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 62, 459-464.

Prout, H.T. & Demartino, R.A. (1986). A meta-analysis of school-based studies of psychotherapy. *Journal of School Psychology*, 24, 285-292.

Sprinthall, N.A. (1981). A new model for research in the science of guidance and counseling. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 59, 487-493.

Several studies find that elementary guidance activities have a positive influence on elementary students' academic achievement.

Sink, C. A. & Stroh, H.R. (2003). Raising achievement test scores of early elementary school students through comprehensive school counseling programs. *Professional School Counseling*, 6(5), 350-364.

Cook, J.B. & Kaffenberger, C.J. (2003). Solution shop: A solution-focused counseling and study skills program for middle school. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(2), 116-123.

Lee, R.S. (1993). Effects of classroom guidance on student achievement. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 27, 163-171.

Boutwell, D.A., & Myrick, R.D. (1992). The go for it club. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 27, 65-72.

Hadley, H.R. (1988). Improving reading scores through a self-esteem prevention program. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 22, 248-252.

Children who are experiencing family problems report being helped by school counselors.

Rose, C.C. & Rose, S.D. (1992). Family change groups for the early age child. *Special Services in the Schools*, 6, 113-127.

Omizo, M.M. & Omizo, S.A. (1988). The effects of participation in group counseling sessions on self-esteem and locus of control among adolescents from divorced families. *The School Counselor*, 36, 54-60.

School counselors help connect the family as a whole to the educational process.

Bemak, F. & Cornely, L. (2002). The SAFI model as a critical link between marginalized families and schools: A literature review and strategies for school counselors. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80(3), 322-331.

School counseling programs designed to teach students peer meditation skills are highly effective. In fact, studies show that students trained in peer mediation use these skills in other settings (e.g., at home).

Tobias, A.K. & Myrick, R.D. (1999). A peer facilitator-led intervention with middle school problem-behavior students. *Professional School Counseling*, 3:1, 27-33. Myrick, R.D. & Morey, R.E., Miller, C.D., Rosen, L.A., & Fulton, R. (1993). High school peer counseling: The relationship between student satisfaction and peer counselors style of helping. *The School Counselor*, 40, 293-300.

Sorensen, D.L. (1992). *Helping skills for middle school students*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

Diver-Stammes, A.C. (1991). Assessing the effectiveness of an inner-city high school peer counseling program. *Urban Education*, 26, 269-284.

Robinson, S.E., Morrow, S., Kigin, T. & Lindeman, M. (1991). Peer counselors in a high school setting: Evaluation of training and impact on students. *The School Counselor*, 39, 35-40.

School counseling programs have significant influence on aggressive and hostile behaviors as well as discipline problems.

Baker, S. B., & Gerler, E. R. (2001). Counseling in schools. In D. C. Locke, J. E. Myers, and E. L. Herr (Eds.), *The Handbook of Counseling*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Omizo, M.M., Hershberger, J.M., & Omizo, S.A. (1988). Teaching children to cope with anger. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 22, 241-245.

Health and mental health care services can play an important role in violence prevention at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), including preventing problem behaviors from developing; identifying and serving specific, at-risk populations; and reducing the deleterious effects of violence on victims and witnesses.

Schaefer-Schiumpo, K. & Ginsberg, A.P. (2003). The effectiveness of the warning signs program in educating youth about violence prevention: A study with urban high school students. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(1), 1-8.

Hermann, M.A. & Finn, A. (2002). An ethical and legal perspective on the role of school counselors in preventing violence in schools, *Professional School Counseling*, 6(1), 46-54. *Youth and Violence*. Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence, December 2000. Available on the Internet at <http://www.ama-assn.org/violence>.

School counselors were effective in reducing victimization by assisting victimized children, reducing bullying behaviors and modifying the school climate and structure.

Hanish, L.D. & Guerra, N.G. (2000). Children who get victimized at school: What is known? What can be done? *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 113-119.

Research indicates that school counselors are effective in teaching social skills.

Verduyn, C.M., Lord, W., & Forrest, G.C. (1990). Social skills training in schools: An evaluation study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 13, 3-16.

School counselors are very effective in assisting children in the area of career development.

Lapan, R.T., Tucker, B., Kim, S., & Kosciulek, J.F. (2003). Preparing rural adolescents for post-high school transitions. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81(3), 329-342.

Blackhurst, A.E., Auger, R.W., & Wahl, K.H. (2003). Children's perceptions of vocational preparation requirements. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(2), 58-67.

Student Poll. (2000). Art & Science Group, Inc. 4:2, 1-10. Available on the Internet at www.artsci.com

Peterson, G.W., Long, K.L., & Billups, A. (1999). The effect of three career interventions on educational choices of eighth grade students. *Professional School Counseling*, 3:1, 34-42.

Whiston, S. C., Sexton, T. L., & Lasoff, D. L. (1998). Career-intervention outcome: A replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane (1988). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 45, 150-165.

Mau, W.C., Hitchcock, R., & Calvert, C. (1998). High school students' career plans: The influence of others' expectations. *Professional School Counseling*, 2:2, 161-166.

Child group interventions such as Guidance/Educational, Counseling/Interpersonal Problem-Solving, and Psychotherapy/Personality Reconstruction have shown positive results in the school setting.

Shechtman, Z. (2002). Child group psychotherapy in the school at the threshold of a new millennium. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80(3), 293-299.

School counseling interventions have reported success for helping students reduce test anxiety.

Cheek, J.R., Bradley, L.J., Reynolds, J. & Coy, D. (2002). An intervention for helping elementary students reduce test anxiety. *Professional School Counseling*, 6(2), 162-164.

School counseling interventions have reported success for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Webb, L.D. & Myrick, R.D. (2003). A group counseling intervention for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(2), 108-115.

Schwiebert, V.L., Sealander, K.A., & Dennison, J.L. (2002). Strategies for counselors working with high school students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80(1), 3-10.

Studies show effective counseling programs are based on human development theories. Program content, goals, and interventions should reflect this theoretical foundation. A developmental program is proactive and preventive, helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, self-awareness and attitudes necessary for successful mastery of normal developmental tasks. Developmentally-based programs increase the visibility of the counseling program and ensure that more students are served (Myrick; Shaw & Goodyear). There is also substantial empirical evidence that these programs promote student development and academic success.

Borders, L.D. & Drury, S.M. (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policymakers and practitioners. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70, 487-498.

Myers, J.E., Shoffner, M.F., & Briggs, M.A. (2002). Developmental counseling and therapy: An effective approach to understanding and counseling children. *Professional School Counseling*, 5(3), 194-202.

Myrick, R.D. (1987). *Developmental guidance and counseling: A practical approach*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

Shaw, M.C. & Goodyear, R.K. (1984). Prologue to primary prevention in schools. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 62, 446-447.

School counselors have proven effective in preventing students from committing suicide. The most effective prevention programs start with younger students and portray suicide as a mental health problem, not a dramatic way of ending a life. It is essential that counselors involve the parents of troubled students in the counseling process.

Jones, R. (2001). Suicide Watch: What can you do to stop children from killing themselves? *American School Board Journal*, May, 16-21.

School counselors in collaborative efforts can implement both systemic and programmatic changes in schools and communities to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Standard, R.P., (2003). High school graduation rates in the United States: Implications for the counseling profession. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81(2), 217-221.

Kaufman, P., Klein, S., & Frase, M. (1999). Dropout Rates in the United States, 1997. Statistical Analysis Report. U.S. Department of Education.

Studies on high school attrition indicate that preventive counseling, occurring before students are in crisis, reduces the risk of these students dropping out later.

Hayes, R.L., Nelson, J., Tabin, M., Pearson, G., & Worthy, C. (2002). Using school-wide data to advocate for student success. *Professional School Counseling, 6*(2), 86-95.

Morey, R.E., Miller, C.D., Fulton, R., & Rosen, L.A. (1993). High school peer counseling: The relationship between student satisfaction and peer counselors' style of helping. *The School Counselor, 40*, 293-300.

Praport, H. (1993). Reducing high school attrition: Group counseling can help. *The School Counselor, 40*(4), 309-311.

Wirth-Bond, S., Coyne, A., & Adams, M. (1991). A school counseling program that reduces dropout rates. *The School Counselor, 39*, 131-137.

Bearden, L.J., Spencer, W.A., & Moracco, J.C. (1989). A study of high school dropouts. *The School Counselor, 27*, 113-120.

Counseling decreases classroom disturbances. Counseling services support teachers in the classroom and enable teachers to provide quality instruction designed to assist students in achieving high standards. Students in schools that provide counseling services indicated that their classes were less likely to be interrupted by other students, and that their peers behaved better in school.

Mullis, F. & Otwell, P. (1997). Counselor accountability: A study of counselor effects on academic achievement and student behaviors *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal, 1*:4, 4-12.

Watts, V. & Thomas, B. (1997). Proving that counseling programs do count: The counseling accountability. *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal, 1*:4, 1-3.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 75*, 292-302.

Sutton, J.M. & Fall, M. (1995). The relationship of school climate factors to counselor self-efficacy. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 73* 331-336.