

# It's School Counselor, Thank You : Moving Away From Guidance Counselor

August 11, 2011, By [Nathan Grosshandler](http://www.childsworld.com) (<http://www.childsworld.com>)

What's in a name? It may seem that using the titles **school counselor** and **guidance counselor** interchangeably has little influence on one's professional abilities. After all, they really are the same thing...right? The problem with this philosophy is the perceptions of others (students, parents, teachers, administrators) of what a **guidance counselor** is.....and it certainly is not a **school counselor**.

## Perceptions of a Guidance Counselor

A simple Google search provided the following descriptions for guidance counselor:

- A member of the staff of a high school whose job is advising students about course selection, possible careers, preparation for college, etc.
- Guidance counselors have the role of student advisor. They work with students on career and college planning and help them pick their course of study. They monitor and adjust student schedules to best serve the students' academic needs. They may also be involved in intelligence and psychological testing.
- Someone whose job it is to help students with their school or personal problems, or to advise them about making career choices.

The typical perception of a guidance counselor is one of the professional sitting behind the desk all day, meeting with one student after another to discuss issues varying from social and academic problems to career and college advisement. Don't believe me? A quick review of [these](#) cartoons should sway you towards agreement with me.

([http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/g/guidance\\_counselor.asp](http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/g/guidance_counselor.asp))

## Why School Counselor?

Using the title school counselor helps you, and us, escape the perceptions represented above. Professionally, we are much different than these depictions of our occupational ancestors. We thank them for their contribution, but realize it is time to move on. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) puts it best as they define a school counseling as "helping all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development, and career development, ensuring today's students become productive, well adjusted adults of tomorrow." School counselors are not "desk jockeys" replicating the same actions year after year. We provide services individually, in group settings and in classrooms on a regular basis. School counselors are educational professionals who align their actions with school and district goals and are able to collect and analyze data to demonstrate effectiveness.

## Moving towards School Counselor

So, as the new school year begins, I challenge all of us to stay away from the "G" word. Ask yourself:

- How do I sign my letters?
- How do I answer my phone?
- What does the sign on my office say?
- What does my letter head say?
- How am I introduced by colleagues?

If you run into the "G" word this school year, remember, "Its school counselor, thank you!"

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