

**Wisconsin Legislative Children's Caucus**

**Wisconsin  
School Counselor Association**



# Wisconsin School Counselor Association

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**MSSW, MSE**

**WSCA  
Executive Director**

Worked 15+ years as a school counselor and school social worker, the majority of the time with the Madison School District.

Trained as a Clinical Social Worker in addition to a school counselor.

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10+ years as a school counselor primarily serving rural Wisconsin high schools.

Currently a school counselor at Verona Area High School.

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15+ years as a school counselor in rural and suburban schools. Currently an Elementary Counselor in the Hudson School District.

2021 National School Counselor of the Year Finalist.

# WISCONSIN SCHOOL COUNSELORS

## ◆ Education

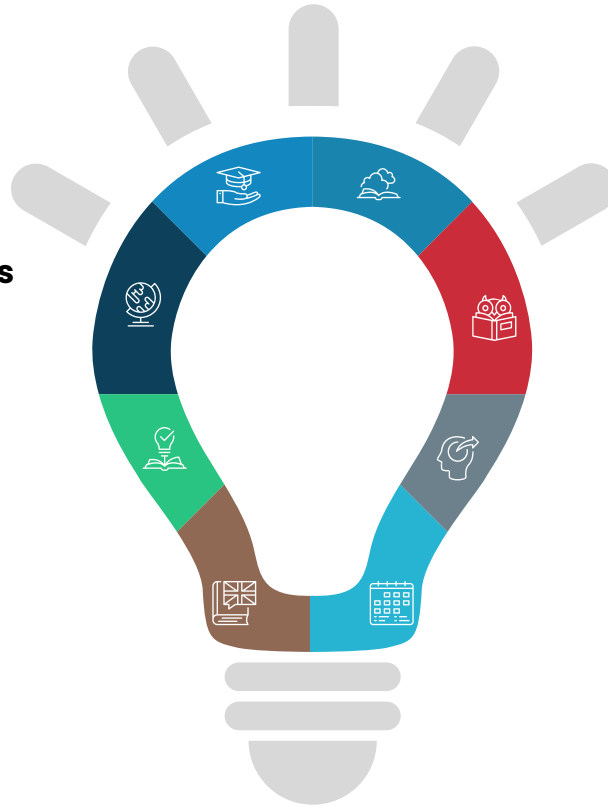
School Counselors have a Masters Degree. WI programs require 48-64 credits. School Counselors are trained in mental health alongside LPC's.

## ◆ Where are School Counselors

School Counselors are employed in 99% of public schools in Wisconsin. Information on private schools is not available. WSCA supports ALL school counselors.

## ◆ School Counseling Program

School Counselors deliver a comprehensive program that serves ALL students. They use academic, attendance and discipline data to support students achieving their academic potential. The school counseling program is developed so all students will be proficient in the Mindsets and Behaviors by high school graduation to successfully transition to their post high school plans.



## ◆ School Counseling Ethics

School counselors are held accountable to professional ethics specifically for the school counseling profession.

## ◆ School Counseling Professional Standards

School counselors have professional standards that outline the services they provide to students.

## ◆ School Counselor Role

School Counselors serve students K-12 in the domains of academic, career and social/emotional support. The recommended ratio of school counselor to student is 250:1. School counselors are not therapists but provide short term solution focused counseling and refer out to community organization for more <sup>3</sup> intensive mental health needs.

# What are school counselors seeing with students?

## The last normal school year

...for students in...

Grade 7

Grade 6

Grade 5

Grade 4

Grade 3

Grade 2

Grade 1

Kindergarten

was

Grade 4

Grade 3

Grade 2

Grade 1

Kindergarten

never

never

never

# What are school counselors seeing with students?

## Struggles with managing emotions

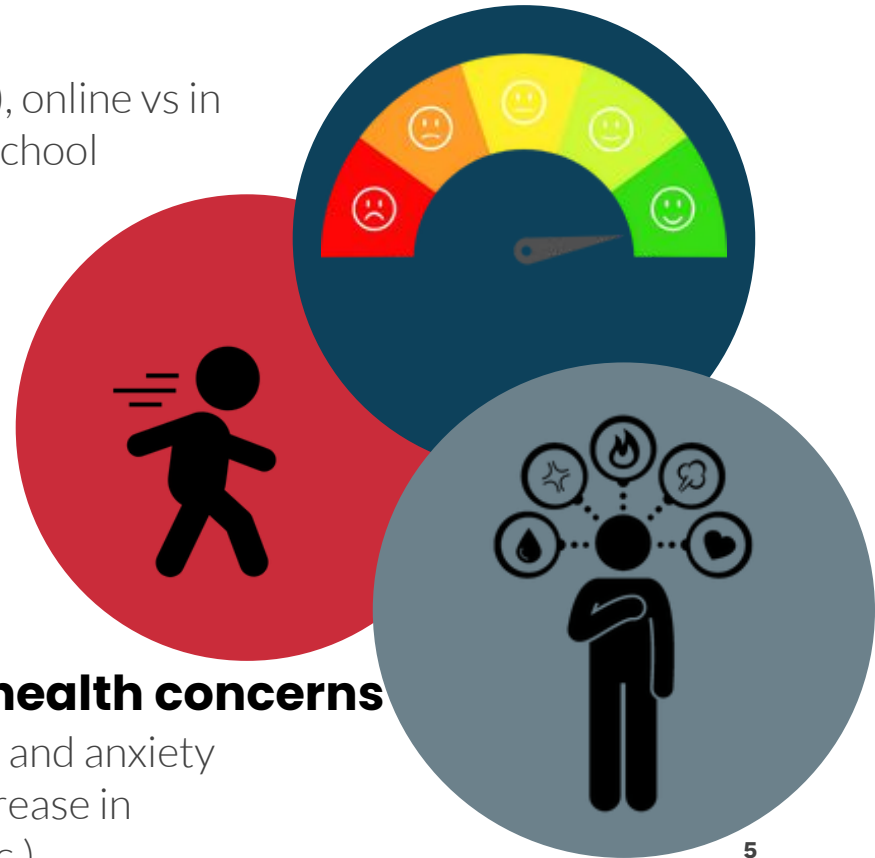
Across all levels, district types (rural, urban, small town), online vs in person in 2020-21, similar stories are being shared by school counselors.

## Demonstrating safe school behaviors

Increase in students having a hard time following school routines and expected school behaviors. Examples include students leaving classrooms without permission, not following routine classroom behaviors (materials ready to start lessons, etc.),

## Increased need and intensity of mental health concerns

School counselors are reporting increases in depression and anxiety across all levels. Along with greater need, there is an increase in intensity (self harm, suicidal ideation, risky behaviors, etc.)



# What are school counselors doing?

## Universal Classroom Lessons

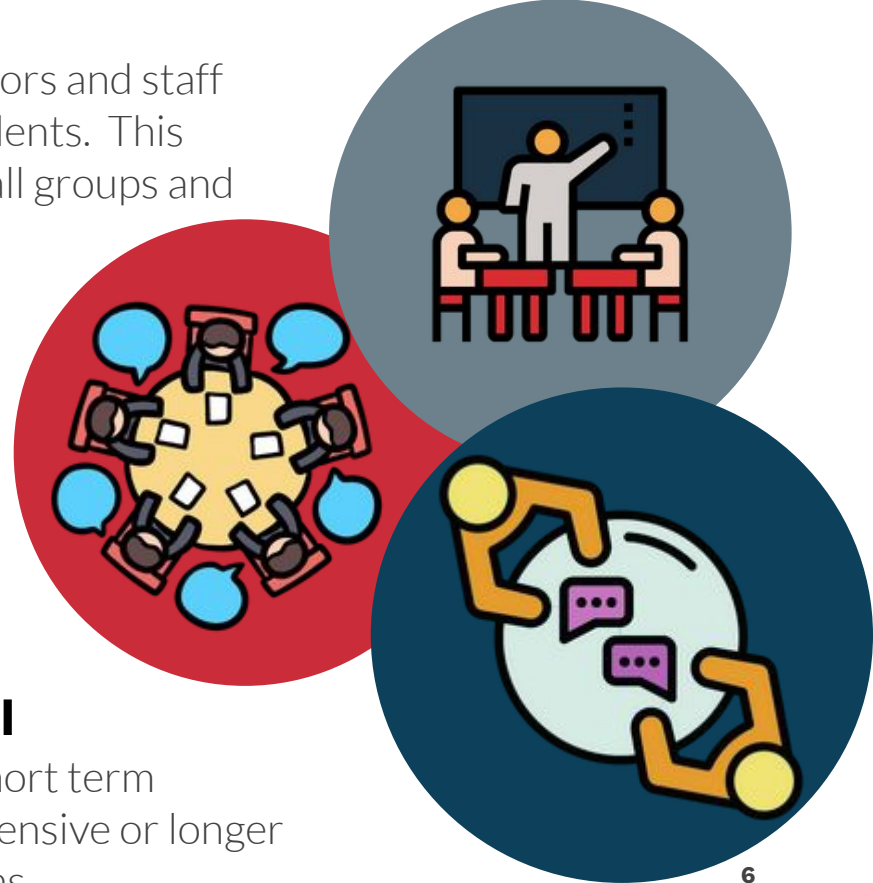
School counselors work collaboratively with administrators and staff to identify needs and instruction that will benefit all students. This also serves as a foundation for when counselors run small groups and meet individually with students.

## Small Groups

Students are identified as needing additional support using school data. This data is collected in many different ways based on the unique needs of each school. Groups are short term and psycho-educational in nature.

## Individual Support & Community Referral

School counselors meet with students individually for short term solution focused counseling. Students needing more intensive or longer term counseling are referred to community organizations.



# What are some of the challenges?

## TIME

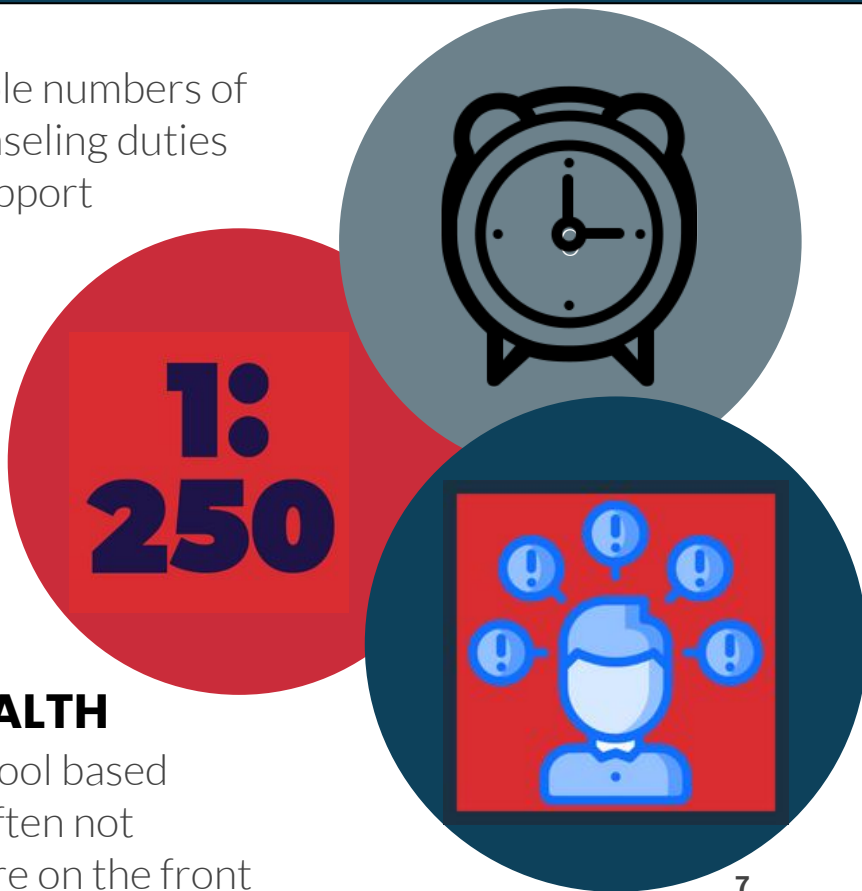
School counselors need the time to work with manageable numbers of students. High counselor to student ratios and non counseling duties make it difficult for school counselors to have time to support students.

## UNDERSTANDING OF ROLE

The role of the school counselor is often misunderstood and/or based on adults own personal experience of their school counselor before the counseling profession made significant shifts in the 1990's.

## LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH

School counselors can serve as leaders in the area of school based mental health based on their training and skills but are often not included in the planning and delivery of services. They are on the front lines every day working with students and families.



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## Thank You

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