



# COUNSELING AND MENTORING DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RE-ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

## BEST PRACTICES IN COUNSELING

Intentionally-created counseling programs that use data-driven, systemic programming as their foundation, result in improved student achievement. These enhanced school based counseling programs are proven effective in improving graduation rates and increasing the number of students who are prepared for, applying to, and continuing into postsecondary education.

School counselors, with their training in effective communication and collaboration, can play critical roles in developing and coordinating responsive programs to address student needs including: the role of mentor, advocate, teacher and guide.

The work that professional school counselors provide requires:

- buy-in and support from school and district leaders as well as parents and families
- focused professional development for teams of counselors
- time for comprehensive and sequential programs to be fully implemented

## MENTORING OVERVIEW

Highly effective mentoring programs provide structures to develop and maintain relationships between a less experienced individual (mentee or protégé) and a more experienced individual (mentor). This two-way, mutually beneficial relationship generally includes psychosocial mentoring, role modeling, and coaching. Mentoring follows a somewhat structured process, including: structures, protocols, and goals regarding skill development.

Effective school-based mentoring programs can also have a powerfully positive effect on students personally and academically. Mentoring helps students grow, develop and connect to social and future professional opportunities. Above all, mentors show their mentees they matter.

## WHY FOCUS ON EFFECTIVE COUNSELING AND MENTORING?

Efforts in dropout prevention should include counselors and community partnerships to more effectively support students. Such efforts might include family counseling, parent workshops, community programs offered after school,

### Colorado Facts and Figures for Counseling and Mentoring

- The Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) began in 2008 and has funded more than 220 school counselors in 255 schools across the state.
- SCCGP schools increased their matriculation rates by approximately 13% with the first year of funding and were able to maintain that increase over the next two years.

**In 2009**, Colorado State Legislature passed **Senate Bill 09-256**

Colorado State Board of Education set expectations for schools and districts across Colorado to provide access to a process for all 9-12 graders to create and manage an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP).

ICAP processes require school counselors to play a more intentional role in career and academic planning beyond high school.



on weekends, or during the summer and coordinated efforts to provide mentors, role models, or advocates.

## RECOMMENDED PRACTICES IN COUNSELING AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

Highly effective Professional School Counseling programs and services look very different today than they did ten years ago.

National best practices include: working with students in the Academic, College and Career goal setting, and Personal-Social domains through an intentionally-created, data-driven, systemic program of services.

Examples of these include:

- Support students and their families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during their senior year of high school.
- Assign an adult advocate or mentor within the school community to students who need individualized support.
- Integrate school counseling programs across middle and high schools to support alignment for student supports and services.
- Include school counselors in school wide student support efforts utilizing comprehensive guidance curricula.
- Utilize data and nurture relationships between teachers and counselors to better support students with necessary interventions - particularly with freshman in high school.
- Support freshman orientation introducing counselors to students and families as a supportive adult in the school environment.
- Plan and lead parent training sessions and educate stakeholders regarding effective dropout prevention practices, or about student concerns.
- Offer professional development activities for teachers and other staff regarding risk factors for dropping out; promising strategies for engaging and re-engaging students; and effective ways of developing positive school climates.
- Establish and nurture community partnerships.

## Counseling and Mentoring References and Materials:

[Dropout Prevention Best Practice Guide References](#)

[Dropout Prevention Resources](#)

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/interventionsandsupport\\_enhancedcounselingandmentoring](http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/interventionsandsupport_enhancedcounselingandmentoring)