School Counseling in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Patrick R. Mullen and Glenn W. Lambie

University of Central Florida

Abstract

Disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEP) service many students; however, limited literature is published for school counselors working in these schools. Therefore, this manuscript provides a conceptual foundation for counselors working with students attending DAEPs. Specifically, the manuscript (a) reviews the types of alternative education schools in the United States; (b) introduces the individual, academic, and family factors of students in DAEPs; and (c) presents implications for counselors in DAEPs to support service delivery.

Keywords: disciplinary alternative education programs, school counseling

School Counseling in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Professional school counselors are charged to support the growth and success of *all* students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2011; 2012). However, many school counselors have limited information or training to work in alternative education schools (AESs), including schools for disciplinary problems (Downs, 1999). AESs provide educational services to students outside of the traditional school educational setting. The National Center for Educational Statistics (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010) defines an AES as a public school setting that:

> (1) addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, (2) provides nontraditional education, (3) serves as an adjunct to a regular school, or (4) falls outside the categories of regular, special education, or vocational education. (p. 61, C-1)

In addition, AESs enhance student potential for success by targeting curricula, programming, and interventions (Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009; Quinn et al., 2006; Unruh et al., 2007). Therefore, AESs have unique qualities as compared to traditional school settings. The uniqueness necessities counselors in AESs to possess knowledge related to attending student characteristics and empirically-supported counseling interventions for this population.

The number of AESs in the United States is increasing (Lehr et al., 2009). The National Center for Educational Statistics (Carver, Lewis, & Tice, 2010) found approximately 645,500 students in public school in the United States attended an AES in 2007-2008 due to at-risk behaviors (e.g., truancy, substance abuse, and behavior problems) as compared to about 613,000 students in the 2001-2002 school year

(Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002). In addition, 64% of the country's school districts offer AESs for at-risk students (Carver et al., 2010). Consequently, many school counselors interact with AESs in some fashion; possibly as a counselor in an AES.

However, only limited literature is published related to school counselors' working in AESs. Specifically, we conducted a literature search using EBSCO database, searching for keywords (e.g., *Professional School Counseling* and *Alternative Education; School Counseling* and *Alternative Education; Guidance Counseling and Alternative Schools*) in ERIC, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and Academic Search Premier. Thirteen publications were identified: (a) two were articles published in peer-previewed journals and (b) the other 11 publications were different types of scholarly papers (e.g., book chapters, dissertations). In addition, we reviewed the both the ASCA journal, *Professional School Counseling* (e.g., 1997-2011) and the *Journal of School Counseling* (e.g., 2003-2012). In *Professional School Counseling* no articles were identified related to AESs, however, the *Journal of School Counseling* published a single article on AESs (e.g., Perepiczka, 2009). Other related fields (e.g., education, special education) have literature addressing AESs; however, these publications do *not* address the unique characteristics of school counselors in AESs. Therefore, the purpose of this manuscript is threefold: (a) to introduce counselors to the types of AESs in the United States, (b) to identify common characteristics of students attending AESs for disciplinary problems (e.g., disciplinary alternative education programs), and (c) to present practical implications for counselors working in disciplinary alternative education programs that align with the ASCA (2012) *National Model*.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Multiple forms of AESs exist in public school systems across the United States. AESs may be categorized into several groups: (a) *popular innovations* – choice schools designed to challenge students to do better, (b) *Last chance programs* – mandated schools prior to expelling students from the school system completely, and (c) *remedial programs* – remediation schools for students who need specialized assistance (Raywid, 1994; Reilly & Reilly, 1983). In addition, nonpublic (e.g., military) and upper-socioeconomic preparatory (e.g., private and college preparation) schools provide educational service to students with diverse needs (Reilly & Reilly, 1983). As a result, AESs exist along a continuum from providing services for gifted and talented students to educating students exhibiting inappropriate behavior in traditional settings (e.g., students who have been expelled for inappropriate behavior). There are many forms of AESs that have specific missions and purposes. Understandably, it is beyond the scope of this manuscript to describe all AESs; therefore, we focus on AESs designed for disruptive and disciplined youth.

Specifically, we concentrate on AESs for students who are removed from their traditional home or zoned school due to district or school level discipline policies (e.g., students who have been expelled for inappropriate behavior; *last chance programs*). Therefore, we define *disciplinary alternative education programs* (DAEPs) as educational institutes, that are public, private, or charter, that service the kindergarten through 12th grade educational needs of students who, for disciplinary reasons, are removed from a traditional setting by the decision of the school, correctional system, and/or district administration (e.g., Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Cortez & Cortez, 2009;

Texas Education Agency, 2007). Moreover, the primary purpose of DAEPs is to provide a quality education to students with unique needs, not to serve as a detention center. Consequently, the needs of students enrolled in DAEPs may be uniquely different from students participating in other forms of AESs (e.g., remedial programs, career education, and detention centers) and traditional education settings.

Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

The number of disciplinary exclusions in the United States is increasing (Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). Students enter and attend an AES for a variety of actions, including referral by home school, social-emotional/behavioral issues, truancy, expulsion from traditional school, and suspension from traditional school (Foley & Pang, 2006). Common reasons for students to be expelled from traditional schools are weapon possession, drug possession or use, physical aggression towards others, verbal abuse to staff, and disruptive or defiant behavior (Morrison & D'Incau, 1997; Tsang, 2004). Additionally, students are referred to AESs due to behavioral problems in schools, academic remediation, poor social skills, family turmoil, and truant behaviors (McCall, 2003). As a result, many students enrolled in DAEPs exhibit behaviors associated with delinquency (e.g., violent and aggressive behaviors, defiant behaviors, and behavioral issues).

Limited research identifies specific characteristics of students enrolled in DAEPs. Thus, we reviewed the juvenile delinquency literature to identify potential descriptors of students enrolled in alternative schools. Specifically, *juvenile delinquency* is linked to the group of behaviors that include anti-social behaviors and illegal actions (Sprague, Walker, Steieber, Simonsen, Nishioka, & Wagner, 2001). The behaviors and actions

that precipitate a referral to DAEPs are behaviors of violence, aggression, and disruption (Foley & Pang, 2006; Morrison & D'Incau, 1997). States may designate DAEPs as programs for students who committed illegal acts (e.g., Texas; Texas Education Agency, 2007). Thus, logical inferences may be drawn between characteristics of students enrolled in DAEPs and delinquent youth.

Students in DAEPs are complex and their problematic behaviors develop out of an interaction of multiple factors (e.g., genetics, environment, neurocognitive, and social and emotional development; Loeber, 2008). Therefore, we present common factors that may contribute to students' disruptive behaviors, including: (a) *individual factors* (e.g., substance abuse, mental health concerns, and antisocial tendencies), (b) a*cademic factors* (e.g., educational disabilities, academic deficiency, and transitional problems), and (c) *family factors* (e.g., limited parenting skills, family discord, and family barriers). Nevertheless, the complexity of DAEP students' lives is not limited to the factors reviewed here; therefore, we provide an introduction to *some* factors that may arise in a counselors' work in DAEPs.

Individual factors. Individual factors represent the activities, behaviors, and characteristics that exist within the individual student. An individual factor influencing students in DAEPs is their mental health. Students who experienced abuse, exhibit depressive symptoms, and/or have a mental illness have higher likelihood of using substances and exhibiting anti-social tendencies (Nation & Heflinger, 2006; Mallett, Stoddard Dare, & Seck, 2009; Skeer, McCormick, Normand, Buka, & Gilman, 2009). The use of substances, inappropriate behavior, and violent behaviors all characterize reasons students are expelled from their zoned/home school and placed in DAEPs

(Foley & Pang, 2006). In addition, students in DAEPs report increased suicidal tendencies as compared to students in traditional schools (Lehr et al., 2004). The seriousness of suicide and the high prevalence in DAEPs identifies the necessity for increased awareness of students' mental health needs for counselors. That is, counselors need to understand and appreciate the diverse mental health needs of students in DAEPs.

Antisocial behavior in children and adolescents may be defined as any behavior that goes against what society considers as normal and acceptable (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). Antisocial behaviors may include violence, rule breaking, defiance towards authority, and breaking of societal and cultural norms that take place in multiple settings (e.g., community, home, and school). Students often are assigned to DAEPs due to behavior involving fighting, assaults, violence, and actions involving weapons (Foley & Pang, 2006; Texas Education Agency, 2007). Inherent in the placement of students to DAEPs is that these students are exhibiting antisocial tendencies and/or behaviors that are antisocial (e.g., McCall, 2003). In addition, many school districts use DAEPs to provide a safe educational learning environment for students displaying antisocial behavior (Van Acker, 2007). Accordingly, counselors working in DAEPs may expect that many of their students will display antisocial behaviors.

Lastly, another individual factor includes the illegal use of substances. Drug use among high school aged youth is prevalent and rising (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2011). Specifically, marijuana, prescription and over the counter drugs, and ecstasy use is increasing in the United States (NIDA). Students in DAEPs have higher rates of substance use and abuse when compared to students in a traditional school

(Clark, Ringwalt, Shamblen, & Hanley, 2011; Grunbaum et al., 2000; Grunbaum et al., 2001; Lehr et al., 2004; Tsang, 2004). In addition, the possession of controlled substances and alcoholic beverages is a common assignment justification for students in DAEPs (Carver et al., 2010; Texas Education Agency, 2007). Thus, possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances may be the reason students are assigned to DAEPs. Substance use may be a concern in all schools; however, its prevalence in DAEP may impact more students due to higher concentration of students using or possessing substances. Overall, counselors in DAEPs need to have an understanding of the multiple stressors influencing their students' social/emotional well-being and development to provide needed preventative and responsive counseling services.

Academic factors. The academic factors consist of educational-based skills and abilities for individual students including pitfalls and disadvantages. Academic ability is fundamental to a student's successful lifelong learning. Students experiencing academic problems may become frustrated, disaffected, and lose self-confidence, which contribute to discipline problems (Miles & Stipek, 2006). In other words, the inability to accomplish academic tasks may contribute to discipline problems and academic aberration. In fact, many students in DAEPs need specific attention on fundamental academic tasks such as reading, writing, and basic math skills. Lehr and colleagues (2004) found that most (85% or more) alternative schools teach "academic basics" (e.g., reading, writing, and math), "interpersonal skills", "content areas" (e.g., state required courses), "life skills", and "remedial instruction" (p. 15). Therefore, many DAEPs focus on student deficits by promoting the foundational educational abilities (e.g., basic skills)

of students (Lehr et al., 2004). Evidently, students enrolled in DAEPs receive distinct educational services as compared to students in traditional school settings.

Delinquent youth experience deficiencies in academic outcomes and intellectual ability when compared to their non-delinquent counterparts (Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann, 2008). Youth involved in the juvenile justice system show functioning problems and shortfalls in academics upon returning to traditional school settings (Brown, Riley, Walrath, Leaf, & Valdez, 2008). Delinquent youth score lower in both reading and math then non-delinquent students (Baltodano, Harris, & Rutherford, 2005; Tsang, 2004). As well, adjudicated youth may read at lower than expected grade level (Vacca, 2008). Due to poor academic development and/or poor academic skills, students may be retained or lose academic credits. Grade retention impacts dropout rates; retained students have a higher likelihood of dropping out of school (Jimerson & Ferguson, 2007). Many students enrolled in DAEPs have a consistent academic history of poor grades, suspension from school, and social isolation (e.g., Lange & Sletten, 2002). Therefore, the academic capability of students in DAEPs needs individual appraisal (e.g., assessment of basic academic skills). Counselors can guide appropriate services based upon individual assessments.

Student mobility (e.g., transition) causes disruption in delivery of educational services. Transitioning is "passing from one condition, place, or activity to another" and "a psychological response to change" (Turner, 2007, p. 224). Transition can be a source of stress for students and families; moving from one school to another may lead to distraction and insecurity in the new school (Schulz & Rubel, 2011). An assignment to a DAEP means the student is required to *transition* to a new school environment;

consequently, causes added disruption. Students placed at DAEPs often wait days or months for placement at the school (Taras et al., 2003) leaving the student in a transient state before attending the assigned school. Prolonged absences may impact student academic outcomes and comprehension (Brown, 2007). Thus, the transition between students' home school and DAEPs may impact their academic achievement and development.

A stigma is attached to DAEPs because they are inferred as being schools for *bad* students (Kim & Taylor, 2008). Labels such as *problem* and/or *bad* student are often placed on disciplined students (Kim & Taylor, 2008; Mendez, 2003). Students attending DAEPs may become resentful, feel rejected, and feel disliked because of their placement (Skiba & Noam, 2002). In addition, students in DAEPs may display negative feelings and resistance towards school staff (McCall, 2003), including being more disruptive because their dissatisfaction with their school placement (Skiba & Knesting, 2002). The placement at DAEPs may hinder students' confidence and willingness to comply with their academic responsibilities.

Many students in schools have disabilities; however, limited research is published relating to students with disabilities in DAEPs (e.g., Lehr, 2004; Unruh et al., 2007). Nevertheless, national survey data estimated that 12% of all students in AESs have an *Individualized Education Program* (IEP; Klienier, et al., 2002). In addition, students classified as having an *emotional behavioral disability* (EBD) are at the highest rate of disciplinary exclusion from their schools (Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). In fact, Bowman-Perrott and colleagues (2011) found that students with EBD held the highest expectancy for exclusion due to disciplinary reasons followed by students with

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and *specific learning disabilities* (SLD). Moreover, students identified as having an educational disability experience disproportionally higher rates of school suspension and disciplinary exclusion than those students identified as not having a disability (Krezmien et al.). As a result, counselors working in DAEPs will likely be serving students with disabilities at a higher rate than counselors in traditional school settings.

Student with disabilities in DAEPs bring their IEP from their traditional school to their new placement. However, the methods that AESs implement IEP vary based on state and district policy (Lehr et al., 2004). Specifically, Lehr and colleagues found that (a) 65% of states reported modifying students' IEP as to reflect the services *available* based on students' needs, (b) 38% of states reported they *discouraged* students with IEPs attendance in AESs, (c) 13% of states reported they *suspended* IEP services to students in AESs, and (d) 17% of states reported that they *terminated* IEP services for students in AESs. In addition, some states reported having *no knowledge* of students with IEPs in their AESs (Lehr et al.). Consequentially, DAEPs may not be providing the exceptional education services that their students require under federal law (IDEA, 2004), inhibiting students' academic and personal/social functioning. As noted, students enrolled in DAEPs have unique academic needs necessitating school counselors' support and advocacy.

Family factors. Students do not exist in isolation, they are a part of their family system that may support and/or hinder their academic growth and development (Lambie & Sias, 2005). Family factors correlate with students' educational and psychosocial outcomes (e.g., Costello, Compton, Keller, & Angold, 2003; Evans, 2004). Delinquent

youth are often raised in homes where discipline and cohesion is less present when compared to families with non-delinquent youth (Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli, & Huesmann, 1996). Consequentially, students enrolled in DAEPs may be raised in families lacking discipline and feelings of cohesion. Additionally, students exhibiting delinquent behaviors are raised in families with significant dysfunctionality (approximately 50% of respondents; Tsang, 2004). Students demonstrating delinquent behavior often have higher rates of family members with drug abuse problems, being incarcerated, and having a history of abuse, as compared to students without delinquent behavior (Buzi et al., 2003, 2003; Dembo, Schmeidler, & Childs, 2007; Lehr et al., 2004; Tsang, 2004). Hence, students in DAEPs may have limited family support to encourage their academic achievement.

Family systems are significant to students' development, where delinquency rates are higher in families with an absence of a biological parent as compared to families with non-absent parents (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Schroeder, Osgood, & Oghia, 2010). In addition, single parent homes with only the biological father present have the highest rate of delinquency as compared to married biological parents' homes that have the lowest rate of delinquency (Demuth & Brown, 2004). Furthermore, students enrolled in AESs have single female parents more often than students in traditional schools (Tsang, 2004). Therefore, school counselors in DAEPs may need to provide additional family and systemic support to their students as compared to counselors in traditional schools because of these students' unique needs.

As noted, limited research exist on the specific characteristics of students in DAEPs. Students attending DAEPs, however, have similar characteristics as those who

are identified as delinquent. Thus, we offered some factors and characteristics of delinquent youth in attempt to better conceptualize students in DAEPs. Next, we outline specific strategies that align with the *ASCA National Model* (2012) to support the distinct needs of student in DAEPs.

Role of the School Counselor in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

The *ASCA National Model* (2012) provides the mechanism for *all* school counselors to provide competency based services to *all* students. The effective implementation of the *ASCA National Model* takes into consideration the "local demographic needs and political conditions" (p. 10) and school counseling content standards. Therefore, school counseling programs within DAEPs should be designed based on the specific needs of the schools' stakeholders (needs assessment) and established counseling standards. For this reason, we present practical counseling interventions to promote the holistic development of students in DAEPs based on identified student needs that align with the ASCA National Model. In table 1, we summarize the factors and present interventions including the associated ASCA National Model standards. Table 1 may serve as a guide for the comprehensive application of service across the factors associated with these students enrolled in DAEPs.

Addressing Individual Factors

Substance abuse is common concern for students in DAEPs. Students should be taught about the dangers of substance use and abuse (ASCA, 2012; PS: C1.8). Groups provide "efficient and effective ways to meets students' developmental and situational needs" (ASCA, 2011, p. 27) in the school setting. In addition, in comprehensive school

counseling programs groups serve as a critical component (ASCA, 2012). Group

counseling in schools is an appropriate method to prevent and intervene in student

substance use (Burrow-Sanchez, Jenson, & Clark, 2009).

Table 1

Factors and Associated Interventions

Common Factors		School Based Assistance, ASCA National Standards (ASCA, 2004), and/or Deliver Mode
Individual Factors	• Substance Use • Mental Health • Antisocial Tendencies	• Group Counseling for Substance Use (PS:C1; Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services) • Service Referral (Individual Student Planning, System Support) • Wraparound services (System Support) • Classroom Guidance on Healthy Lifestyle (PS:A1; PS:C1; School Guidance Curriculum)
Academic Factors	• Educational Disability • Reading and Math Deficiency	• Accurate and Early Assessment of student Needs (Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services) • Academic Remediation (A:B1; Responsive Services, Individual Student Planning)
Familial Factors	• Parenting Ability • Family Discord	• Orientation with Family (School Guidance Curriculum) • Parent Education and Resources (School Guidance Curriculum) • Coffee Talk (School Guidance Curriculum)

Specifically, psychoeducational groups serve to prevent substance abuse and other

topics; support groups for substance use encourage students to remain free of

substances once they are no longer using (Burrow-Sanchez et al.). The Substance

Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMSHA; www.samhsa.gov) and National

Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA; www.drugabuse.gov) provide *free* curriculum and

educational guides for intervening and supporting students involved in substances,

which may utilized by school counselors.

We noted the prevalence of mental health needs of students in DAEPS. While school counselors have unique qualifications to deliver comprehensive counseling programs that target students' mental health needs, other stakeholders may better service severe student needs; thus, collaboration with families, staff, and community members is important (ASCA, 2011; Bemak, 2000). Referring students and families with severe needs to appropriate resources and services (e.g., substance abuse, mental illness, and family difficulties) is a significant role of effective school counselors (ASCA, 2012; Tucker, 2009; Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Oempsey, 2010). Services can be referred to other school professionals (e.g., school psychologist, school resource officer) or to community collaborators (e.g., charitable organizations, mental health agencies). Counselors are encouraged to develop resources for collaboration and referral to help support students with diagnosed mental illness.

In addition, the use of wraparound services can support students with mental health needs. A distinct difference between referral and wraparound services is the team-based approach in wraparound services promotes a holistic approach to supporting the student. Specifically, *wraparound service* is a collaborative team approach to supporting students' needs in school, home, and community (Suter & Burns, 2009). Wraparound services coordinate the skill sets and resources of multiple professionals (e.g., counselors, social workers, psychologist, mentors, teachers, and other stakeholders) who are invested in supporting the student and family. A team of service providers involved in a wraparound approach work together to use school and community based resources (e.g., mental health services, medical care, financial assistance, and mentoring; Suter & Burns, 2009). School counselors, collaborative in

nature, may organize wraparound service team meetings with stakeholders. Wraparound services are effective at reducing delinquent behaviors in students with emotional or behavioral problems (Mears, Yaffe, & Harris, 2009). In addition, wraparound services reduce recidivism (e.g., likelihood of students returning to a DAEP) and promote healthy thinking (Carney & Buttell, 2003). Accordingly, wraparound services are a collaborative modality that counselors can coordinate to provide systemic and holistic services to meet the all-inclusive educational and personal needs of students.

School counselors use diverse methods to implement interventions with students, including the use of classroom instruction. The school guidance curriculum delivers preventative and responsive information to all students (ASCA, 2012). The delivery vessel for school guidance curriculum may come in the form of classroom instruction. Moreover, counselors facilitate classroom guidance lessons that enhance "the awareness of mental health" (ASCA, 2011, p. 48). Accordingly, classroom guidance on important topics (e.g., decision-making, substance use, life skills) is a pathway for counselors to support student growth and development. Based on the mental health needs of students in DAEPs, classroom guidance curriculum addressing the specific topics of social skills can promotes healthy lifestyles and pro-social behaviors. For example, S*killstreaming the adolescent: New strategies and perspectives for teaching prosocial skills* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) is a curriculum that educates students about appropriate decision-making. Such curricula targets maladaptive patterns in behaviors identified in students with antisocial tendencies, targeting the specific needs of these students.

Addressing Academic Factors

Students in DAEPs have specific and unique academic needs. The *ASCA National Model* (2012) calls school counselors to appraise students' "abilities, interests, skills and achievement" (p. 86), facilitated by the use of test information, academic grades, discipline reports, academic credit checks, and attendance records. Limited research is published examining the use of individual and student appraisal as an intervention for students in AESs. Nevertheless, logical inferences can be made that students whom are academically behind (e.g., Baltodano et al., 2005; Vacca, 2008), missing school do to mobility (e.g., transition from zoned school; Lehr et al., 2004), and whom may have a growing distaste for school policy (e.g., Schulz & Rubel, 2011; Taras et al., 2003) would benefit from advanced inspection of their academic standing and ability. Assessment of students is *not* completed in isolation; but rather, is collaborative in nature utilizing school psychologists, social workers, and educators. Data on students' individual academic and vocational needs may modify their educational placement and course selection. Thus, the appraisal and assessment of students' needs provides the opportunity to assure students are placed in courses that match their needs.

Based on an accurate assessment of students needs, counselors can make accurate course placement that use academic and behavioral accommodations. Students in DAEPs and juvenile facilities have shown academic deficiency; specifically in, math and reading deficiencies are prevalent. Academic remediation may develop and promote these skills. Remediation can be accomplished in many forms (e.g., course placement, tutoring, mentoring, study skill development). *Student Success Skills*

(Brigman & Campbell, 2003) is an empirically supported program that is a counselor-led initiative to increase students' academic success, which may be utilized to address the primary academic needs of students enrolled in DAEPs.

Addressing Family Factors

Students in DAEPs and their families often have familiar discord or dysfunctionality. School counselors seek collaborative relationships with the guardians of students in an attempt to increase student growth and development (ASCA, 2012). Counselors have the responsibility to encourage parent engagement; especially for students considered at-risk (Bemak & Cornely, 2002). Higher parental involvement is positively associated to more engaged and more motivated students (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005). Students in DAEPs transition from their home school to this new school environment upon administrative assignment, influencing student and parent familiarity and understanding of the new school; which may contribute to feelings of insecurity and distrust (Schulz & Rubel, 2011). Thus, weekly student-parent (primary caregiver) orientations for new students facilitate an introduction to school-wide policies, school culture, and initiate parental involvement. Counselors can foster a welcoming school environment that encourages parental engagement in their students' education. For example, *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (Epstein et al., 2008) offers counselors a guide for building collaboration with families and community stakeholders, supporting opportunities for family-school collaboration.

The mental health needs of students in DAEPs are diverse and complex. Counselors should provide insight and education to families and community

stakeholders about mental health concerns and associated environmental factors

(ASCA, 2011). In addition, counselors have the skills and knowledge to provide parent

education on topics related to their students. Counselors can address an assortment of

topics that concern the parents of students in DAEPs (e.g., discipline, substance use,

academic planning). For example, the NIDA supplies substance use informational

handouts that are for parents/caregivers of students who are abusing substances (e.g.,

www.drugabuse.gov/parents-teachers). School counselors can utilize this free

curriculum to educate parents to promote increased family education and engagement.

Students in DAEPs often come from homes where there are unique parenting

situations. Accordingly, counselors can offer families the opportunity to enhance

parenting skills through education programs and small group education sessions to

meet the needs of families (Bemak & Cornely, 2002; Walker et al., 2010). *Coffee talk* is

an example of a parent education program that counselors can use to educate parents

on ways to supporting their students. As the name implies, the school provides coffee

and snacks, engaging parents and promoting a comfortable climate for parents to

become involved in their child's education (Bemak & Cornely, 2002). Once on campus,

school personnel (e.g., counselors) can educate parents about approaches to fostering

a home environment that is supportive of successful student development. Counselors

can utilize specific curricula to build parenting skills of the families (e.g., Cornell

University's *Parenting Skills Workshop Series;* www.human.cornell.edu/pam/outreach/

parenting). As well, counselors can facilitate book studies during these coffee talks

(e.g., *Positive Discipline*; Nelsen, 2006). Counselors coordinating collaboration and

parent education promote all educators' abilities to support students' academic achievement and development.

Conclusion

School counselors service numerous groups of students in a variety of settings. Many professional school counselors work with students in AESs. Yet, limited school counseling literature addresses this population of students and school modality, warranting more research. Researchers may examine the lived experiences of both students and staff within DAEPs, gaining better understanding the unique phenomenon of DAEP (qualitative inquiry). In addition, researchers may investigate specific counseling interventions employed in DEAPs (e.g., group and family counseling) to examine students' change and programmatic efficacy with a control group of students in a different DEAP (quasi-experimental design). Furthermore, research is needed to examine counselors' experiences working with students in DEAPs, investigation relationships between counselors' and students' variables potentially identifying influential factors in supporting student success (correlational research).

School counselor educators can incorporate information regarding DAEPs in their school counseling program curriculum. Specifically, school counselors-in-training may benefit from learning about their local AESs, includes DAEPs. Counselor educators can include more information regarding DAEPs in their curriculum for school counselor trainees by incorporating local and state level policies regarding DAEPs (e.g., federal and state laws that dictate expulsion for both general and exceptional education). Specific pedagogical interventions in the school counseling curriculum may include: (a) guest speakers (e.g., teachers, principles, school counselors) from local DAEPs to

speak about the how the school operate and maintain their school; (b) telephone interviews with school counselors regarding their experience with DAEPs; and (c) case studies that examine the experiences of a student in a DAEP. Counselor educators can prepare school counselors-in-training to work with and in DAEPs by including information pertaining to the characteristics of DAEPs and the students in DAEPs.

We introduced information pertaining to AESs in the United States; presented a conceptual understanding of the individual, academic, and family factors of students enrolled in DAEPs; and provided systemic school-based approaches for counseling service deliver that align with the *ASCA National Model* (2012). The individual, academic, and family factors of students in DAEPs are unique; accordingly, counselors need to tailor their service delivery to match their specific students. Our recommended school-based interventions and support mechanisms are for counselors to use in their ongoing work with students in DAEPs. In addition, we listed considerations for future research and pedagogical interventions for counselor educators to integrate into their school counseling curriculum. We believe a systemic, collaborative school counseling approach to supporting students in DAEPs will facilitate these students' academic achievement and holistic development.

References

American School Counselor Association (2004). *ASCA national standards for students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

American School Counselor Association. (2011). *ASCA position statements*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

American School Counselor Association. (2012). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Baltodano, H. M., Harris, P. J., & Rutherford, R. B. (2005). Academic achievement in juvenile corrections: Examining the impact of age, ethnicity, and disability. *Education and Treatment of Children, 28*(4), 361-379.

Bemak, F. (2000). Transforming the role of the counselor to provide leadership in educational reform through collaboration. *Professional School Counseling*, *3*(5), 323.

Bemak, F., & Cornely, L. (2002). The SAFI model as a critical link between marginalized families and schools: A literature review and strategies for school counselors. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *80*(3), 322-331.

Brown, J. D., Riley, A. W., Walrath, C. M., Leaf, P. J., & Valdez, C. (2008). Academic achievement and school functioning among nonincarcerated youth involved with the juvenile justice system. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 13*(1)*,* 69-75.

Brown, T. M. (2007). Lost and turned out: Academic, social, and emotional experiences of students excluded from school. *Urban Education*, *42*(5), 432-455.

Booker, K., & Mitchell, A. (2011). Patterns in recidivism and discretionary placement in

disciplinary alternative education: The impact of gender, ethnicity, age, and

special education status. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *34*(2), 193-208.

Bowman-Perrott, L., Benz, M. R., Hsu, H., Kwok, O., Eisterhold, L. A., & Zhang, D.

(2011). Patterns and predictors of disciplinary exclusion over time: An analysis of

the SEELS national data set. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*.

21(2), 83-96.

Brigman, G., & Campbell, C. (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement

and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling*, *7*(2), 91-98.

Burrow-Sanchez, J. J., Jenson, W. R., & Clark, E. (2009). School-based interventions

for students with substance abuse. *Psychology in the Schools*, *46*(3), 238-245.

Buzi, R. S., Tortolero, S. R., Roberts, R. E., Ross, M. W., Addy, R. C., & Markham, C.

M. (2003). The impact of a history of sexual abuse on high-risk sexual behaviors

among females attending alternative high schools. *Adolescence, 38*(152)*, 595-

605.

Buzi, R. S., Tortolero, S. R., Roberts, R. E., Ross, M. W., Markham, C. M., & Fleshler,

M. (2003). Gender differences in the consequences of a coercive sexual

experience among adolescents attending alternative schools. *Journal of School

Health, 73*(5)*, 191-196.

Carney, M. M., & Buttell, F. (2003). Reducing juvenile recidivism: Evaluating the

wraparound services model. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *13*(5), 551-568.

Carver, P. R., Lewis, L., & Tice, P. (2010). *Alternative schools and programs for public

school students at risk of educational failure: 2007-08* (NCES 2010-026). U.S.

Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Clark, H., Ringwalt, C. L., Shamblen, S. R., & Hanley, S. M. (2011). Project SUCCESS' effects on substance use-related attitudes and behaviors: A randomized controlled trial in alternative high schools. *Journal of Drug Education*, *41*(1), 17-44.

Cortez, A., & Cortez, J. (2009). *Disciplinary alternative education programs in Texas: A 2009 update.* San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association.

Costello, E., Compton, S., Keeler, G., & Angold, A. (2003). Relationships between poverty and psychopathology: a natural experiment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *290*(15), 2023-2029.

Dembo, R., Schmeidler, J., & Childs, K. (2007). Correlates of male and female juvenile offender abuse experiences. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *16*(3), 75-94.

Demuth, S., & Brown, S. L. (2004). Family structure, family processes, and adolescent delinquency: The significance of parental absence versus parental gender. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *41*(1), 58-81.

Downs, L. (1999). The educational counselor's role in alternative education. *Clearing House*, *73*(2), 118-120.

Epstein, J. L, Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C, Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2008). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Evans, G. W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, *59*(2), 77-92.

Foley, R. M., & Pang, L. (2006). Alternative education programs: Program and student characteristics. *High School Journal*, *89*(3), 10-21.

Goldstein, A. P., & McGinnis, E. (1997) *Skillstreaming the adolescent: New strategies and perspectives for teaching prosocial skills.* Rev. ed*.* Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Gonzalez-DeHass, A. R., Willems, P. P., & Holbein, M. (2005). Examining the relationship between parental involvement and student motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, *17*(2), 99-123.

Gorman-Smith, D., Tolan, P. H., Zelli, A., & Huesmann, L. (1996). The relation of family functioning to violence among inner-city minority youths. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *10*(2), 115-129.

Grunbaum, J. A., Kann, L., Kinchen, S. A., Ross, J. G., Gowda, V. R., Collins, J. L., & Kolbe, L. J. (2000). Youth risk behavior surveillance national alternative high school youth risk behavior survey, United States, 1998. *Journal of School Health, 70*(1) 5-17.

Grunbaum, J. A., Lowry, R., & Kann, L. (2001). Prevalence of health-related behaviors among alternative high school students as compared with students attending regular high schools. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 29*(5), 337-343.

Jimerson, S. R., & Ferguson, P. (2007). A longitudinal study of grade retention: Academic and behavioral outcomes of retained students through adolescence. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *22*(3), 314-339.

Katsiyannis, A., Ryan, J. B., Zhang, D., & Spann, A. (2008). Juvenile delinquency and recidivism: The impact of academic achievement. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *24*(2), 177-196.

Kim, J., & Taylor, K. (2008). Rethinking alternative education to break the cycle of educational inequality and inequity. *Journal of Educational Research, 101*(4), 207-219.

Kleiner, B., Porch, R., & Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000-01* (NCES 2002-004). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Krezmien, M. P., Leone, P. E., & Achilles, G. M. (2006). Suspension, race, and disability: Analysis of statewide practices and reporting. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 14*(4), 217-226.

Lambie, G. W., & Sias, S. M. (2005). Children of alcoholics: Implications for professional school counseling. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 266-273.

Lange, C. M., & Sletten, S. (2002). *Alternative education: A brief history and research synthesis.* Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

Lehr, C. A. (2004). Alternative schools and students with disabilities: Identifying and understanding the issues. *Information Brief, 3*(6), 1–6.

Lehr, C. A., Moreau, R. A., Lange, C. M., & Lanners, E. J. (2004). *Alternative schools: Findings from a national survey of the states.* (Report No. 2). Minneapolis, MN: Institute on Community Integration.

Lehr, C. A., Tan, C., & Ysseldyke, J. (2009). Alternative schools: A synthesis of state-level policy and research. *Remedial and Special Education*, *30*(1), 19-32.

Loeber, R. (2008). *Tomorrow's criminals: The development of child delinquency and effective interventions*. Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Mallett, C., Stoddard Dare, P., & Seck, M. (2009). Predicting juvenile delinquency: The nexus of childhood maltreatment, depression, and bipolar disorder. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, *19*(4), 235-246.

Mendez, L. (2003). Predictors of suspension and negative school outcomes: A longitudinal investigation. *New Directions for Youth Development*, (99), 17-33.

McCall, H. J. (2003). When successful alternative students "disengage" from regular school. *Reclaiming Youth and Children, 12*(1), 113-117.

Mears, S. L., Yaffe, J., & Harris, N. J. (2009). Evaluation of wraparound services for severely emotionally disturbed youths. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *19*(6), 678-685.

Miles, S. B., & Stipek, D. (2006). Contemporaneous and longitudinal associations between social behavior and literacy achievement in a sample of low-income elementary school children. *Child Development, 77*(1), 103–117.

Morrison, G., & D'Incau, B. (1997). The web of zero-tolerance: Characteristics of students who are recommended for expulsion from school. *Education and Treatment of Children, 20*(3), 316-336.

Nation, M., & Heflinger, C. (2006). Risk factors for serious alcohol and drug use: The role of psychosocial variables in predicting the frequency of substance use

among adolescents. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, *32*(3), 415-433.

National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2011). *InfoFact: High school and youth trends.* Retrieved from http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/infofacts/high-school-youth-trends

Nelsen, J. (2006). *Positive discipline.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Perepiczka, M. (2009). Wellness-based group counseling with elementary students in disciplinary alternative education programs. *Journal of School Counseling*, *7*(10). Retrieved from http://www.jsc.monana.edu/articles/v7n10.pdf

Raywid, M. (1994). Alternative schools: The state of the art. *Educational Leadership, 52*(1), 26-31.

Reilly, D. H., & Reilly, J. L. (1983). Alternative schools: Issues and directions. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 1089-98.

Quinn, M., Poirier, J. M., Faller, S. E., Gable, R. A., & Tonelson, S. W. (2006). An examination of school climate in effective alternative programs. *Preventing School Failure*, *51*(1), 11-17.

Sable, J., Plotts, C., & Mitchell, L. (2010). *Characteristics of the 100 largest public elementary and secondary school districts in the United States: 2008-09* (NCES 2011-301). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Schroeder, R. D., Osgood, A. K., & Oghia, M. J. (2010). Family transitions and juvenile delinquency. *Sociological Inquiry*, *80*(4), 579-604.

Schulz, L. L., & Rubel, D. J. (2011). A phenomenology of alienation in high school: The experiences of five male non-completers. *Professional School Counseling*, *14*(5), 286-298.

Skeer, M., McCormick, M., Normand, S., Buka, S., & Gilman, S. (2009). A prospective study of familial conflict, psychological stress, and the development of substance use disorders in adolescence. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *104*, 65-72.

Skiba, R. J., & Knesting, K. (2002). Zero tolerance, zero evidence: An analysis of school disciplinary practice. In R. J. Skiba & G. G. Noam (Eds.), *Zero tolerance: Can suspension and expulsion keep schools safe?* (pp. 17-43). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Skiba, R. J., & Noam, G. G. (Eds.). (2002). *Zero tolerance: Can suspension and expulsion keep schools safe?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sprague, J., Walker, H. M., Stieber, S., Simonsen, B., Nishioka, V., & Wagner, L. (2001). Exploring the relationship between school discipline referrals and delinquency. *Psychology in the Schools*, *38*(2), 197-206.

Suter, J., & Bruns, E. (2009). Effectiveness of the wraparound process for children with emotional and behavioral disorders: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, *12*(4), 336-351.

Taras, H. L., Frankowski, B. L., McGrath, J. W., Mears, C. J., Murray, R. D., & Young, T. L. (2003). Out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *Pediatrics*, *112*(5), 1206-1209.

Texas Education Agency. (2007). *Disciplinary alternative education program practices.* Policy Research Report No. 17 (Document No. GE07 601-11). Austin, TX: Author.

Tucker, C. (2009). Low-income African-American caregivers' experiences of being referred to mental health services by the school counselor: Implications for best practices. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(3), 240-252.

Turner, S. L. (2007). Introduction to special issue: Transitional issues for K-16 students. *Professional School Counseling, 10*(3), 224-226.

Tsang, W. (2004). *Adolescents in alternative schools: The psychological, behavioral, and academic characteristics of students in a disciplinary alternative education program* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Unruh, D., Bullis, M., Todis, B., Waintrup, M., & Atkins, T. (2007). *Programs and practices for special education students in alternative education setting* (Research Brief Volume 6 Issue 1). Retrieved from University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition website: http://www. ncset.org/publications/researchtopractice/NCSETResearchBrief_6.1.pdf

Vacca, J. S. (2008). Crime can be prevented if schools teach juvenile offenders to read. *Children and Youth Services Review, 30*(9), 1055-1062.

Van Acker, R. (2007). Antisocial, aggressive, and violent behavior in children and adolescents within alternative education settings: Prevention and intervention. *Preventing School Failure, 51*(2), 5-12.

Walker, H. M., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F. M. (2004). *Antisocial behavior in school: Evidence-based practices.* Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.

Walker, J. T., Shenker, S. S., & Hoover-Oempsey, K. V. (2010). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? Implications for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling, 14*(1), 27-41.

Biographical Statements

Patrick R. Mullen is a second year doctoral student at the University of Central Florida. Mr. Mullen has worked as a school counselor in multiple settings, including alternative education settings for six to 12th grade students. In addition, Mr. Mullen has worked as a mental health counselor in a multitude of settings and specialties. Mr. Mullen's area of research interest and expertise include (a) ethical and legal issues in counseling, (b) counseling in alternative education settings, (c) professional school counseling, and (d) school based interventions for multi-stressed youth.

Dr. Glenn Lambie is an Associate Professor at the University of Central Florida (UCF) and serves as the School Counseling Program Director for the UCF Counselor Education & School Psychology Program. He has practiced in the field of counseling for 18 years, including work as a licensed professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, and professional school counselor. Dr. Lambie has received multiple University, Regional, and National awards that recognize his scholarship, research, and service to the profession. Additionally, Dr. Lambie has served on the editorial boards for the national refereed journals, *Professional School Counseling*, the *Journal of Counseling & Development*, and *Counselor Education & Supervision*. Dr. Lambie's areas of research interest and expertise include (a) professional school counseling, (b) counselor development and supervision, and (c) counseling children and adolescents.