School Counselors Make Connections

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Annual Conference 2019

CSCA

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
Student Success:
The Role & Impact of Comprehensive School Counseling

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Let’s Talk...

- What do school counselors do?
- Who decides what school counselors do?
**GUIDANCE COUNSELORS OR SCHOOL COUNSELORS: HOW THE NAME OF THE PROFESSION INFLUENCES PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE**

**FOUNDATION OF THE RESEARCH**

**IN 1990,** ASCA issued an official statement calling on the profession to change the title to “school counselor” rather than the previous title of “guidance counselor.”

**WHY THE TITLE CHANGE?**
The title “guidance counselor” no longer encompassed the broad scope of work that was done by the professionals in the school.

**RESEARCH PROCEDURE**
Researchers sought to determine if there were significant differences on a measure of perceived competence of school counselors based on job title. About half the participants completed a version of a research survey that used the term “guidance counselor” and half completed a version of a research survey that used the term “school counselor.”

**WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?**

Participants who completed the surveys that used the term “guidance counselor” were statistically significantly less likely to believe individuals with that job title were able to perform the 25 tasks on the survey. The results of this study show the following:

**THE TITLE MATTERS:**
- Using “guidance counselor” versus “school counselor” has an impact on the perceived competence of school counselors.
- School counselors who received the survey using the term “guidance counselor” were statistically significantly more likely to assign lower scores on the survey than their peers who received the version with the term “school counselor.”
- School counselors who saw the term “guidance counselor” used to describe school counselors’ standards and competencies were less likely to believe school counselors were able to perform the tasks of a data-informed comprehensive school counseling program.
- School counselors who received the surveys that used the term “guidance counselor” described within the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies and CACREP standards.
- School counselors with every level of experience were equally affected by the survey terminology. The years of experience of the school counselor did not affect the perceptions of competence.

Because titles are used to describe the nature of the work of the profession, when the terms “guidance counselor” and “school counselor” are used interchangeably, when in fact they are not interchangeable, this results in confusion around the nature of the work completed by school counselors.

When school counselors use “guidance counselor” to describe the work they do, it significantly influences their own perception of the competence of members of their profession in a negative way.

**WHAT CAN WE LEARN?**

1. Advocate to ensure the use of the title “school counselor” in all areas of your work by all educational stakeholders.
2. Use your title as a form of social capital to advance the recognition and legitimacy of the profession and to ensure all students receive data-informed comprehensive school counseling programming.
3. Adopt the title “school counselor” on all communication media, including business cards, door plaques, and digital communication such as email signatures, social media, and websites.

**SOURCE:** “Guidance Counselors or School Counselors: How the Name of the Profession Influences Perceptions of Competence” (Professional School Counseling, Vol. 22, Issue 1). Authors: Brett Zyromski, Ph.D., Tyler D. Hudson, M.A., Emily Baker, M.A., and Darcy Haag Granello, Ph.D. The Ohio State University. This study used a sample of 276 school counselors who were recruited for participation at a 2018 state counseling association conference in Ohio.
Would you rather?
School Counselor #1...

- Susie is a 2nd year counselor. In addition to individual counseling, she runs 5 small groups per week and is in each teacher’s classroom two times per month. She is a member of the school’s data team and regularly disaggregates student achievement, attendance and discipline data. She has her calendar posted on her door as well as in the shared staff electronic directory. She regularly communicates with stakeholders and ensures messages are responded to usually the day they are received. She ensures a translator is available at all programs and conferences for her non-English speaking families. She creates newsletters, sends frequent email, updates the school counseling website often and plans 5 night programs a year. She routinely conducts needs assessments to learn what people want from the school counseling program.
Or, School Counselor #2...

• Sam is a 4th year counselor. No one really knows his schedule and is sometimes hard to find during the day. He is a one of the school’s data team members but does not speak up very much and rarely takes initiative to provide solutions for students who are struggling. He is rarely in classrooms and if he is, not every grade level classroom receives the same lessons. He runs some groups but is not consistent and teachers do not know how to refer a student. He tries to be attentive to the needs of the families he works with but is not always good about responding in a timely fashion. He is never seen in the community or at after school activities. He does not conduct evening programs as he does not get paid or receive flex time for such events. He never answers his own phone. He rarely schedules any meetings after school hours stating that teachers are not willing to stay late.
School Counseling Framework and Standards
ASCA NATIONAL MODEL -
1. Foundation

• Program focus
  • Beliefs and philosophy
  • Vision & mission statement
  • Program goals

• Student mindsets & behaviors

• Professional competencies
  • School counselor competencies
  • Ethical standards
MINDSETS AND BEHAVIORS - Student Competencies

Purpose: “as a result of a comprehensive school counseling program, each student will be able to…”

Aligns with Common Core State Standards
Includes:

- **6 Mindset Standards**
- **29 Behavior Standards**

Based on 3 domains of school counseling:
- **Academic**
- **Career**
- **Social-Emotional**

* Go to schoolcounselor.org for complete document: https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf
School Counselor Competencies

Newly revised, 2018

- Go to schoolcounselor.org for complete document -
  https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/SCCompetencies.pdf

Similar framework as mindsets & behaviors...

defines what school counselors need to know in order to establish, maintain, and enhance comprehensive school counseling programs
ASCA NATIONAL MODEL –
2. Delivery

- Direct student services
  - Core Curriculum
  - Individual student planning
  - Responsive services

- Indirect student services
  - Collaboration
  - Consultation
  - Referrals

Diagram:
- Core Curriculum: Information provided for all students
- Small Group or Closing the Gap
- Individual Consultation
- Specialized Interventions

Diagram Image
ASCA NATIONAL MODEL –
3. Management

• Annual agreements
• Advisory council
• Action plans
  • Curriculum
  • Closing the gap
  • Small group
• Use of time
• Program assessments
• Annual and weekly calendars

20% indirect
80% direct
Appropriate or Inappropriate School Counselor Activities?

- Cafeteria or study hall duty
- Coordinating testing
- Interpreting test results
- New student enrollment
- Printing transcripts
- Ongoing therapy

- Computing GPAs
- Analyzing GPAs in relation to student achievement
- Disciplining students
- Disaggregating/interpreting data
- Coordinating IEP/504 or other plans/teams
ASCA NATIONAL MODEL – 4. Accountability

3 Main Goals of Accountability:

✔ To monitor student progress and close the achievement gap;

✔ To assess and evaluate programs;

✔ To demonstrate school counseling program effectiveness.
Evidence Based Practices

“...using the best available research to guide practice and the integration of this knowledge with clinical skills.”

(Dimmitt, Carey, Hatch, 2007)
Newly Revised CT Model
Research to support CSCP
FACT #1

- In schools where the school counseling program spent more time addressing student personal and social needs, students were significantly more likely to report feeling a greater sense of belonging to their school, less likely to report difficulties with teachers, less likely to say that they were teased or bullied (Dimmitt & Wilkerson, 2012)
FACT #2

- In schools where counselors provided more college and career counseling services, students had statistically significantly lower suspension rates, a stronger sense of belonging to their school, fewer self-reported hassles with teachers, fewer self-reports of being teased or bullied, better attendance, & fewer self-reported hassles with other students (Dimmitt & Wilkerson, 2012)
More Evidence of Effectiveness at the National Level

FACT #3
- There is strong evidence that elementary schools with comprehensive data-driven school counseling programs display higher academic outcomes compared to schools without such programs (Wilkerson, Pérusse, & Hughes, 2013)
Evidence of Effectiveness in Connecticut

FACT #1
• When comprehensive school counseling programs are in place there has been a decrease in suspension rates, improved attendance, and higher graduation rates (Lapan et al., 2012)

FACT #2
• Comprehensive School Counseling Programs are an effective way to improve student college and career readiness (Lapan et al., 2012).
IMPACT OF SCHOOL-COUNSELOR-TO-STUDENT RATIOS ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Study shows impact of school counselor ratios on student outcomes.

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?

A school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 has a significant effect on student attendance, SAT mathematics, SAT writing and SAT verbal scores.

- In Indiana, the average school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 resulted in:
  - 0.3% higher attendance (i.e., every day in a school of 1,000 students, three more students attend class than otherwise).
  - 18 points higher SAT mathematics scores.
  - 19 points higher SAT verbal scores.
  - 16 points higher SAT writing scores.

Students in districts with elementary school counselors have improved performance outcomes versus districts without.

Connecticut school districts report:
- Schools with K-12 school counselors: 69.4% report graduation rates greater than 90 percent.
- Schools without elementary school counselors: 45.6% report graduation rates greater than 90 percent.
- Approximately 72% of school districts provide no comprehensive school counseling services to students in grades K-5.

Lower-performing schools/schools in lower-socioeconomic-status communities maintain higher caseloads than higher-performing schools.

In Connecticut:
- High-performing schools average school-counselor-to-student ratio:
  - High school = 1:82
  - Middle school = 1:211
- Low-performing schools average school-counselor-to-student ratio:
  - High school = 1:285
  - Middle school = 1:891

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

1. Lowering ratios allows school counselors to effectively deliver a comprehensive school counseling program to better meet students’ academic, career and social/emotional needs.

2. Socioeconomic status and community resources have an impact on school counselors’ ability to effectively deliver comprehensive school counseling programs.

3. School-counselor-to-student ratios may be optimal at 1:250, but grade level and socioeconomic factors of a district require close consideration.

Read the full report: www.schoolcounselor.org/effectiveness

SOURCE: ASCA grant-funded research of school counselor ratios and student outcomes in three states (Indiana, Connecticut, and New York).

RESEARCHERS: Jennifer L. Parzych, Ph.D., Southern Connecticut State University; Peg Donohue, Ph.D., Central Connecticut State University; Amy Gaesser, Ph.D., The College at Brockport, SUNY; Ming Ming Chiu, Ph.D., The Education University of Hong Kong
What are the findings?

Lower student-to-school-counselor ratios and complete implementation of the ASCA National Model lead to engagement in higher-quality college counseling learning activities.

85% of students in low-ratio (2:1) schools reported that their school counselors made an effort to really get to know them and treat them as an individual compared with 67% of students in high-ratio schools (30:1 or more).

First-generation college students attending schools with low student-to-school-counselor ratio, applied to and were accepted into more colleges than continuing-generation students attending high-ratio schools.

Lower ratios + more complete implementation of the ASCA National Model may play a role in closing the college knowledge gap between first-generation college students and continuing-generation students.

- Data gathered from students taking a subset of items on the College Admissions Knowledge Evaluation Test (CAKE) show that students attending low-ratio schools scored higher (67% correct) than students in high-ratio schools (46% correct).
- Students at schools with fully implemented ASCA National Model scored 66% correct (on the CAKE subset) compared with 46% of students with less-implementation of the ASCA National Model.

Read the full report: www.schoolcounselor.org/effectiveness

Source: ASCA grant-funded research study

More than 300 12th-graders, attending 10 different high schools across the United States, participated in an online survey to examine if graduating 12th-graders attending schools with lower student-to-school-counselor ratios that implement the ASCA National Model engage in a wider and more in-depth range of college counseling learning activities.

Researchers: Richard T. Lapan, Ph.D., University of Massachusetts - Amherst; Timothy Poynton, Ph.D., University of Massachusetts - Boston; Richard Balkin, Ph.D., University of Mississippi; Lindsay Jones, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts - Amherst
“Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”

~ John R. Wooden
What’s Your Big Takeaway?
THANK YOU!
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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