Meeting the Academic, Career and Personal/Social Needs of Missouri Students in the 21st Century

The Need

In the 21st century, the United States and the state of Missouri continue to undergo changes industrially, occupationally, socially and economically. These changes are creating challenges for students in Missouri. A rapidly changing work world and labor force; violence in homes, schools and communities; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples of these challenges. These challenges are real and they are having substantial impact on the personal/social, career and academic development of students.

A Response

Comprehensive school guidance programs in Missouri, implemented by certified, professional school counselors, in collaboration with parents, teachers and administrators, are effective in assisting students to respond to these and similar challenges. Empirical research conducted in the state of Missouri since the 1990’s has shown that when certified, professional school counselors have the time, the resources and the structure of a comprehensive guidance program to work in, they contribute to positive student academic and career development as well as the development of positive and safe learning climates in schools.

- Students (22,964) in 236 small, medium and large size high schools in Missouri with more fully implemented guidance programs as judged by school counselors reported that:
  - they had earned higher grades.
  - their education was better preparing them for the future.
  - their schools had a more positive climate (Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997).

- When middle school classroom teachers in Missouri (4868) in 184 small, medium and large size middle schools rated guidance programs in their schools as more fully implemented, seventh graders (22,601) in these schools reported that:
  - they earned higher grades.
  - school was more relevant for them.
  - they had positive relationships with teachers.
  - they were more satisfied with their education.
  - they felt safer in school (Lapan, Gysbers & Petroski, 2001).

- When school counselors in Missouri work in schools that have more fully implemented guidance programs, they make significant contributions to overall student success including student academic achievement.
  - Students had higher 10th grade MAP mathematics scores.
  - Students had higher 11th grade MAP communication arts scores.
  - More students are likely to attend school.
  - Fewer students have discipline problems.
  - Fewer students receive out-of-school suspensions (Lapan, Gysbers & Kayson, 2006).

This brief has been provided by the Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA). For more information on this topic, contact MSCA at 1.800.763.MSCA (6722).
Information and Consultation
As research has documented, professional school counselors in Missouri have substantial expertise in assisting students and their parents respond to the challenges students face growing up in the worlds of today and tomorrow. Based on this expertise, the Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA), representing professional school counselors in Missouri, offers state legislators and policy makers research-based information and consultation on issues related to the academic, career and personal/social development of students. For additional information, please contact:

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References

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