

# School Counselors' Leadership Role in Creating a Collaborative School Climate for Linguistically Diverse Students

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## Abstract

School systems are increasingly diverse communities, with a broadening diversity of students and staff alike. School counselors play a critical role in creating a welcoming school climate within the school community. As a catalyst for change within the school system, school counselors can create an effective community partnership culture for schools and families that is collaborative and welcoming for all. This article will discuss the importance of creating a collaborative school climate for linguistically diverse students (LDS) in order to promote their overall well-being and school achievement. With this objective in mind, a review of the literature on school counselor's leadership role within the school community will be discussed, before embarking on an investigation into the effectiveness of counselors as agents of systemic change in facilitating engagement. A discussion of school counselors' role in creating a welcoming school climate towards LDS within the school and school community could pave the way for a more positive organizational culture. Using a systemic approach, which aims to generate greater understanding and awareness, school counselors have the power to play a critical role in the transformation of the school system, especially for students from diverse backgrounds (Aydin, 2011; McCall-Perez, 2000; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004).

**Keywords:** school counselor's leadership role, collaborative school climate, linguistically diverse students

## 1. Introduction

The number of non-native speakers in the American public school system has increased significantly (Araujo, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2019, 2020; Fix & Capps, 2005). By the fall of 2020, public school enrollments from pre-primary to grade 12 are estimated to have reached 50.7 million, with 23.4 million White and 14 million native Hispanic students according to the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). In the fall of 2017, 10% of public-school students in the United States were English learners, totaling 5 million students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). It is projected that the number of LDS in America will reach 25% in 2026 (Garcia, 2002).

Continuing demographic changes may affect the overall school achievement outcome and general mental health of students whose native languages are not English (Aydin, 2011). Students' mental health can be affected by factors such as social and emotional learning, classroom instruction and the school climate (Durlak & Weissberg, 2005). School counselors, as leaders for organizational change, are in a position to create a collaborative school climate to pave the way for inclusive, culturally diverse schools (Guzman, Calfa, Kerne, & McCarthy, 2013). As an advocate for students, school counselors play a critical role in building an effective school, family and community partnership (Aydin, 2011; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). Furthermore, partnerships among school stakeholders are especially relevant for school counselors when they find themselves in a position to implement wide-ranging solutions to various problems (e.g., homelessness, poverty, academic failure, school alienation) that many students encounter (Bryan, 2005). In line with a transformative leadership approach, school leaders can embrace various tasks and facilitate shared leadership among stakeholders (Elias, O'Brien, & Weissberg, 2006).

As the numbers of LDSs are increasing within the school system, school counselors' leadership role in creating a collaborative school climate has become critical (Aydin, 2011; McCall-Perez, 2000; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). Furthermore, school, family and community partnerships are important for creating a collaborative school climate (Bryan & Henry, 2008). To help create a welcoming climate in which

diverse students feel accepted within the community is a core part of school counselors' job description. *The Professional School Counselor and Cultural Diversity* (Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2015) in the ASCA position statement indicates that school counselors have a responsibility to meet the needs of every student in their caseload. Thus, a collaborative partnership is necessary among school stakeholders (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). Partnerships are known as collaborative efforts with school employees, parents, families, community members and other institutions in the community. School, family and community partnerships are formed to promote equity (i.e., to access opportunities) and rigorous educational experiences to address academic, personal/social and career development needs for all students at home, school and community environments (Epstein, 1995). As catalysts for change, school counselors can help establish an effective school, family and community partnerships culture. By cultivating positive organizational culture, collaborative school climate facilitates greater partnerships among stakeholders within the school community (Hutchins, Greenfeld, Epstein, Sanders, & Galindo, 2012).

School counselors' leadership role in creating a collaborative school climate for LDSs is a professional matter in terms of counselor training, as well as competence in responding to wide a range of student issues. Partnerships are collaborative practices forged between school personnel, families, community members, community organizations such as businesses, churches, mosques, libraries, social services and banks (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2012; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007). Aydin (2011) conducted a national study with 916 participants to explore school counselors' parental involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families. The research investigated as to what degree the use of translators, bilingual status, caseload, race and ethnicity and free/discounted lunch status related to the percentage of LDSs. The ANOVA test showed important results that the use of translators was influenced by the percentage, with school counselors more likely to use translators as the number of LDSs increased.

In a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 13 school counselors, Dogan (2017) indicated that respondents felt competent responding to the issues of LDSs and their families. Moreover, shared ethnic and cultural background, ability to speak another language or being bilingual and level of experiences with LDSs emerged as factors positively impacting the counselors' levels of self-perceived competence. Johnson (2012) found that while Latino/school counselors had the highest level of self-esteem working with English language learners, White participants had the lowest score. School counselors who spoke another language other than English scored higher level of self-efficacy working with English language learners. Race, ethnicity and bilingual status emerged as important factors when school counselors utilized partnerships with linguistically diverse families (Aydin, 2011; Cook, Prusse, & Rojas, 2012). Consistently, Non-White and bilingual school counselors enjoyed a higher level of involvement with linguistically diverse parents compared to those with white ethnic backgrounds (Aydin, 2011; Cook, Prusse, & Rojas, 2012). Thus, these dynamics require school counselors to engage in leadership roles in creating a collaborative school climate.

Furthermore, according to Aydin's work, school counselors need additional training and skills working with LDSs (2011). School counselors have affirmed they face linguistic and cultural challenges when serving linguistically diverse families about their perceptions working with LDSs (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). School counselors' beliefs about their abilities to work successfully with such students are influenced by their race and ethnicity, bilingual status, residence and linguistically diverse student populations (Johnson, 2012). Similarly, their perceptions are impacted by their experience and age, formal prior training coursework in multicultural counseling and personal interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Aydin, 2011; Steuernagel, 2004). Multicultural training affects school counselors' case conceptualization skills (Constantine & Gushue, 2003); thus, additional training to increase professional and multicultural competence is critical in responding to more urgently emerging requirements in this field (Cazares-Cervantes, 2014). While school counselors are involved in collaborative partnerships, they need to improve their competency by staying engaged to increase their knowledge and skills to build effective partnerships with linguistically diverse families (Aydin, 2011). School counselors also need ongoing professional development in order to increase their knowledge and develop their skills to work effectively with LDS (Dogan, 2017), as stated by professional standards (CACREP, 2016).

## **2. Review of the Literature on School Counselor's Leadership Role within School Community**

A school counselor's role is crucial, especially for meeting the needs of students and families with diverse backgrounds within the community. School, family and community partnerships involve counselors, school staff, students, parents, family and community members, as well as other stakeholders that work in collaboration to apply school and community centered preventive and remedial programs to enhance children's probabilities of achievement (Bryan & Griffin, 2010, p. 1). It is important to identify and make use of resources that exist in the community (e.g., health, social services, substance abuse services, juvenile justice, recreation, service clubs and

other organizations) to strengthen school counseling programs (Thompson, 2002). Especially when planning prevention and intervention programs, collaborative partnerships with community organizations are crucial to respond to the needs of students (Keys & Lockhart, 1999). Similarly, a collaborative school climate is essential for developing a positive organizational culture, which creates motives for greater connection within the stakeholders (Hutchins, Greenfeld, Epstein, Sanders, & Galindo, 2012).

School counselors serve as liaisons between the school and the school community; thus, school, family and community partnership practices are a central aspect of the school counseling programs (Davis, 2005). Bemak (2000) advised several to utilize ways to work with community organizations. The first of these involves building relationships with students and their families regarding the community resources to meet their unique needs such as summer and/or enrichment programs, alternative education services, employment issues, mental health and health care related information. Second one involves making collaborative regulations within the community to carry services such as substance abuse counselors working with students in the school. Last one involves partnering to develop and implement prevention and remediation services either inside or outside the school. Such collaborations are critical to promote good public relations and support school projects and activities that request community participation.

School counselors have wide-ranging roles in collaborative partnerships. A study conducted by Henderson and Mapp (2002) elaborates on the appropriate implications that school counselors have on school and community members. Reviewing 51 studies with sound methodological standards, Henderson and Mapp (2002) provide ideas how to turn these research findings into school, family and community partnership programs. In terms of the school counselor's role with school and community members, nine suggestions emerged, some of which include; (a) increasing the competence of school staff working with families and community members; (b) boosting the spirit of collaboration, which underlines the power of sharing; (c) connecting family and community partnerships to student learning; (d) working with families to build social and political capital; and (e) building strong connections between schools and community system. Acting as liaisons between the school and the community (Davis, 2005), school counselors embrace a shared leadership approach (Elias, O'Brien, & Weissberg, 2006).

While school counselors are fundamental in fostering a welcoming school environment and raising student awareness about LDS' needs (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004), they must also ensure the needs of all students in general (ASCA, 2005). A school climate is composed of factors that are shaped by an individuals' attitudes, feelings and behaviors within the school system (Hernández & Seem, 2004), which is highly relevant to school counselors. There are many positive implications of a collaborative school climate. It is known that children are best supported when families and schools have shared goals, work collaboratively, and when the partnership with the community is integrated into the student's learning experience (Epstein, 1995). Consequently, a systemic perspective committed to ensuring achievement for all students regardless of their backgrounds is necessary to appropriately address differences in diverse cultural communities and schools (Lee, 2001). School counselors can increase their presence in these communities by developing partnership systems (Herr, 2002).

Partnerships among school stakeholders are especially relevant for school counselors (Bryan, 2005). School counselors reported that partnerships with multiple stakeholders often result in innovative solutions to complex problems that students encounter (Bryan & Henry, 2008). For example, when school counselors are involved in school, family and community partnership activities, they work with teachers, administrators, school psychologists and student support personnel, families and community members to create a school environment that is accessible and welcoming to all families. By using collaborative partnerships, both inside and outside the school, a school counselor reaches out and offers the information (e.g., referral) and support necessary for all families to be involved in education at home and in school. School counselors work as leaders, advocates, collaborative team members, and supporters of systemic change in order to empower students and families from all backgrounds. In collaboration with local community, health care and university members, a school counselor promotes tutoring programs, health and safety training and college visits for students; classes on parenting and communication/networking opportunities for families. Further research is necessary to explore the attitudes and perceptions of school professionals' (who facilitate connections with school, family, and community members) (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). However, examining the existing literature on school, family and community partnerships reveals new knowledge on how school and school counselor-related factors influence school counselors' involvement in school, family and community partnerships with linguistically diverse families.

### *2.1 School Counselors' Have a Leadership Role in Transforming Their Schools*

Beyond the arguments about inadequate leadership observed in schools, school counselors should take an active

approach to achieving a much needed and deserved leadership status (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010) by using leadership, advocacy, collaboration and communications strategies with school stakeholders to promote partnerships programs. When school counselors' team with school stakeholders to conduct home visits that generate social capital to enhance student learning that promote partnerships with linguistically diverse families. Using interpersonal skills and developing relationships with stakeholders to "bond" within schools and communities can create future leadership opportunities (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010).

Aydin (2011) argues that school counselors are emerging as proactive leaders. In her study, based on 916 school counselors with members of American School Counselors Association (ASCA), Aydin explored as to whether school variables (i.e., collaborative school climate, principal support) predicted involvement in school, family and community partnerships with linguistically diverse families. The findings were supportive of school counselors' leadership role in creating a collaborative school climate for LDSs. As in earlier studies (Aydin, Bryan, & Duys, 2012; Bryan & Griffin, 2010), school and school counselor variables influenced counselors' overall involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families (Aydin, 2011). Unlike earlier studies, multiple regression analysis revealed that, (i.e., after controlling for the percentages of LDSs, free/reduced priced lunch status, school and school counselor variables), bilingual status and the use of translators affected overall involvement in school, family, and community partnerships with linguistically diverse families, influencing school counselors' leadership role in creating a collaborative school climate for LDS. Aydin's (2011) finding diverges from other partnership studies (e.g., Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan, 2003; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2006, 2007), focusing on the role of school counselors' involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families. Likewise, other studies highlight the role of communication barriers as a serious issue in working with LDSs (Saritaş, Şahin, & Çatalbaş, 2016). When school counselors use translators and are either bilingual or multilingual, they are more involved in school, family and community partnerships with families from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Such qualifications may have facilitated the elimination of communication barriers to implementing partnership programs that are critical to closing the achievement gap.

The professional role of a school counselor should be clearly defined; otherwise, it may hinder their involvement. Similarly, school counselors' role perception and self-efficacy about partnerships could help make use of involvement. School counselors stated that their role perceptions and self-efficacy affected their involvement partnerships with linguistically diverse families (Aydin, 2011). A study by Lapan, Gysbers, Cook, Bragg and Robbins (2006) indicate that schools with a lower percentage of racially diverse and economically disadvantaged students generally have a lower student-to-counselor ratio. Similarly, school counselors in the study indicated that they were less at ease working with diverse families, because they believed that working with them required a knowledge of multicultural family dynamics. A lack of translators increased school counselors' frustration in their work with these students and families (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). It is even more important to be aware that English learners are less likely to seek help compared to English speaking students (Montgomery, Roberts, & Growe, 2003). In fact, LDSs need more help and support compared to other students because they lack the support needed to help navigate the school system (McCall-Perez, 2000), given language barriers and challenges to academic preparation in their native language (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). These challenges and others call for school counselors to show proactive leadership.

## *2.2 School Counselors Facilitate Social and Emotional Learning in Building Effective Schools*

Taylor, Oberle, Durlak and Weissberg (2017) conducted a meta-analysis to examine ways to promote positive development among students through social and emotional learning interventions used in schools, reviewing 82 school-based, universal social and emotional learning interventions involving 97,406 K-12 school students. Post-intervention outcomes spanning 6 months to 18 years were reviewed in order to understand the effects of the interventions on positive youth development. Participants performed significantly better than controls in social-emotional skills, attitudes, and indicators of well-being. The follow-up effects intervention showed similar benefits regardless of students' race, socioeconomic status, or school related factors.

Students' mental health is affected by school climate. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) states that school counselors need to engage in professional development on a regular basis regarding to recognize and respond to student mental health problems (ASCA, 2009). Furthermore, the school counselor has an obligation to develop an awareness of students' social and emotional needs (VanVelsor, 2009). Educational systems, including school counselors, students in training not only are proficient in core academic subjects but show an aptitude to socially and emotionally practicing healthy behaviors and show respect while working with others from diverse backgrounds (ASCD, 2007).

A study conducted by Durlak and Weissberg (2005) examined 300 studies on school-based prevention programs

on social-emotional development interventions in K-12 schools. When studies used experimental and control groups research designs, social-emotional programs considerably improved students' social-emotional skills, self-esteem, school bonding and at the same time increased the level of respect to social norms; reduction in disruptive behavior, school violence, and suspensions; and an increase in positive classroom behavior, academic attainment, and test scores. Meanwhile, Durlak and Weissberg (2005) in their research synthesis revealed a pattern which emerged from the results that mental health is affected by factors such as social and emotional learning, classroom instruction and school climate and when combined they enhance academic performance.

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011) conducted a meta-analysis with students who participated in social and emotional learning programs. These students showed considerably better social and emotional skills, attitudes and behaviors. When compared to control groups, their academic performance increased an 11-percentile-point in their academic attainment. According to The American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution (2015), social and emotional competencies are critical for all students for the continuing achievement since productive citizens are crucial for the betterment of society.

School counselors promote engagement vital to students' social and emotional development within the school community. Both Blum and Libbey (2004) and Klem and Connell (2004) asserted that when students start high school that they will disengage from the school (it is between 40%–60% probability). School performance could be affected negatively when they demonstrate at risky behaviors for example substance abuse, sex, violence, depression and suicide attempt (Eaton et al., 2008). School counselors' role is to respond to these issues addressing students' social and emotional needs.

### **3. School Counselors as Systemic Change Agents Facilitating Family Engagement**

A collaborative, systemic approach is vital for the benefit of students, with school staff working hand-in-hand to support families. School counselors working toward systemic change as leaders, advocates and collaborative team members have had their efforts buoyed by recent reforms (e.g., The ASCA National Model, 2005, 2012, 2019). School counselors are in a great position to support family involvement because of their specialized education in human development, collaborative services and systems change.

Exploring what contributes to family involvement requires uncovering what contributes to reduce family involvement. Davis and Lambie (2005) exploring the impact of developmental and contextual factors in family disengagement found the following themes emerge: a) developmental changes during early adolescence, b) family life-cycle transitions and c) potential systemic barriers in schools for middle school students. Potential systemic barriers in schools comprise a range of factors. The size of a school enrollment can pose challenges when teachers, students, family members in the school community increase, thereby challenging effective communication among all parties. Additionally, if the size of the systems increase, bureaucracy increases in tandem. As a school system gets bigger in size, the decentralization and compartmentalization of services become a threat to existing partnerships. It is important for families to identify authority figures in such circumstances, as poor communication between home and school present further potential barriers.

While more frequent communication between home and school can contribute to more consistent positive academic achievement (e.g., for middle school students), there remains resistance (Downs, 2001). Among the various reasons for this, there exists a complex dynamic between home and school. The level of trust between families and schools can be a predictor of involvement, decreasing by middle school. Nevertheless, as attested to by Adams and Christenson (2000), the bolstering of communication between home and school is the most effective method of enhancing trust. As one can imagine, the quality of the home-school communication contributes to trust, promoting better family involvement and student success. An increase in family involvement in education is thus an important goal for the school community.

Amatea, Daniels, Bringman and Vandiver (2004) presented a framework for middle school counselors to apply their skill for systemic change in supporting stronger family and school connections and family engagement. They assess the current structure of family and school relations in a comprehensive school system to identify barriers in the school context that excluded increased positive family and school partnership. Later, they implemented strategies to encourage involvement among school, family and community members. They presented four steps as collaborators of systemic change, could adjust to promote family engagement and support students' development and achievement. The third step is called: "Restructuring Family-School Interactional Patterns" which involves revising the way family-school meetings are usually conducted for better engagement.

### *3.1 Commitment to Collaborative School Climate Calls for Investing in Supportive Communities, Effective Schools and Strong Families*

Using qualitative data from eight school counselors gathered by Yildiz (2020, 2021) results indicate that, school counselors' role with LDSs in building partnerships a) rely on school-family partnerships, b) school-community collaboration and c) the overall involvement of all relevant parties. Advocating for a systemic approach, Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model (1996, 2001) is particularly ideal for building school, family and community partnerships. This model embraces multiple dimensions and other variables that help or hinder school, family and community partnerships. School stakeholders play a significant role in cultivating family involvement at the organizational level. Yildiz' (2020, 2021) findings from eight school counselors reported that they defined their role as "working to earn somebody's trust," located at the center of three settings—namely, school, family and community) are inseparable interlinking three spheres. School counselors' training programs had better advocate for systemic thinking; thus, school counselors realize as they operate within the larger system they bridge community, school and families. Therefore, school, family and community partnerships are reciprocally structured with at an interpersonal and inter-institutional level (see Epstein, 1987, 1996, 2001).

What can school counselors do to help establish a collaborative school climate that works? Fitch and Marshall (2004) examining the situation in high-achieving schools in Kentucky, involved a look at the impact of school counselors. Six factors were common between the majority of the 63 schools entered to the study revealed that a collaborative school climate characterized by a) autonomous school leadership; b) an understanding of how academic achievement predict student achievement; c) strong staff relationships and professional development opportunities, as well as proof of teamwork and staff training; d) a sense of belongingness among the students, who felt respected and treated fairly by staff; e) a high level of parent and community support; and f) quality social systems around the students. Moreover, school counselors' training in human relations equips them with essential skills to influence linking systemic capacities to student success (Fitch & Marshall, 2004). Advocates of the profession promote training in systemic perspective; thus, they can cultivate leadership, advocacy and collaborative skills (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Herr, 2002; Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, & Pak, 2003).

While years of research have pointed to the important role of families in student success, finding effective and meaningful ways of relating to families still presents a challenge. Human-centered design (also called "design thinking") offers a new capacity to bridge the gap between research and application. Harnessing the impact of "observation, optimism, collaboration, and experimentation," this approach can guide educators to explore innovative and advanced ways to motivate and maintain family participation activities in the learning experience of LDSs (Lopez, 2016). A human-centered approach to family participation is forwarded by the Harvard Family Research Project, which focuses on ways to embrace empathic understanding among involved parties. Hence, emphasizing the collaborative and complementary feature of school, family and community partnerships, Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model incorporates both social and organizational perspectives, supporting positive interchange and participation amongst shareholders (Epstein, 1987, 1996). It is inspired by the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986).

Beyond school-based programs, an engagement in community - based programs is important. After school programs promote positive youth development for diverse children. A study by Smith, Witherspoon and Osgood (2017) focused on positive impact of after-school programs on the development of racially and ethnically diverse children. There is a need among families for supervision after school; thus, a community - based afterschool program could be a convenient option to promote. This study examined the quality of afterschool experiences on youth development, while also considering families with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Using multiple methods, this study included more than 500 children from grades 2–5 (i.e., a sample comprises 49% White, 27% African American, 7% Latino, and 17% mixed race/others with 45% free/reduced priced lunch eligible children). Multilevel models showed that, when independently observed, "quality across time positively impacted competence, connection, caring for all" (Smith, Witherspoon, & Wayne Osgood, 2017, p. 1063). Afterschool programs nurture positive youth development, when they are suitably structured, supportive, and engaging for personal interactions.

## **4. Conclusion**

As has been commented beforehand, schools have a vested interest in becoming "true learning communities" (Epstein & Salinas, 2004, p. 12). Schools are accountable for all students' learning. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required schools to develop academic programs with the main objective of increasing students' aptitude in academics (i.e., reading, math, and science), offering children the guidance and support needed from their teachers, families and the school community (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

School counselors have a central role in providing culturally responsive school counseling programs and helping to create a collaborative school climate. The ASCA National Model proposes a comprehensive framework for school counseling programs, indicating that school counseling programs would be incomplete without incorporating multicultural competencies to respond to all students' needs (ASCA, 2005, 2012; 2019; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018; Young & Dollarhide, 2018). As a result, school counselors hold the power to create an effective organizational culture with multicultural competencies (Guzman, Calfa, Kerne, & McCarthy, 2013). When school counselors forward positive perceptions, they promote positive emotions between all school stakeholders that benefit LDSs (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011). Through their effort, a welcoming all-inclusive atmosphere that instigates partnership with linguistically diverse families may be created (Aydin, 2011; Dotson-Blake, Foster, & Gressard, 2009).

The number of LDSs in the U.S. public school system has increased considerably (Araujo, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2019; Fix & Capps, 2005). The number of LDSs is projected to come to 25% by 2026 (Garcia, 2002). By the fall of 2020, public school enrollments from pre-primary to grade 12 are estimated to have researched 50.7 million, with 23.4 million White and 14 million native Spanish students according to the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). These demographic changes have influenced the experiences of LDSs, requiring school counselors to take a central role within their school system in response (Aydin, 2011). School counselors are thus emerging as proactive leaders—yet their professional role must be clearly defined; otherwise, it may hinder their engagement (Aydin, 2011). Correspondingly, school counselors' role perceptions and self-efficacy about partnerships could help make use of involvement. It is also reported that school counselors' role perceptions and self-efficacy influence their involvement in school, family and community partnerships with LDS, when addressing students' social and emotional needs.

In conclusion, a review of the literature shows consensus that school counselors' have a leadership role in creating a collaborative school climate for LDSs. As a key player within the school system, they have the ability and obligation to contribute to transforming schools when by engaging families with community resources to facilitate social and emotional learning in the school environment. This way, school counselors can become agents of systemic change. However, this relies on ongoing engagement and training.

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