School Counseling.

Not Your Parent’s Guidance Counselor

Katherine Pastor
What do school counselors “really” do?
Why do we need school counselors?
What’s the big deal about a “title”, does it really matter if I call you a “Guidance Counselor”?

Let’s Explore
What Does The Media Portray
John Cena Becomes a Guidance Counselor for High Schoolers
Sheldon decides to go to college
Snicker’s Commercial
truTV’s Those Who Can’t
Do you remember your school counselor?

- What did you notice in the clips?
- Where there consistent themes?
- How was the guidance counselor portrayed?
- Does how a profession is portrayed in the media matter?
- Do we treat all education professions with respect?

Think back on your life, which educator comes to mind as someone who made a positive influence?
Titles

Do Matter
GUIDANCE COUNSELORS OR SCHOOL COUNSELORS: 
HOW THE NAME OF THE PROFESSION INFLUENCES PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE

FOUNDATION OF THE RESEARCH

IN 1990, ASCA issued an official statement calling on the profession to change the title to “school counselor” rather than the previous title of “guidance counselor.”

WHY THE TITLE CHANGE?
The title “guidance counselor” no longer encompassed the broad scope of work that was done by the professionals in the school.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE
Researchers sought to determine if there were significant differences on a measure of perceived competence of school counselors based on job title. About half the participants completed a version of a research survey that used the term “guidance counselor” and half completed a version of a research survey that used the term “school counselor.”

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?
Participants who completed the surveys that used the term “guidance counselor” were statistically significantly less likely to believe individuals with that job title were able to perform the 25 tasks on the survey. The results of this study show the following:

THE TITLE MATTERS:
- Using “guidance counselor” versus “school counselor” has an impact on the perceived competence of school counselors.
- School counselors who received the survey using the term “guidance counselor” were statistically significantly more likely to assign lower scores on the survey than their peers who received the version with the term “school counselor.”
- School counselors who saw the term “guidance counselor” used to describe school counselors’ standards and competencies were less likely to believe school counselors were able to perform the tasks of a data-informed comprehensive school counseling program.
- School counselors perceived that guidance counselors are less competent to complete the job roles and tasks described within the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies and CACREP standards.
- School counselors with every level of experience were equally affected by the survey terminology. The years of experience of the school counselor did not affect the perceptions of competence.

Because titles are used to describe the nature of the work of the profession, when the terms “guidance counselor” and “school counselor” are used interchangeably, when in fact they are not interchangeable, this results in confusion around the nature of the work completed by school counselors.

When school counselors use “guidance counselor” to describe the work they do, it significantly influences their own perception of the competence of members of their profession in a negative way.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?
1. Advocate to ensure the use of the title “school counselor” in all areas of your work by all educational stakeholders.
2. Use your title as a form of social capital to advance the recognition and legitimacy of the profession and to ensure all students receive data-informed comprehensive school counseling programming.
3. Adopt the title “school counselor” on all communication media, including business cards, door plaques, and digital communication such as email signatures, social media and websites.

SOURCE: “Guidance Counselors or School Counselors: How the Name of the Profession Influences Perceptions of Competence” (Professional School Counseling, Vol. 22, Issue 1). Authors: Brett Zyromski, Ph.D., Tyler D. Hudson, M.A., Emily Baker, M.A., and Darcy Haag Granello, Ph.D. The Ohio State University. This study used a sample of 276 school counselors who were recruited for participation at a 2018 state counseling association conference in Ohio.
Why

School Counseling
I am thankful for our forefathers in our profession... the guidance counselors — many of us cringe at those words but those teachers received some classes to help students get to college. Fast forward to current days and school counselors receive preparation to not only address the post secondary options for students but also emotional support and training for academic supports. Why do I love my job? I get to use my training for all these areas for students every day. I get to collaborate with staff to do what is best for students. And I get to connect with the best counselors all over the country that make me a better counselor.

Matthew McClain: Fort Morgan High School, CO
Titles or "names" in general are so important because they are tied to IDENTITY. Identity is tied to PURPOSE. Our purpose as school counselors is so much more than providing "guidance." The work we do is rigorous, comprehensive, and for ALL kids in the entire school system. We are system (school) change agents, providing prevention, cultural interventions, and 1:1 and group counseling.

Renee Parker Schoening, Elementary School Counselor, MT
“School counselors are uniquely positioned to proactively transform generational destinies by the work they do with students, staff, and their community.”

"Evolving from the title GC to SC sets the expectations and captures the essences of the work we do to proactively contribute to students and staff exceeding desired outcomes. The title is critically important because we can no longer afford to live in the past knowing what is needed in the days ahead."

Edward Reed, Robert Frost Middle School, MD
Before I became a school counselor I was a counselor in an adult men’s correctional facility. The majority of my caseload were gang members. And although they were very intelligent, talented, charismatic, and leaders a high majority of them had not completed high school because they didn’t feel like they belonged at school, they didn’t connect to an adult at school and they didn’t see education as a path for success themselves. So I became a school counselor to connect with students so I can connect them to their education.

*Laura Ross, Five Forks Middle School, GA*
What do School Counselors do?
School counselors are educators. In my roots as a teacher, it became clear that I wanted to help students beyond their academic needs and the best way to assist them beyond academics, in success readiness and social/emotional, with their academic needs is as a school counselor. The title school counselor is important to me because guidance indicates that I’m going to tell you what you need to do. As a school counselor, I don’t want to tell you, I want you to tell me and together we’ll find the path to that goal. Additionally, school counselor refers to all things we work with in school, not just success readiness as the term guidance historically relates to, but academic and SEL together with success readiness to support the whole child.

*Geoff Heckman, Platt County High School, MO*
Guidance is a part of what we do but it doesn’t define us, just as addressing the academic, social emotional, and career needs of all students are parts of what we do. As “School” Counselors we now have the training and skills to meet the needs of the whole child.

*Kris Owen, Ridgeview STEM Junior High, OH*
School counselors serve as an integral player on the educational team by positively supporting student outcomes in every area - academics, social-emotional, and career development. When SCs are given the support to serve as proactive change Agents, they have the capacity to set up systems that are centered on equity and access to address the needs of ALL students in ALL areas of development.

*Terri Tchorzynski, Calhoun Area Career Center, MI*
WHAT DOES A SCHOOL COUNSELOR DO?

CORE CURRICULUM
- Evaluate school and student data and outcomes
- Develop core curriculum to address desired student competencies
- Deliver curriculum systematically through classroom lessons in cooperation with classroom teachers

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING
- Help students evaluate their own interests, abilities, and skills
- Help students develop personal goals
- Help students create plans for their futures

RESPONSIVE SERVICES
- Individual counseling
- Small group counseling
- Crisis response services

INDIRECT SERVICES
- Make referrals for outside counseling or assistance
- Consult with parents and teachers to share effective strategies that support students
- Collaborate with parents, professionals, and community members to support student success

AND SO MUCH MORE!
“Educate and inform the whole mass of the people... They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.”

Thomas Jefferson
SCHOOL COUNSELORS: BUILDING BETTER HUMANS