



SECTION V

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A school district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program is intended to meet the needs of all students including students with disabilities as identified by the Missouri's State Plan for Special Education as well as students with disabilities as identified by Section 504 of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

Personnel Standards for Special Education Funded Positions

To achieve the goals of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program at the local level, as specified by the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), it is necessary to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. School counselors are not responsible for special education process coordination.

The Missouri State Plan for Special Education defines personnel standards for those positions that provide special education support services. These personnel standards outline the titles, responsibilities, educational qualifications, and appropriate Missouri licensure or certification requirements for the personnel providing funded special education and related services for students with disabilities.

School counselors may be partially funded by special education to provide certain services not routinely offered to the entire school population. It is the responsibility of the school district to review applicable practice acts, codes of ethics, and official transcripts to determine if their school counselors are qualified to deliver specific special education services.

The portion of time that the school counselor spends delivering services paid for by special education funding cannot be counted toward the MSIP FTE personnel requirements for school counselors. For example, if a school counselor position is funded 30% with state funds for special education services and 70% with local district funds, the school district can only count .7 FTE toward meeting the school counselor personnel requirements of MSIP.

For further information regarding funding for special education personnel, contact the [Special Education Funds Management Division](#) of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

School Counselors' Responsibilities with Students with Disabilities within the District Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program

The school counselor has the responsibility to provide the district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program to all students, including students with disabilities. It is incumbent upon the school counselor to adapt as needed the activities and services provided in the comprehensive guidance and counseling program to meet the needs of all students, including those with IEPs. Examples of such adaptations may include such activities as serving on the IEP team for special needs students on a school counselors caseload as part of the individual planning process, or adapting and delivering guidance lessons to self-contained classroom (in collaboration and partnership with the special needs teachers).

If a school counselor is asked to provide services for special education students outside of the scope of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, partial funding for that school counselor's position should be paid for by special education funds (Exceptional Pupil Aid). In addition, the time that the school counselor spends delivering special education services should not be counted toward the personnel ratios required for fully implementing the district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program for all students.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the School counselor's role in cognitive testing?

Cognitive testing is not part of comprehensive guidance and counseling program. It is not the school counselor's role to administer tests of cognitive abilities. Missouri state certification requirements for school counselors do not require a class in administration of individual intelligence tests. Qualifications for test administration are determined by the test publishers and are specified in test administration manuals. Districts should review applicable practice acts, codes of ethics, and individuals' official transcripts to determine if they are qualified to provide specific services.

What is the role of the school counselor in Care Teams/Teacher-Support Teams?

Coordinating and facilitating Care Teams/Teacher-Support Teams is not the sole responsibility of the school counselor. Any educational professional can convene Care Teams/Teacher-Support Teams, including school counselors. The local school district determines the school counselor's role in these teams. If a school counselor is involved in coordinating/facilitating Care Teams/Teacher-Support Teams for students other than those on his/her caseload, the school counselor should categorize this work as non-guidance and counseling unless it is deemed a fair-share responsibility in which all faculty have some responsibility. Then it could be considered an activity under system support.

What can be done to assist school counselors who have special education responsibilities in fully implementing the comprehensive guidance and counseling program?

The school counselor's primary responsibility is to fully implement the district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program to all the students within the district. The Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) gives clear guidelines on the number of school counselor FTEs that a school must have.



If a school counselor's duties include special education responsibilities, a portion of the school counselor's salary should be paid for by special education funds. The amount of time the counselor spends with special education responsibilities will then be documented in Core Data and should be consistent with the amount of time actually spent with special education responsibilities. Additionally, the portion of school counselors' time that is funded by special education cannot be counted toward the MSIP FTE personnel requirements to fully implement the district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program.

What is the school counselor's role in providing counseling services as a related service on IEPs?

The Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program does not include on-going counseling/therapy services to students. Many districts do not approve of school counselors administering therapy to students, and many school counselors are not licensed to provide such services. It is the responsibility of the school district to review the school counselor's license, applicable practice acts, codes of ethics, and official transcripts, as well as district procedures, before directing a school counselor to provide on-going, long-term counseling services.

If a school counselor's duties include special education counseling responsibilities, a portion of the school counselor's salary should be paid for by special education funds. The amount of time the counselor spends with special education responsibilities will then be documented in Core Data and should be consistent with the amount of time actually spent with special education responsibilities. Additionally, the portion of school counselors' time that is funded by special education cannot be counted toward the MSIP FTE personnel requirements to fully implement the district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program.

Does a school counselor always have to be a member of the eligibility staffing team?

No. IDEA and the Missouri State Plan for Special Education requires that, upon completing the administration of tests and other evaluation materials, a group of qualified professionals, plus the child's parents/guardians, must determine whether the child is/is not disabled. The school counselors are not specifically mentioned as members of this team, but may be included.

Does a school counselor always have to be a member of an IEP team?

No. The Missouri State Plan for Special Education specifies that the IEP team for each child with a disability must include:

- The parents/guardians of the child
- The child, beginning at age 14, or younger, if appropriate
- At least one regular education teacher who is or may be responsible for implementing a portion of the IEP of the child
- At least one special education teacher of the child or, if appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child
- A representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provisions of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general curriculum, is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency and is able to commit the resources of the agency.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results. This role may also be covered by any other member of the team, with the exception of the parents/guardians and/or child



- At the discretion of the parent/guardian or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate. The determination of the knowledge or special expertise of any individual shall be made by the party (parents/guardians or public agency) who invited the individual to be a member of the IEP team.

Can school counselors be case managers for students with disabilities?

Case managers should be certified in special education as they are responsible for writing the IEP. If school counselors had special education certification, they could serve as case managers. If a school counselor's duties include such special education responsibilities, a portion of the school counselor's salary should be paid for by special education funds. The amount of time school counselors spend with special education responsibilities will then be documented in Core Data and should be consistent with the amount of time actually spent with special education responsibilities. Additionally, the portion of school counselors' time that is funded by special education cannot be counted toward the recommended school counselors student/ratio needed to fully implement the district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program. For example, if an individual is paid $\frac{1}{2}$ time for special education services and $\frac{1}{2}$ time for guidance and counseling, that individual would be considered a half-time school counselor.