

# Collaborative Principal-School Counselor Preparation: National Standards Alignment to Improve Training Between Principals and School Counselors

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## Abstract

*To meet the challenges of promoting equitable educational opportunities and improved academic achievement for all P-12 students, principals and school counselors must join forces in substantive ways. However, higher education preparation programs for principals and school counselors have not typically collaborated in efforts to prepare candidates to work together through curricula employing national standards from both fields. The purpose of this project was to align standards and competencies from National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) to develop units of study for preparation programs that foster effective partnerships between administrators and school counselors. Guided by Social Capital Theory, this paper outlines standards-aligned curricular units for principal preparation, developed in partnership with school counseling faculty, that are currently being implemented at one Midwestern university with the goal of promoting collaboration toward P-12 student success.*

**Keywords:** Principal-Counselor Collaboration, Leadership Preparation, Cross-Discipline Standards Alignment, Social Justice Leadership

Effective relationships between principals and school counselors are imperative as we develop high-quality educational opportunity for all children, their families, and communities (Connolly & Protheroe, 2009; Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Martin, 2013). Working as allies, principals and school counselors are in a unique position to forge systemic change that promotes social justice, fosters student success, and develops partnerships with the school community to directly support the school's vision and mission (Connolly & Protheroe, 2009; Dahir, Burnham, Stone & Cobb, 2010; Janson, Militello, Kosine, 2008).

In their preparation programs, school counselors are trained to implement state and national professional counseling standards and competencies, including comprehensive school counseling programs based on the American School Counselor Association's national model (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012b). The ASCA national model calls for comprehensive school counseling to become an integral part of the school's academic mission and provides a framework with four essential components: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability (ASCA, 2012b). Roles of school counselors and use-of-time allocations are clearly outlined in comprehensive school counseling programs as counselors strive to address the academic, career, personal, and social development of all students (ASCA 2008, 2012b). In addition, under the ASCA (2012b) model, school counselors are summoned to leadership and advocacy roles within their schools and communities, which is fitting as reform in today's P-12 educational system calls for school leadership to be a collaborative effort (Brown et al., 2016; College Board, 2008; Janson, Stone & Clark, 2009; Marbley, Malott, Flaherty, & Frederick, 2011; Martin, 2013; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2017; Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunju, 2010).

Research indicates that strong comprehensive school counseling programs favorably advance important school goals like improved student achievement, opportunity, and equity (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carey & Martin, 2015; Wilkerson, Perusse, & Hughes, 2013). However, research also reveals that few school administrator preparation programs provide principal candidates with information on comprehensive school counseling or the national ASCA standards (Bringman, Mueller, & Lee, 2010; Leuwerke, Walker & Shi, 2009). Principals often exhibit lack of understanding about the appropriate roles of school counselors per the national model, which may

create barriers for implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs (Armstrong, MacDonald, & Stillo, 2010; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005).

The success of a school counseling program, like all vital programs within a school, is contingent upon support from the school leader (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Duslak & Geier, 2018). A positive partnership between the principal and school counselor may enhance outcomes in many areas, for example, increased support for at-risk and disadvantaged students (Johnson & Perkins, 2009), establishment of an achievement-oriented school climate (College Board, 2008), and heightened social justice advocacy (Crawford, Arnold, & Brown, 2014). Therefore, the need for effective and collaborative principal-counselor relationships cannot be overstated and prompts important implications and recommendations for administrator preparation programs. These recommendations, as outlined by Carnes-Holt, Range, and Cisler (2012), stress the need for principal candidates to be educated about the importance of school counselors and their appropriate roles, the ASCA national model for comprehensive school counseling, and the potential for partnerships between school counseling and administrative preparatory programs at the university level. In addition, it is essential for principal candidates to learn how to effectively work with school counselors to increase student achievement (Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010) and for principals to include counselors in school improvement processes and leadership activities (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunju, 2010; Young, Millard & Kneale, 2013). Improving the preparation of P-12 principals to effectively collaborate with school counselors per the national standards from both fields is the focus of this manuscript.

Although there is growing awareness of the importance of communication and respect in the principal-counselor relationship (Duslak & Geier, 2018; Finkelstein, 2009), principals may still be unaware or unclear about counselors' responsibilities and appropriate roles per comprehensive school counseling programs (Graham, Desmond, & Zinsser, 2011; Williams & Wehrman, 2010). Despite precise definitions of the school counselor's role by ASCA (2005, 2008) as a leader, advocate, collaborator, and systemic change agent; a lack of clarity regarding the role of the school counselor among principals has persisted. These include the principal viewing the counselor as a quasi-administrator and assigning the counselor inappropriate duties such as testing coordinator or disciplinarian, unrealistic use-of-time expectations, conflicting program focus, and role disparity (ASCA 2012b; Dahir et al., 2010; Edwards, Grace & King, 2014; Martin, 2013; Williams & Wehrman, 2010). In summary, principals' unclear role perceptions and their lack of understanding about the ASCA national model may present challenges for school counselors by placing barriers to the effective implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs and also by reducing the amount of time counselors have available to spend on appropriate duties as defined by ASCA (2008; 2012b).

At the same time, counselors may lack knowledge of national professional preparatory standards for principals; the National Educational Leadership Preparation standards (NELP), and this may limit school counselors' understanding of principals' roles and responsibilities (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2018). However, by introducing future principals and school counselors to the roles and standards from both ASCA and NELP while they are in training, a new understanding of the need for collaboration may be developed. To this end, we sought to develop a series of standards-aligned curricular units to be presented to principals and school counselors during their preparation programs, designed to foster positive collaborative relationships between future principals and school counselors towards school improvement and social justice. This paper details the principal preparation components of this project, which are currently being implemented at a Midwestern university.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to align standards and competencies from the new NELP standards with the ASCA standards to develop units of study that demonstrate collaboration between departments of educational leadership and school counseling in higher education institutions (ASCA, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2016; NPBEA, 2018). We strive to be proactive in preparing a new generation of highly collaborative school leaders who are equipped to partner with school counselors and other school stakeholders to create equitable and culturally responsive P-12 environments. Specifically, this project cultivates partnerships between principals and counselors with the goal of effectively navigating current educational challenges and promoting equity through cooperative practices that support all P-12 students through implementation of research-based standards and competencies.

Separate training programs for administrators and school counselors decrease opportunities for leaders and decision makers to understand roles, responsibilities, and relationships between the two disciplines (Carnes-Holt, Range, & Cisler, 2012; Shoner & Williamson, 2000). As the leading national standards for their respective fields, NELP and ASCA standards are critical components of principal and school counselor preparation programs throughout the United States (ASCA, 2004; NPBEA, 2018). Our goal was to bring together leading national standards from educational leadership and school counseling to identify and develop curricular units to prepare principals and school counselors to work together judiciously and effectively in educational settings. Furthermore, the integration of culturally responsive standards-based practices for principals and school counselors to enhance cultural competency, promote education for social justice, develop social capital networks, and foster inclusive school environments are important component of our joint training framework.

Research suggests that efforts to increase educational opportunities and collaboration between administrators, school counselors, and school stakeholders should take place to better prepare P-12 students to be college and career ready (DeSimone & Roberts, 2016). Studies on the topic of administrator and school counselor relationships have been completed (e.g. Dahir et al., 2010; Finkelstein, 2009; Janson, Militello, Kosine, 2008); and principal-counselor collaborative leadership models have been proposed (McCarty, Wallin, & Boggan, 2014). However, it is difficult to implement a collaborative pre-service program between two academic departments while integrating national standards and competencies for both programs. This paper will outline a comprehensive standards alignment with curricular units for principal preparation to promote collaboration with school counselors toward P-12 student success.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Social Capital Theory guides this work and refers to the relationships and social networks (i.e. principal-counselor-students-families-communities) where information and resources are shared and developed at the individual or institutional level. It has been proposed that variations in levels of social capital might be one reason why some schools and students perform at higher levels (Coleman, 1988; Linn, 2001; Ortiz, 2001; Plagens, 2011).

Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) are widely recognized for early development and application of Social Capital Theory in educational contexts. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital in terms of an individual's actual or potential access to institutional resources. Bourdieu postulated that a person's level of social capital was dependent on the size of his or her network of connections,

plus the collective amount of social capital possessed by each person in that network (Dika & Singh, 2002).

In schools, social capital and the pedagogic work of educators, as defined by Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) can work towards either preserving or transforming the status quo (English & Bolton, 2016). Bourdieu's concept of social capital suggests that most educational "reform" movements (e.g. high-stakes testing, school choice, vouchers) serve to maintain current cultural power structures and repressive practices, rather than dismantle them (English & Bolton, 2016). Therefore, school leadership requires a strong social justice perspective and understanding of culturally responsive practices (Minkos et al., 2017), as well as appreciation of social capital networks and relationship development as assets for school and student success (Plagens, 2011).

Employing a social capital lens, Coleman (1988) examined why high school graduation rates were higher in private religious schools than public schools. Coleman demonstrated the value of social capital to students in the private religious schools by identifying the sizeable and influential network of social relations that existed between parents, the school, and institutions in the community (Ortiz, 2001). In sum, social capital acted as a helpful resource (Coleman, 1988).

In school-based social capital, relationships occur at two levels, which include the micro-level (e.g., principals and families, principals and school counselors, school counselors and families) as well as at the macro-level (e.g., schools, community, business, or government agencies). Social capital plays a critical role in educational outcomes for P-12 students because school personnel such as principals and counselors, as well community partners, have valuable information, resources, and opportunities to help meet the changing needs of P-12 students (Lin, 2001). As such, the development of social capital guides our joint training of principals and school counselors to be change agents who pool their collective resources through teamwork.

## Method

The purpose of this project was to align national standards and competencies for educational leadership and school counseling, and to promote collaboration in training programs in higher education with a focus on social justice. University faculty members from educational leadership and school counseling developed the standards alignments and curricular units.

To start the process, we first conducted a comprehensive literature review to understand current practices surrounding principal and school counselor collaboration for both pre-service training and current practitioners. The literature provided insights into the importance of effective working relationships between principals and school counselors and also highlighted potential overlaps in skill development and training for principals and school counselors. We took insights gleaned from the literature and began an extensive review of standards and competencies that guide principal and school counselor training including *NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders* (NPBEA, 2018), *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (2016), and *ASCA School Counselor Competencies* (2012a).

After review of each set of standards or competencies separately, we mapped out an alignment of all three sets. This alignment went through several versions where we interrogated the alignment to ensure appropriateness and proper fit of each standard and competency. As a result, six curricular units for principal preparation were developed. Pre and post assessments were also developed to evaluate whether our intended curriculum was enacted (Porter, 2006).

## Standards-Aligned Curricula Units

Our curricular units and standards alignment allows future principals and school counselors opportunities to work together as collaborators to provide equitable learning opportunities for all P-12 students and to advocate for positive changes in public education for children, families, and communities (Bickmore & Curry, 2013; Perusse, Roynton, Parzych, & Goodnough, 2015). While aligning the national standards and competencies, we identified themes and trends for intentional partnerships between departments of educational leadership and school counseling in higher education with a focus on culturally responsive practices.

We incorporated social justice advocacy throughout the curricula. To provide candidates with research, theory, and practical applications of social justice leadership, we developed culturally responsive practices for each unit and also adopted a textbook as a “core reader” to be used in six foundational courses during the principal preparation program. The core reader we selected was, *Leadership for Increasingly Diverse Schools* (Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015). Two to three chapters are studied in each course. A culminating reflection and application activity occurs in the internship at the end of the principal preparation program.

The following six units are currently being implemented in the principal preparation program, with parallel units soon to be implemented in the school counseling preparation program. The units developed for the principal preparation program are the focus of this paper and are summarized below.

### Unit 1: Introduction to Comprehensive School Counseling (CSC)

This unit is designed for school administration candidates who are beginning their degree or licensure program. Candidates are introduced to the national standards and competencies that guide educational leadership and school counseling preparation, as well as the framework for comprehensive school counseling. Seven topics are included in this unit and cover themes such as the research surrounding comprehensive school counseling, college and career readiness, NELP standards, and key aspects of culturally responsive practices. The *ASCA National Model* and *ASCA Student Mindsets and Behaviors For Student Success* are also introduced in this unit (ASCA, 2003, 2005, 2012b, 2014). Example class activities include having principal candidates write leadership essays describing how they will work collaboratively with school counselors to implement CSC. The standards alignment for this unit is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Standards Alignment for Unit 1: Introduction to Comprehensive School Counseling (CSC)*

Unit 1 Topics	<i>ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors</i>	<i>ASCA School Counselor Competencies</i>	<i>NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders</i>
1.1 Framework for CSC ( <i>The ASCA National Model</i> )	All standards	I-A-1, I-B-2, I-B-2d, III-B-4d, V-B-3a	1.1-1.2

1.2 The research base behind effective school counseling programs and best practices	A.1, A.3-8, B.1, B.2	I-A-3, I-B-1b, I-C-7, IV-A-5, IV-B-3, V-A-2, V-B-1f, C-V-3, V-C-1	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
1.3 College and career readiness (CCR)	A.4. a-d	I-A-8, I-C-3, II-A-8, III-A-5, III-B-2d, III-B-2e-g, III-B-3I, plus <i>ASCA Student Mindsets and Behaviors For Student Success</i>	4.1, 4.2, 4.4
1.4 Education and licensure of counselor	D. a-n	II-B-1b, II-B-4a	7.1
1.5 State and national standards	E. a-c	I-B-3e, I-B-5c, II-A-1, II-A-2, II-A-6, II-B-1, II-B-3, II-B-3a	2.1, 2.2, 2.3
1.6 Key aspects of culturally responsive practices	A.6. e, B.1 d.	I-A-6, III-A-6	3.1, 3.2
1.7 Skills and dispositions for culturally responsive practices	A.1. f	III-A-6, IV-B-3c	3.3

*Note.* Standards and competencies from NELP and ASCA (ASCA, 2012a, 2016; NPBEA, 2018). *The ASCA National Model* and *ASCA Student Mindsets and Behaviors For Student Success* are introduced in this unit (ASCA, 2003, 2005, 2012b, 2014).

## Unit 2: The Roles of the School Counselor and the Administrator

In Unit 2, the roles and responsibilities of both administrative and school counselor positions are studied. Following an introduction to comprehensive school counseling in Unit 1, eight topics related to the duties of school counselors and administrators are included in this unit. Themes such as the administrator-counselor relationship, counselors as advocates for all students, and supporting students’ social, emotional, and academic needs are covered. Principal candidates learn the appropriate utilization of a counselor’s time, expertise, and skills in this unit. Example activities include principal candidates learning how to conduct school equity audits for purposes of school improvement. The standards alignment for Unit 2 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Standards Alignment for Unit 2: The Roles of the School Counselor and the Administrator*

Unit 2 Topics	<i>ASCA Ethical Standards for</i>	<i>ASCA School Counselor Competencies</i>	<i>NELP Standards</i>

	<i>School Counselors</i>		<i>for Building Level Leaders</i>
2.1 The administrator-counselor relationship	B.2. e.	I-B-1e, I-B-4, I-C-5, IV-C-3	7.1, 7.2
2.2 The counselor's use of time	B.2. c.	IV-A-4, IV-B-2c, IV-B-4, IV-B-4a, IV-B-4b, IV-B-4d, IV-B-5, IV-B-5a-b	7.1, 7.3, 7.4
2.3 Collaboration of counselors, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel to serve all students	B.2. a-f	I-A-6, I-B-4, I-C-5	3.3, 7.2
2.4 Supporting students socially, emotionally, and academically	A.1. a-j	I-A-9, I-B-4, I-B-4c, I-B-5, I-C-1, III-A-5, III-A-6, III-B-1b, III-C-2	1.1, 3.1, 3.2
2.5 Counselors as advocates for all students	A.6. 1-h, A.10. a-g	I-A-5, I-B-1c, I-B-3, I-B-3a, I-B-3b-d, I-C-4, II-C-1	7.2, 5.1, 5.3
2.6 Crisis response planning	A.9. a-d	III-A-7, III-A-8, III-B-3, III-B-3f, III-B-3g, III-B-3m	6.1, 6.3
2.7 Shifting from deficit to assets-based thinking	A.10. a-g	III-A-6	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
2.8 Examining community cultural wealth	A.10. a, c	-	3.1

*Note.* Standards and competencies from NELP and ASCA (ASCA, 2012a, 2016; NPBEA, 2018).

### **Unit 3: Delivery and Management of Counseling Services**

Counseling services are delivered in a variety of modes and approaches. Effective methods of providing and managing those services are covered in Unit 3. The content in Unit 3 builds upon the knowledge and understanding of school counselors' and administrators' roles in Unit 2. Six topics are included in Unit 3 and concentrate on themes such as managing student services programs, direct and indirect CSC services, human resource management and resource allocation, and leadership for social justice. As part of *The ASCA National Model*, the four CSC program components of foundation, management, delivery, and accountability are reviewed (ASCA, 2003, 2005, 2012b). Example class activities include principal candidates learning how to utilize collaborative processes for effective search, screening, and hiring of school counselors. Table 3 summarizes the standards alignment for this unit.



Table 3

*Standards Alignment for Unit 3: Delivery and Management of Counseling Services*

Unit 3 Topics	<i>ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors</i>	<i>ASCA School Counselor Competencies</i>	<i>NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders</i>
3.1 Management of student services program	All standards	IV-A-6, IV-B-1, V-B-1a, IV-B-1b	6.1, 6.2
3.2 Direct and indirect CSC services	A.1. a-j, A.4. a-d, A.8. a-b, A.7. a-j	III-B-1-III-B-4d	2.2, 4.4
3.3 Hiring of counselors	-	-	7.1
3.4 Appropriate counselor to student ratio	B.2. e	V-B-1	6.1, 7.3
3.4 Financial and human resources in support of comprehensive school counseling	A.3. e	IV-B-1, IV-B-6e	7.1, 7.2, 7.4
3.5 Leadership for equity and social justice	A.1. f	I-A-5, I-A-8	1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
3.6 Human resource management of counselors for equity and social justice	A.10. a-g	I-A-6	7.1, 7.4

*Note.* Standards and competencies from NELP and ASCA (ASCA, 2012a, 2016; NPBEA, 2018).

**Unit 4: Professionalism, Ethics, and Legal Issues**

In Unit 4, professional, ethical, and legal decisions and issues for school counselors and administrator are presented. While methods to deliver and manage counseling services are discussed in Unit 3, the content in Unit 4 specifically reviews five topics related to professional and ethical decision-making. Topics in this unit include confidentiality, *A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools* (Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen, & Pollitt, 2013), and the *Every Student Succeeds Act* ([ESSA], P.L. 114-95, 2015). The *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (2016) are incorporated into this unit to better prepare administrators and counselors to advocate for all students. Principal candidates also learn requirements for reporting child-abuse, suicide, and bullying; as well as prevention and intervention techniques. Example class activities include reflection papers on case studies surrounding these and other important child-advocacy issues. The standards alignment for this unit is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Standards Alignment for Unit 4: Professionalism, Ethics, and Legal Issues*

Unit 4 Topics	<i>ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors</i>	<i>ASCA School Counselor Competencies</i>	<i>NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders</i>
4.1 Counselor and administrator professionalism and ethical standards	All standards (especially F. a-i)	I-A-7, I-B-1h, II-A-7, II-B-4a, II-B-4b, II-B-4g, II-B-4i, II-B-4j, II-B-4k	2.1, 2.2, 2.3
4.2 Confidentiality	A.2. a-o, A.12. a, A.13. c	II-B-4k	2.1, 2.3
4.3 Prevention, intervention, and reporting of suicide, child-abuse, bullying, harassment	A.9. 1-d, A.11. a-e	I-A-9, III-A-7	2.1, 2.2, 6.3
4.4 A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools	A.10 a-g, A.11 a-e, B.2 m-n	I-A-9, IV-B-3g	2.3, 6.1
4.5 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	A.2 j, A.6 c	I-A-7, II-C-5	6.2, 6.3

*Note.* Standards and competencies from NELP and ASCA (ASCA, 2012a, 2016; NPBEA, 2018). *A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools* (Cowan et al., 2013) and *ESSA* (2015) are also included in this unit.

**Unit 5: Evidence-Based Accountability and Improvement Processes**

The accountability and continuous improvement plans for administrators and school counselors are emphasized in Unit 5. Building upon the professional, ethical, and legal subjects from Unit 4, Unit 5 focuses on nine topics related to data-based decision-making and cooperative improvement processes. Examples of topics include the school counselor's role on school leadership teams, self-assessment, and annual agreements between school administrators and counselors. The topics in Unit 5 also stress the importance of ongoing professional development and continuing education opportunities for school counselors and administrators. Example class activities include principal candidates interviewing school counselors and learning effective counselor evaluation techniques and processes. Table 5 presents the standards alignment.

Table 5

*Standards Alignment for Unit 5: Evidence-Based Accountability and Improvement Processes*

Unit 5 Topics	<i>ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors</i>	<i>ASCA School Counselor Competencies</i>	<i>NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders</i>
5.1 Data-based program assessment	A.3. a-g, A.13. i	1-C-7, IV-A-5, IV-B-2d, IV-B-3a-f, IV-B-4a, IV-B-6f, V-A-2, V-A-3, V-B-1, V-B-1a-b, V-B-1e, V-B-1h	4.3, 6.2
5.2 The counselor’s role on school leadership teams	A.3. a	I-B-2, I-B-2a-c, III-A-5, III-A-6	1.2
5.3 CSC advisory councils	A.4. a	I-A-6, I-B-1e, I-B-1h	1.2, 5.2, 5.3
5.4 Counselor’s evaluation by the administrator	-	V-B-2a, V-B-2b, V-B-2c	7.4
5.5 Counselor’s self-assessments	A.13. i	II-B-4h, III-B-4a-c, IV-B-1g, V-B-2a	7.4
5.6 Annual agreements	-	IV-B-1e	7.2
5.7 Counselor’s professional development and continuing education	B.2. d	IV-B-1d, IV-B-1e, IV-B-1g	7.3
5.8 & 5.9 Examine internal implicit bias, identity, and privilege through lenses of race, linguistic diversity, class, sexuality, gender (dis)ability, and power	A.10. a-g	III-A-6, IV-B-3c	3.1, 3.2, 3.3

*Note.* Standards and competencies from NELP and ASCA (ASCA, 2012a, 2016; NPBEA, 2018).

**Unit 6: Family and Community Partnerships and Engagement**

Methods of establishing and maintaining effective partnerships between school stakeholders, school counselors, and administrators are outlined in Unit 6. As Unit 5 emphasizes accountability and continuous improvement for school counselors and administrators, Unit 6 highlights the necessity of creating commitment to all students’ success with families and communities and methods to do so. Five topics are included in this unit and focus on themes such as effective communications and engaging the community in the comprehensive school counseling program. In addition, a culminating reflection and application (internship) activity regarding culturally responsive practices is included in Unit 6. Example activities include the principal candidate and school counselor collaborating on a robust school improvement project at the school site. The standards alignment for this unit is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6

*Standards Alignment for Unit 6: Family and Community Partnerships and Engagement*

Unit 6 Topics	<i>ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors</i>	<i>ASCA School Counselor Competencies</i>	<i>NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders</i>
6.1 Parents/Guardians as partners in student success	A.6. a, B.1. a-i	I-A-6, I-B-1e, I-B-4, I-C-5	5.1, 5.3
6.2 Effective communications	B.1. e, B.1. h	I-B-1e, IV-B-6g	5.1
6.3 Community and business partnerships	A.6. f	I-C-5	5.2
6.4 Engaging the community in the CSC	A.6. a-d	I-B-2, I-B-4, IV-B-2	5.1, 5.2, 5.3
6.5 Culturally responsive standards-based practices for administrators and counselors	A.6. e, A.10. a, B.1. d	I-B-4c, II-B-4b	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

*Note.* Standards and competencies from NELP and ASCA (ASCA, 2012a, 2016; NPBEA, 2018).

**Discussion**

This paper outlines standards-aligned preparatory units for principals designed to foster partnerships with school counselors towards social capital development and success for all P-12 students in today’s schools. We incorporated culturally responsive practices and leadership for social justice throughout the units as social justice curricula has been shown to influence the development of positive dispositions in school leadership candidates (Allen, Harper, & Koschoreck, 2017). Taken together, the new units allow application of every component of the NELP Building-Level Leadership Standards 1-7, with additional collaborative leadership practice in the internship experience (Standard 8) at the end of the program (NPBEA, 2018). These units were designed to encourage teamwork, communication, and understanding between principals and counselors; and were developed by a team of educational leadership and school counseling faculty members who teach the preparatory courses. Faculty members have begun implementing the units and we are helping each other in the development of lessons, joint presentations, resources, and assessments.

In relation to our theoretical framework, the alignment and curricula developed in this project outlines intentional collaboration between administrative and school counselor training programs that promotes the development of social capital networks. This occurs at both the micro- and macro-levels as identified by Coleman (1988) and Lin (2001). Units 1-5 are focused on developing future administrators’ knowledge about counselors and effective counselor-principal professional relationships (micro-level) that are most impactful when the professionals are culturally competent and collaborative. Therefore, cultural competence and an understanding of engagement with the larger community and outside resources at the macro-level are also developed in these units. Unit 6 situates the role of principals and counselors as integral to an understanding of families and the larger communities (macro-level). In sum, the units serve to develop collaborative relationships

and increased social capital networks for students and schools, which enhances access to institutional resources and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986).

Moving forward, it will be important to continuously evaluate and improve the curricular units using assessments, research, and standards to guide our revisions. We have conducted pre-assessments of all incoming principal candidates in terms of their current attitudes regarding social justice leadership and their understanding of the roles of school principals in working with school counselors. We will be monitoring our candidates' progress using post-evaluations and other measures as they complete the units. We look forward to assessing candidates' attitudes and understandings as they move through the preparatory programs to determine if we are meeting our goal of developing candidates who understand and can demonstrate principal-counselor collaboration, social justice leadership, and social capital network development.

The units we have created for principal preparation promote understanding and practical application of essential teamwork between principals and counselors. Our units were developed by university faculty from educational leadership and school counseling collaboratively from a collective standards alignment that focuses on shared leadership, social justice advocacy, and vision between principals and counselors. We believe implementation of our units is an initial and promising step in the career development of principals and school counselors who will join forces to improve P-12 student outcomes.

## **Conclusions**

Public education and the needs of P-12 students are ever changing, and it is important that educators are trained in ways that promote collaborative, "all hands-on deck" efforts to ensure educational opportunity and equity. As this collaboration is needed at the school level, training models must adapt and move from training in silos to building intentional partnerships that foster appropriate skill development.

While current literature highlights the importance of the principal-counselor relationship in meeting the academic, personal/social, and career development needs of students, few researchers have explored the process by which graduate level training programs intentionally prepare each to enter these collaborative relationships in P-12 schools. This project fills this gap by developing joint standards-based curricular units designed to promote principal-counselor teamwork, communication, understanding, and respect.

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