

children and adolescents generates social value of \$1.62 after one year.

Another critical social contribution of school counselling to consider, in the present global context of humanitarian crises and increased interracial tensions, is that a statewide study of more than 51 different elementary and junior high schools conducted by Dimmitt and Wilkerson (2012), which included schools with high proportions of ethnic minority students, found that school counselling services driven by student needs corresponded to students reporting significantly fewer incidents of hassles between students and fewer incidents of experiencing bullying. Also, students reported a significantly greater sense of belonging and attachment in their schools when school counselling services were provided. A positive and safe school climate can go a long way in promoting students' mental health and well-being, and in enabling them to maximize their learning experiences.

The Bottom Line

School counselling inputs and activities/interventions have strong and significant effects on a number of critical student outcomes, both at the K-12 system level and beyond, including

- academic achievement, especially in core subject areas related to literacy and numeracy;
- behaviour problems and suspension rates;
- problem-solving skills;
- collaboration and helping skills;
- mental wellness (ie, depression and anxiety levels of students);
- attendance;
- degree of tensions/hassles between students and amount of bullying incidents in a school;
- student feelings of attachment/belonging at school;
- high school completion rates;
- drop-out rates;
- career knowledge; and
- college and university admission rates.

These effects have been demonstrated through the multiple rigorous research studies in the areas of education, economics and public policy that were described in this briefing. The skill sets that school counselling helps students to build are

inarguably essential for success in today's knowledge economy and in 21st-century careers. It is particularly important to highlight that financial and statistical calculations indicate that employing additional school counsellors has a more potent effect on student achievement and behaviour than hiring additional teachers, and that the presence of school counsellors in a school actually improves the performance of every teacher in the school by a fair margin in enabling those teachers to maximize their students' learning potential.

The long-term financial savings that school counselling provides over each year and over children's lifetime are in the multimillions, and financial gains of school counselling are a strong testament to its very high social return on investment of \$1.62 for every \$1 invested. Furthermore, the fact that school counselling services have been found to be related to less student victimization/bullying and less interpersonal tensions or hassles between students at school supports the role these services play in creating a safe and welcoming educational climate, which is particularly important at the present time of escalated interracial and interreligious tensions both in Canada and abroad.

References

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