

ILKKA OKSANEN,  
*Counsellor,  
 Windsor, Ontario, and  
 Graduate Studies  
 Wayne State University, and*

WILLIAM H. VAN HOOSE,  
*Department of Educational  
 Guidance and Counselling,  
 Wayne State University.*

## STATUS OF ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL COUNSELLING IN SIX CANADIAN PROVINCES

**ABSTRACT:** This study was an attempt to investigate several aspects of elementary-school counselling in Canada. The number of counsellors employed, their professional background, certification, and provincial standards for guidance were examined. In the six responding provinces whose data were usable, a total of 267 counsellors were employed in the elementary schools with approximately half of that number employed on a full-time basis. About 18 percent held a graduate degree in guidance; 75 percent had an undergraduate degree with guidance qualifications; while 7 percent had no degree but some guidance training. Only 2 of the 6 provinces providing data had certification requirements for elementary-school counsellors and only 2 had developed standards for counsellors in the elementary schools.

Three national surveys in the United States on the status of guidance in elementary schools have been completed in the past four years. (Van Hoose & Carlson, 1971; Van Hoose & Kurtz, 1970; Van Hoose & Vafakas, 1968). In Canada a similar survey examined the status of elementary counselling in the Province of Alberta (Altmann & Herman, 1970).

Since the purpose of this investigation was to determine the status of elementary-school counselling in Canada, the Alberta study will be dealt with briefly as the findings of this study are presented.

The present study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How many elementary schools are there in each province?
2. How many elementary-school counsellors are employed in each province?
3. How many elementary-school counsellors are employed on a full-time basis?
4. How many elementary schools in each province are without the services of a counsellor?
5. What guidance qualifications do these counsellors hold?
6. What position did the counsellors hold prior to counselling?
7. What certification requirements for counsellors are established in each province?
8. What standards for guidance in the elementary schools have been developed by each province?

### PROCEDURES

In February, 1971, a questionnaire to obtain answers to these questions was mailed to the chief guidance officer in each of the

ten provinces. Seven provinces responded to the initial request or to the follow-up letter mailed in April, 1971. The data from six provinces were used. The writing of this report was purposefully delayed for several months in the hope that the remaining provinces would respond to the questionnaire.

## RESULTS

TABLE 1

Number of Elementary Schools, and Number of Elementary-School Counsellors in Six Provinces

Province	Number of elementary schools	Number of counsellors	Number of full-time counsellors	Number of elementary schools without counsellors
Prince Edward Island	227	10	8	170
Ontario	3013	73	0	No data
Manitoba	640	3	3	631
Saskatchewan	738	31	23	339
Alberta	1120	62	10	No data
British Columbia	1239	88	88	700
TOTALS	6977	267	132	1840

Responses revealed, as shown in Table 1, that in six provinces with a total of 6977 elementary schools, there were 267 people employed as elementary-school counsellors. About 50 percent of the counsellors were employed as full-time personnel. For those provinces which provided data, it was found that 1840 of 2844 schools in the four provinces had no elementary-school counsellors. It also must be noted that this can be a very misleading statistic, because the counsellors are often employed in the most populated areas and thus are able to serve a greater percentage of the total school population. British Columbia reported that such was the case in that province.

TABLE 2

Degrees and Qualifications of Counsellors

Province	Graduate Degree	Bachelor's Degree with Guidance Diploma	No degree and less than Diploma
Prince Edward Island		10	
Ontario		73	
Manitoba	1	2	
Saskatchewan	13	7	11
Alberta	35	22	5
British Columbia		88	
TOTALS	49	202	16

About 75 percent of the counsellors were reported as having a bachelor's degree with diploma qualifications; 18 percent were professionally qualified by virtue of masters' or doctoral standing in Guidance; 7 percent had no degree but had some guidance qualifications. Diploma qualifications usually involved summer courses or in-service professional training by a school district.

TABLE 3  
Prior Experience of Counsellors.

Province	Experience Prior to Becoming Counsellor			
	Elementary	Secondary	Social Work	Other
Prince Edward Island	7	2		1
Ontario	73			
Manitoba	2	1		
Saskatchewan	13	5	1	12
British Columbia	88			
TOTALS	183	8	1	13

It can be seen that approximately 95 percent of the people employed as elementary-school counsellors had previous elementary-school teaching experience. This is not unusual because teaching experience is a requirement in most provinces if a person expects to become involved in counselling. The Province of Alberta did not furnish prior experience data.

TABLE 4  
Provincial Requirements for Counsellors

Province	Certification for Counsellors	Guidance Standards for Elementary Schools
Prince Edward Island	yes	no
Ontario	yes	yes
Manitoba	no	no
Saskatchewan	no	yes
Alberta	no	no
British Columbia	no	no

For the provinces responding to the question, replies are shown in Table 4. Two provinces reported certification for counsellors and two reported having guidance standards. It must be noted that the Province of Saskatchewan is in the process of establishing certification requirements and Manitoba is developing standards for guidance in the elementary schools.

## DISCUSSION

An earlier study of elementary counselling in Alberta (Altmann & Herman, 1970) indicated that the program in that Province was in its infancy. A similar picture can be drawn for those provinces covered by this study. It is also too early to predict the future of elementary-school counselling in Canada. Since no comparison can be made with a previous Canadian study as to the growth of the profession, the only guidepost available is the observed fact that in Ontario at least, elementary schools in increasing numbers have several people working as counsellors. Furthermore, the summer certification programs conducted by the colleges of education are finding an increasing enrollment of elementary-school teachers in guidance courses geared to the elementary school. Manitoba is in the process of initiating an elementary-school counsellor program at the University of Manitoba next year. Ontario has plans for similar courses which will be launched in the future.

The tight-money policy which has been in effect federally for the past year or so is filtering down through the provincial to the local level. Programs are being examined and accountability is the key word in educational circles. It is the fervent hope of the authors that guidance, both at the elementary- and secondary-school levels, will not be cut off existing educational programs in the interests of austerity. Education must develop in its students a passion for the future if they are to survive the impact of change in the future. Elementary school counselling programs can make a valuable contribution to such an educational program.

**RESUME:** On s'est efforcé dans cette étude d'inventorier différents aspects du counseling tel qu'on le pratique dans les écoles primaires des dix provinces du Canada. On a examiné le nombre de conseillers, leur formation professionnelle, les standards de pratique et d'admission à la pratique du counseling dans les provinces. En se basant sur les réponses provenant des six provinces dont les données pouvaient être utilisables, on note un total de 267 conseillers à l'emploi des écoles primaires. Environ la moitié de ce nombre travaille à temps complet. Environ 30% des conseillers détient un diplôme d'études supérieures dans le domaine de l'orientation et de la consultation. Un autre 30% est détenteur d'un baccalauréat tandis que le 40% restant est constitué de personnes qui ne possèdent aucun grade universitaire en counseling. Cinq des sept provinces n'exigent aucun diplôme particulier pour la pratique du counseling au niveau primaire. Seulement deux provinces ont élaboré des standards de pratique à ce niveau.

## REFERENCES

- Altmann, H., & Herman, A. Status of elementary counselling in the Province of Alberta. *Canadian Counsellor*, 1971, 5, 41-45.
- Van Hoose, W. H., & Carlson, J. Status of guidance and counselling in the elementary school: 1970-71. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1971 (mimeo).
- Van Hoose, W. H., & Kurtz, M. Status of guidance and counselling in the elementary school: 1968-69. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 1970, 48, 381-384.
- Van Hoose, W. H., & Vafakas, C. M. Status of guidance and counselling in the elementary school. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 1968, 46, 536-539.