

SECTION VIII

INTEGRATED SERVICES: THE COLLABORATIVE WORK OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS, AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Schools are designed for learning. There is a direct and obvious correlation between a person's ability to learn and the status of their mental health. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 5% of children between the ages of 4 and 17 demonstrate mental health issues. That translates to 45,000 Missouri school aged children. There is a great need for coordinated mental health services in our schools today.

[Appendix O](#) is designed to more clearly define the roles of school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers. These roles are not interchangeable as there are unique capabilities and responsibilities of each group as well as shared duties and responsibilities that are common to all three groups. The template in [Appendix O](#) can serve as a springboard for conversation to clarify roles. The examples provided within the appendix are exemplary but not exhaustive. Each school must define its unique organizational design based on local context, personnel and skill sets. Clearly defined role and job definitions are vital in developing common understanding, working effectively together and in educating others.

The ultimate goal of school mental health providers is to improve the conditions for learning. Providing both prevention and intervention services at all three levels of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (See [Appendix P](#)) promotes effective teaching and learning while collaborating with teachers and school staff to ensure that students receive high quality instruction. Simply stated, schools cannot be effective without a healthy and supportive culture and students cannot be productive learners without viable mental health dispositions.

Professional School Counselors hold responsibility to fully implement their Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program addressing the academic, personal/social, and career development of all students through the delivery of guidance and counseling curriculum, individual student planning, and responsive services along with system support activities. They are the primary school mental health providers as they deliver services to all students and families in every school as well as serve as the point of contact for Social Work and School Psychological Services. School Counselors are engaged in every facet of school and serve as the first line in each tier of interventions and consultations.

School Psychologists work with students with advanced educational and psychological challenges. School Psychologists focus on assessment, diagnosis, and treatment plans for more complex situations covering the entire spectrum of emotional, functional, and learning barriers, primarily in Tiers 2 and 3. Serving as consultants for educators and parents while supporting high needs students, these providers are a critical source of technical information and guidance for school personnel. School Psychologists typically serve as consultants for multiple schools.

School Social Workers are an increasingly common and critical component to student support services. School Social Workers fill a unique niche in the school setting as they conduct psycho-social



evaluations and provide mental health services for a targeted number of students with more notable emotional and behavior barriers to learning, typically Tiers 2 and 3 interventions. School Social Workers work with students, parents and educators providing consultation and interventions concerning home, school and community factors to improve student's school functioning.