



# School Counselors: What are they worth?

Washington state law RCW 28A.410.043 calls for school counselors to implement comprehensive school counseling.

*But why are school counselors and comprehensive school counseling important?*

## Successful Graduation means Savings for Everyone

When school counselors use comprehensive school counseling, they work with all students. This means all students K-12 receiving academic, social/emotional and career guidance. High school dropouts, on average, earn \$9200 less per year than HS graduates (about \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates) and are over three times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates – twice as likely to slip into poverty. Furthermore, a dropout is more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as a person with at least a HS diploma. The lifetime cost to the nation for each youth who drops out of school and later moves into a life of crime ranges from \$1.7 to \$2.3 million<sup>1</sup>.

*Dropout prevention doesn't wait until sophomore year; it begins in kindergarten when student excitement and interest are arguably at their highest!*

## Get the Most for Your Money

With comprehensive counseling, school counselors work with and impact all students. Not just the ones failing or hurting the most. When school counselors can work with kids and not be bogged down with non-counseling duties (filing, test-proctoring, lunch room duty, etc.) real results can be seen in key student outcomes<sup>2</sup>. This means instead of hiring or creating new positions, just allowing school counselors to implement a comprehensive program can make a difference.

*School counselors are the ones already there, with the Masters-level training and experience to do the job!*

## Based on Research

Comprehensive counseling isn't the latest "fad" or "craze" in education. It's based on National Standards with a research foundation. The continually growing body of research shows how comprehensive counseling impacts key outcomes for all students (academics, attendance, and discipline).

So what does the research say?

- When school counselors have more reasonable caseloads, student discipline incidents decrease<sup>3</sup>.
- A more fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program means greater student achievement and less discipline<sup>2</sup>.
- Comprehensive school counseling not only provides a systemic program, but actively utilizes data to evaluate program direction and effectiveness. School counselors are transparent and accountable<sup>4</sup>.

## References

<sup>1</sup>"The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts", Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison; Gates Foundation, March 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Carey, J., Dimmitt, C., Harrington, K., Lapan, R. (2010).

<sup>3</sup>Carrell, S. & Carrell, S. (2006). Do Lower Student-to-Counselor Ratios Reduce School Disciplinary Problems? *Contributions to Economic Analysis & Policy*: Vol. 5: Iss. 1, Article 11.

<sup>4</sup>ASCA National Model, American School Counselor Association.

**Want more research? Visit the WCSA website for examples and to contact someone at [wa-schoolcounselor.org](http://wa-schoolcounselor.org)**