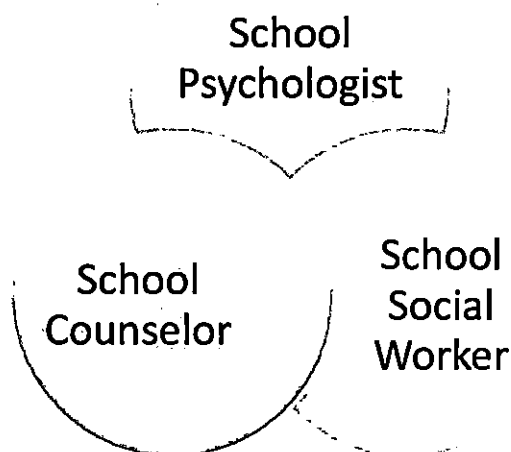


## What are the differences between a School Counselor, Social Worker, and School Psychologist?



The roles of the school counselor, social worker, and school psychologist are similar but different at the same time. The goal is universally the same in that school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists all fall under the mental health umbrella and are looking to improve overall behavior, social-emotional functioning, and academic success with the students with whom they work. There are different expectations in their daily activities and services to students that each role provides, but they are all considered mental health providers in the school setting.

School Counselor	Social Worker	School Psychologist
<b>Recommended Ratio</b>		
The recommended ratio for school counselors to students is <b>1:250</b> .	The recommended ratio for school social workers to student is <b>1:400</b> .	The recommended ratio for school psychologists to students is <b>1:500-700</b> .
<b>Credentials</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's Degree in Educational Counseling (60+ credit hrs) + 700 internship hours.</li> <li>• Pass a licensing exam through the State to obtain a Special Service Provider license.</li> <li>• Renew state license every 5 years + continuing education coursework/professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's Degree in Social Work (30 credit hrs) + 600 internship hours.</li> <li>• Pass a licensing exam through the State to obtain a Special Service Provider license.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most positions require Educational Specialist (MS &amp; Specialist) Degree (60 credit hrs). A doctorate in school psychology (600 hrs) is not required but is looked upon more favorably for employability.</li> <li>• Pass a licensing exam through the State to obtain a Special Service Provider license.</li> </ul>



For more information, please contact Tonette Salazar, CSCA lobbyist at [Tonette@t2salazar.com](mailto:Tonette@t2salazar.com) or 720.231.1425

Credit: Jennifer Quintana, CO School Counselors' Association, Elementary School VP and Counselor at Coronado Hills Elementary School, Adams 12 School District.

School Counselor	Social Worker	School Psychologist
<b>Collaborative Services</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers mental health and behavioral health classroom guidance curriculum lessons to ALL students. (Tier I)</li> <li>• Provides school-wide training on school counselor-related topics such as suicide prevention, behavioral support, mediation, trauma, secondary trauma, restorative practices, etc.</li> <li>• Supports and educates students in the areas of Social-Emotional, Academic, and College/Career Readiness.</li> <li>• Largely focused on delivering services directly to students and collaborating with teachers and parents for classroom and individual courses of action.</li> <li>• Collaborates with other professionals and makes referrals to outside agencies to help with student needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with teachers, administrators, and other school staff regarding the social and emotional needs of students.</li> <li>• Coordinates family, school, and community resources on behalf of the student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborates with educational administrators to influence school district policy and coordinate school and community provider services for students.</li> <li>• Provides mental health or behavioral counseling in collaboration with teachers, administrators, and other school personnel.</li> <li>• Coordinates intervention strategies for management of individuals and school-wide crises.</li> </ul>
<b>Small Group/Individual Services</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides small-group (Tier II) interventions for students who need more support. (6-8 weeks)</li> <li>• Meets individually with students to provide BRIEF solution-focused counseling (Tier III). (Not therapy)</li> <li>• Helps students who are struggling to make positive behavioral choices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides short-term individual and group therapy to selected students (6-8 weeks).</li> <li>• Identify and provide intervention strategies for identified children and their families, including counseling, case management, and crisis intervention.</li> <li>• Assess home, school personal, and community factors that may impact a particular student's learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets with students individually and in small groups according to their individual needs.</li> <li>• Delivers intervention, assessment, and support services to select students.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts suicide and threat assessments according to district policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides special education consultation, case management, process coordination, and related services.</li> <li>• Conducts suicide and threat assessments according to district policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts assessments and screenings, intelligence tests, determines eligibility for special education services, and provides referrals for external assistance for identified students.</li> <li>• Conducts suicide and threat assessments according to district policy.</li> </ul>
Employment Setting		
<p>High schools generally have counseling staff; some middle schools do as well; elementary schools are more limited, and it is a case-by-case basis whether one is assigned. Often in the lower grades, one may be shared among several schools or another position such as school psychologist or social worker.</p>	<p>Some social workers will serve more than one building in a district. Usually there is either a social worker or a psychologist in a building but not both.</p>	<p>Most psychologists will serve several buildings in a district. Usually there is either a social worker or a psychologist in a building but not both.</p>

