

Other Service Providers Interacting Within the School Counseling Program Scope

By preparation and credentials professional school counselors bring a unique and essential perspective and skill set to the academic, career, and personal/social development of students unlike that provided by any other position or role within the school or within the community. The Kansas School Counselor Association (KSCA) recognizes that student needs can best be met through a continuum of services through cooperative and collaborative efforts of professionals (school psychology, school nursing, and school social work) who work within their own sphere of training, licensure, and school role. In some cases non-school providers also interact within the school setting. However, cooperative professional relationships can exist only where the scope of practice, functional boundaries, and duties of each professional working with students is clearly defined and consistently followed. The services to be performed by other professionals should never be allowed to compete with, compromise, supplant, or be considered in lieu of services appropriate for delivery by a licensed professional school counselor as identified in the Kansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program (KSDE, 2009) and the Curricular Standards for School Counseling (KS BOE, 2006). These documents define and structure the role of the professional school counselor as delivering academic, career, and personal-social counseling and developmental services to all students. In following comprehensive program delivery models, job descriptions, and ethical standards, counseling concerns are initially assessed by the professional school counselor: 1) to determine the need for delivery of additional counseling services within the scope of the program; 2) to determine if a need exists beyond the scope of services available through the school counseling program, and; 3) determine an appropriate referral resource internally or outside the system in the community when needs exceed program scope or time available. Professional school counselors are following ethical standards when they initiate conversations with other professionals, administrators, teachers/staff, or local boards of education with respect to a) the role of the school counselor as identified by the profession, b) establishing clear guidelines and boundaries for scope of practice, and c) ensuring the protocol for referral to another professional is followed. Staff, parents, and students need to be informed of each professional's role and scope of practice limits as identified by their own profession. Professional school counselors must continue to advocate as needed if the work of others providing services to students is not being limited to the scope of that person's training and expertise or when protocol is not being followed.

Employment in Counseling Roles/Positions in Kansas Schools. KSDE license endorsements demonstrate that counseling positions within a school are to be filled with credentialed school counselors (either already licensed and endorsed as a school counselor or enrolled in a master's degree program in school counseling leading to state licensure and endorsement as a school counselor). KSCA also stands firm in the conviction that the professional preparation, perspective, and roles to be performed by those from other fields are not in any way interchangeable with the preparation, perspective, and role of the professional school counselor. As such they should not be considered for employment in a counseling position nor be hired to function in that role in lieu of the services of a credentialed school counselor. Further, ethical practice places a requirement on professionals in every field to function only within one's scope of training and expertise and thus to accept only those positions for which they are qualified. As such, professionals who have preparation only in another field are not qualified for employment in a counseling profession role or position without additional preparation in school counseling.