

Counseling at West Park Elementary School



West Park Elementary School Counselor Jenni Hightower

Many parents had their first contact with a SCHOOL COUNSELOR in high school, so to some of you, it may not be clear what a counselor's role is in an elementary school. First and foremost, it is our responsibility to help your child get the best possible education. A good education is not only learning to read, write and do math, but also includes learning good social skills. This means, among other things, learning how to get along with other children, making good decisions, controlling emotions, accepting responsibility, and being aware of personal strengths. Ideally, these skills are taught at home. School counselors supplement the learning from home through individual and small group work as well as classroom instruction. We also help students who are facing particular problems. If your family is experiencing anything out of the ordinary, please let me know. If I am aware of challenges your child might be facing, I may be able to help both your child and you with difficulties that surface. A parent, student, teacher or administrator can refer a student for counseling. You can find me at school throughout the week, through email at hightowj@msd281.org or leave a phone message for me at the West Park office. Please, feel free to contact me anytime.

Here are some reasons a **student** might want to talk to the School Counselor:

- "I'm getting picked on at the bus stop and I don't know what to do about it."
- "My best friend isn't talking to me and it's making me really sad."
- "I want to show you what I just made in art. I'm very proud of it."
- "I'm new to this school, and I'm really scared!"
- "When am I going to get to be in a Friendship Group?"
- "I just want to talk to someone who won't laugh at me."
- "I did a lot better on my last math test, and I'm so excited to tell someone!"
- "Tim, Samantha and I had a problem at recess. Can you help us work it out?"

Here are some reasons **parents** might want to talk to the School Counselor:

- "Sarah doesn't want to go to school in the mornings."
- "I'm concerned because Allen keeps telling me that he doesn't have any friends. Do you think a Friendship Group might help?"
- "We recently had a death in the family, and I'm not sure how to tell my child."
- "Kevin has difficulty going to sleep at night and often has nightmares."
- "My wife and I have been divorced for two years, but we think our kids could really benefit from talking about it with other kids who are going through the same thing. We'd like to refer them for a Family Change Group."
- "Jason seems to get really frustrated doing his homework, and nothing I say seems to help."
- "I just wanted to thank you for inviting my daughter to participate in a New Student Group. She really enjoyed meeting some other kids."