

A Snapshot in Time: 1,244 School Counselors Speak Out About the Alabama State Plan

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Abstract

The Alabama Department of Education (ALSDE) introduced the revised Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Alabama Public Schools (State Plan) in 2003. Based on sweeping national changes in school counseling and the first publication of the ASCA National Model® (American School Counselor Association, 2003, 2005), the ALSDE was among the first states to use the ASCA National Model as the framework for redesigning statewide school counseling programs. In Fall 2004, during the first year of implementation of the revised State Plan, this study measured how well the State Plan was put into practice. With responses from 1,244 public school counselors (74% of Alabama school counselors), results are reported, as well as suggestions for school counselors, counseling coordinators, administrators, and the ALSDE to move school counseling forward to a fully implemented comprehensive program.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) introduced the ASCA National Model® (2003, 2005) and thus extended the influences of the *ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (Campbell &

Dahir, 1997; Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998) and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (The Education Trust, 1997). Most significantly, the ASCA National Model reiterated the importance of comprehensive and developmental school counseling programs by utilizing successful school counseling models from experts in the field (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Myrick, 2005). As a result of the ASCA National Model, most state departments of education and/or state school counselor associations in the United States have refined or redesigned their state program guidelines since 2003. Yet, even though most states have realigned their state programs, no published research has focused on school counselor readiness to shift from the traditional counseling of the past decades to transformed 21st century practices as articulated in the ASCA National Model. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes, beliefs, strengths, and challenges of Alabama school counselors as they undertook the implementation of *The Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Alabama Public Schools* (State Plan) (2003). Prior to the examination of the variables in this study, national changes in school counseling and expectations found in the State Plan will be reviewed.

National Changes in School Counseling

The notion of a comprehensive guidance and school counseling program was first developed by Gysbers and Moore (1981). This concept, developed and refined over the past 27 years (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005), has sustained the overall mission of schools by promoting student achievement, career planning, and personal and social development for *all* students.

Major influences also impacted school counseling in more recent years. In the late 1990s, the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Dahir et al., 1998) restated the urgent need for school counselors to deliver comprehensive school counseling programs and to consider such factors as the demographic needs and the political climate of the community. Additionally, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (The Education Trust, 1997) called for social advocacy in school counseling and a new vision that strongly advocated for *all* children (i.e., all deserve the same educational opportunities, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status). During the 21st century, the new vision in school counseling has been bolstered and sustained by the ASCA National Model, the national framework for comprehensive school counseling programs. Consequently, the ASCA National Model is dedicated to moving school counseling from a *position* (i.e., the role of the school counselor) to a school counseling *program* (i.e., impacting student achievement and school success).

The ASCA National Model

The ASCA National Model, a deliberate, programmatic delivery system aimed to benefit *all* students, fully embraces the new vision of school counseling (ASCA, 2003, 2005; The Education Trust, 1997), converging on such factors as advocacy, leadership, teaming and collaboration, use of data, counseling, commitment to accountability, and systemic change. The ASCA National Model has four quadrants to examine. The first component, the Foundation, addresses the belief and mission that every student will benefit from a school counseling program and focuses on “the *what* of the program, discussing what every student should know and be able to do” (p. 22). Second, the Delivery System component defines the implementation process and the components of the comprehensive model and is considered “the *how* the program will be implemented” (p. 22). The delivery system includes the guidance curriculum, individual planning with students, responsive services, and system support. Third, the Management System, addresses “the *when* (calendar and action plan), *why* (use of data), and *on what authority* (management agreement and advisory council) the program will be implemented” (p. 22). This component presents the organizational processes and tools needed to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program, including use of data, action plans for guidance curriculum, closing the gap, and time and task analysis. Fourth, the Accountability System, demonstrates the relationship of the school counseling program to the instructional program and “answers the question: “*How are*

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students different as a result of the school counseling program?" (p.23).

In more recent years, the alignment of school counseling programs with student learning has become the driving force for revisions of statewide counseling program models. Of 50 states, Alabama was one of the first to revise the state school counseling program based on the ASCA National Model. Alabama's state school counseling program, (i.e., the State Plan, 2003), will be briefly reviewed.

Alabama's State Plan

The ALSDE revised the State Plan in 2003, based on the ASCA National Model and with consultation from Dr. Norman Gysbers. With similar wording to the ASCA National Model, the State Plan established counseling and guidance as an "integral component of each school's total educational program" (p. v). The tenets of the State Plan are: "(1) School counseling and guidance programs are based on specific student knowledge and skill content.; (2) School counseling and guidance programs are outcome-based programs.; and (3) School counseling and guidance programs are developmental and comprehensive in scope and sequence" (the State Plan, p. 1). The State Plan also embraces the four key components of the ASCA National Model (i.e., foundation, delivery, management, accountability) to ensure that Alabama school counselors build comprehensive school counseling programs at the local level, while simultaneously using the same language and focus as their counterparts across the nation.

As a result of the revised State Plan (2003), Alabama school counselors have

a document that affords the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive program, based on the ASCA National Model and addresses the goals of education and *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Further, the State Plan supports the need for school counselors to articulate how their contributions positively impact student achievement, show accountability for school improvement, and become valued members of the educational environment (Stone & Dahir, 2007).

The Current Study

School counselors have struggled for years (at the national and state level) to move from an array of ancillary services to meeting the needs of all students' needs through comprehensive, preventative, and developmental programs (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2005; Wittmer, 2000; Wittmer & Clark, 2007). At the present time, no published research has examined school counselor's readiness to implement the ASCA National Model. Thus, the opportunity to examine school counselor readiness during the transition to 21st century school counseling is limited to nonexistent. With this in mind, the authors chose to examine the attitudes, beliefs, strengths, and challenges of school counselors in Alabama in October 2004, the year the revised State Plan (2003) was implemented for the first time. This study was conducted with the use of a readiness instrument, The Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASCNPD; Dahir & Stone, 2003) survey. The goals of the study were: (1) to give school counselors an opportunity to voice their views; (2)

to report readiness findings to school counselors, coordinators, and the ALSDE; (3) to inform policymakers and stakeholders of what is needed to successfully implement the new State Plan (i.e., priorities, strengths, limitations); and (4) to use the data to inform the direction needed for professional development for school counselors during the transition period and thereafter.

Method

Instrument

To measure readiness of Alabama school counselors during the implementation year of the State Plan (2003), The ASCNPD (Dahir & Stone, 2003) survey was utilized. The ASCNPD survey is a 56-item self-report survey with a 5-point Likert scale, coded to the specific school counseling functions (i.e., school counseling priorities, school setting perceptions, personal/social, career, and academic domains, management of program) and designed to address the new vision of school counseling (e.g., school counselor attitudes, knowledge and skills in the areas of advocacy, leadership, teaming and collaboration, use of data, counseling). In analyzing the ASCNPD survey, Burnham, Dahir, Stone, and Hooper (in review) found after principal component analyses (PCA) that a six-component orthogonal solution was most interpretable, with 53.49% of the total variance explained. The internal consistency estimate was an alpha of .94.

Participants

A copy of the ASCNPD survey was sent to all (1,691) public school counselors in

Alabama in October 2004 via the 133 counseling coordinators in the state of Alabama. Of the surveys mailed, 74% ($n=1,244$) were returned. The participants were: 461 elementary school counselors, 224 middle/junior high school counselors, 312 high school counselors, 74 K-12 counselors, and 171 who described themselves as "other." Of the school counselors, 17% had no teaching experience, 52.4% had 1-10 years teaching experience, 28.3% had 11-25 years teaching experience, and 2.3% had 25+ years teaching experience.

Procedure

During 2004, the implementation year of the newly revised State Plan (2003), there were 1,691 public school counselors in Alabama. Copies of the ASCNPD (Dahir & Stone, 2003) survey were mailed to the 133 counseling coordinators in Alabama public school counselors in October 2004, with a cover letter. The mailings took place after Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was attained from the authors' respective universities. The coordinators were asked to distribute the cover letter and surveys to all school counselors employed in their respective school systems. The surveys were returned to the first author for data analysis.

Results

The survey questions were presented on a Likert scale and analyzed by categories (i.e., *Your School Setting*, *Your Priorities*, *Your Work with Students*) (see Tables 1-3). The analyses were disaggregated between elementary, middle, and high schools, K-12, and total population and aggregated to reflect the thinking and perspectives of a

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representative sample of Alabama school counselors (See Appendix A).

Descriptive Data from the ASCNPD

Your School Setting category captured the perception of school counselors regarding their involvement in specific roles, initiatives, practices, and services within the respective schools. Table 1 offers the aggregate data for the top five strengths and top five areas that need most improvement in the *Your School Setting* category. For example, the data revealed such findings as: 98% of school counselors in Alabama consult often with parents, teachers, and administrators, 98% strongly believe that all students can achieve at high levels, and 97% counsel individuals on personal/social issues. By examining the areas that need most improvement, more findings were evident. For example, 75% of the school counselors work to increase the participation of underrepresented students in higher-level academics and slightly more than 50% of the school counselors monitor and evaluate the impact of the school counseling program on student achievement. Consultation with teachers to improve classroom management techniques had the lowest response rating (i.e., 52%) in this category. Appendix A, under *Your School Setting*, has disaggregated data across elementary, middle, and high schools, K-12, and the total population.

Table 2 offers the aggregate data for the top five most important and least important activities and tasks in the *Your Priorities* category. The *Your Priorities* category requested that participants rate the importance of specific activities or tasks for school counselors. Aggregated

data revealed that traditional practices prevail among the Alabama school counselors as most important. For example, 95% highly endorse individual counseling, while 82% monitor student performance rather than the new vision/transformed school roles as suggested in the ASCA National Model. New vision practices that received the least important ratings included: (a) changing policies and practices that can negatively impact student success (74%), (b) serving on school committees (65%), (c) attending academic, department, or grade level meetings (57%), (d) providing professional development for teachers (49%), and (e) helping teachers improve classroom management skills (39%). Appendix A, under *Your Priorities*, has disaggregated data across elementary, middle, and high schools, K-12, and the total population.

Table 3 offers the aggregate data for “Since school started this year, how often have you worked with students (%)?” in the *Work with Students* category. This captured the traditional roles of school counseling versus the new vision in the State Plan (2003) and the ASCA National Model (2003, 2005). The results suggested that school counselors spend much of their time with students on traditional tasks (i.e., addressing personal problems that affect grades (83%), personal/social issues (92%), decision-making skills (83%). To add, the following competencies and indicators in the ASCA National Model and the State Plan, were not highly rated by the school counselors. They included (a) developing educational, career, and program planning (54%), (b) teaching study skills (41%), (c) test-taking strategies and study skills (38%), (d) working with serious mental health

issues (35%), and (e) diversity issues (34%). Appendix A, under *Your Work with Students*, has disaggregated data across elementary, middle, and high schools, K-12, and the total population.

Discussion

There were limitations to this study. First, gender, racial identity, and age were not demographic variables under consideration for anonymity to the participants. Second, the study took place two months (October 2004) after the mandated implementation of the State Plan (2003) in Alabama (i.e., school counselors were familiarizing themselves with the revised State Plan as the researchers examined their beliefs and perceptions). Therefore, further studies are needed to determine the present attitudes, beliefs, strengths, and challenges at this time. Third, the data cannot be generalized to other states in the U.S. With the limitations in mind, this study offered significant strengths and challenges from a large representative sample (74%) of school counselors in Alabama.

Numerous strengths were found among the 1,244 school counselors who offered their voice in this study. Overall, school counselors in Alabama revealed ambition, dedication, a willingness to learn, and strong commitment to implement the revised State Plan. Approximately 90% of the school counselors stated that they were

participation of underrepresented students in higher level academic programs, collaborating with teachers). To add, school counselors believed that their contributions create schools that are safe and drug-free. The participants also

concurred that the implementation of the State Plan was essential, that involving the school counseling community in closing the achievement and opportunity gap was paramount, and providing equity and access for *all* is critical.

This study also revealed challenges for the Alabama school counselors, which will be the focus hereafter. The *School Setting* category revealed that Alabama school counselors would benefit from additional professional development to assist with connecting to school improvement, implementing the ASCA National Standards, identifying student barriers to success, and working collaboratively with teachers and administrators to improve the school climate. True partnerships with school administrators and teachers are critical to implementing the State Plan and seemed to be lacking to some degree among the school counselors. Collaboration was recognized by Alabama school counselors as a critical element to the implementation of a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program; yet progress is slow.

There were three main areas of concern in this category. First, the authors observed a trend to use valuable time in individual counseling rather than in collaboration with others. In the depiction of day-to-day work, the Alabama school counselors' shift from an isolated practice to collaboration and teaming with faculty, staff, and administrators was deemed less important in this study than expected. This reluctance to transition to a more visible role has been documented in the past (Burnham & Jackson, 2000) and is a reminder of the comfort level of traditional priorities (e.g., individual

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counseling) and the slow progression toward an integration of school counseling interventions in the educational system. Second, the need to increase the participation of underrepresented students in higher level academic programs at every level was found. The goal to work with *all* students is still critical. Third, this study revealed certain external influences that have negatively impacted how much school counselors engage in comprehensive school counseling. Based on school counselor's comments in this study, this stems mainly from administrators/principals' nonguidance expectations on counselors.

The *Your Priorities* category revealed that Alabama school counselors are not consulting frequently with teachers on strategies that help with student management in the classroom. To add, even though a high percentage of school counselors (over 80%) served on school improvement teams, a divide existed between "serving" and "acting" in a leadership/advocacy capacity. While the school counselors saw work with school administrators and teachers on school improvement as a priority, it appeared that monitoring student academics was of less importance.

There were also issues related to advocacy. Advocacy was not a high priority for the counselors in this study, even though it is an essential part of the ASCA National Model. In examining advocacy for school counselors, Field and Baker (2004) outlined the need to "go beyond the four walls of an office" on behalf of students (p. 57). Full implementation of the *State Plan* will involve more advocacy on the part of the school counselors as they close both the

achievement and opportunity gaps and assure equity and access for *all* students.

In the category *Your Work with Students* the data revealed that counselors spend much of their time with student concerns such as personal/social issues and problems that affect grades. For instance, a significant amount of time was spent on decision-making skills, managing stress, anger, improving grades, personal problems, and interpersonal communication skills. This finding shows the importance still placed on traditional individual counseling rather than the new vision of the 21st century. The priority of responsive services and the continued adherence to the traditional three c's of school counseling (i.e., counseling, consulting, coordinating) still holds true for many Alabama school counselors.

Recommendations for Meaningful Progress

The authors believe that long-term changes in school counseling require collaborative efforts from many stakeholders, including school counselors, counseling coordinators, administrators, and the ALSDE, if meaningful progress is going to be made. Because of the importance of each set of stakeholders mentioned above, recommendations for each group will be addressed separately.

School Counselors. This study revealed that Alabama school counselors believe that the State Plan is important and that they are working diligently to implement the new vision in school counseling. However, requisite knowledge, skills, and support necessary to move from traditional counseling to the foundation, management, delivery, and accountability phases of the State Plan

(2003) are still on-going. In fact, after close examination of the data, it was noted that many of the skills that were rated less important were those that required school counselors to shift from isolation (individual counseling) to collaboration and teaming with faculty, staff, and administrators. Thus, more effort is vital to move to the new vision of school counseling.

The authors contend that to be in line with 21st century expectations, Alabama school counselors need to consider the following: (1) obtaining additional professional development to fully embrace the revised expectations of the State Plan (e.g., leadership, advocacy, use of data, collaboration), (2) honing skills to proactively advocate for more direct time with students (as stipulated in the ASCA National Model and the State Plan), (3) acquiring more accountability training and using data-driven results more frequently to inform others (i.e., principals, teachers, policymakers, stakeholders) of the effectiveness of school counseling, (4) increasing visibility and leadership at school, and (5) endorsing diversity issues more completely.

Counseling Coordinators. The counseling coordinators in Alabama enabled the voices of school counselors to be heard in this study. The study revealed that coordinators are concerned, supportive, and protective of the school counseling domain. Moreover, it can be concluded that the coordinators share similar frustrations felt by the school counselors (e.g., State Plan versus administrator/principal non-guidance priorities; counselors overwhelmed with testing versus coordinators having little authority to free them).

To assist further, coordinators need to continue to embrace the new vision skills more fully. This can be done by: (1) advocating that school counselors have the 80% direct time mandated for students as suggested in the State Plan, (2) working with administrators to identify alternative staff support to eliminate school counselor responsibilities as test coordinators, substitute teachers, and so forth, (3) establishing on-going professional development for counselors to learn more about expectations of the 21st school counselor, and (4) ensuring that *all* school counselors are providing direct services, sharing accountability efforts for student success, and moving toward the new vision. Coordinators can assist with the task of informing administrators about the State Plan and the stipulations within the document. It is paramount that administrators understand the roles and functions of school counselors in the future.

Administrators. Overwhelmingly, the school counselors revealed that principals or other administrators (not counseling coordinators) viewed school counseling in a traditional fashion. Moreover, school counselors believed that many principals were seemingly not aware of the State Plan, resulting in a substantial amount of frustration among the counselors in this study. A high percentage of counselors are conflicted as to their priorities (e.g., implementing the State Plan versus nonguidance duties) and many counselors in this study believe that principals and administrators are at the root of the problem (i.e., principals are indifferent, defiant, uninformed about school counseling). With such frustration

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among the participants, the authors strongly advocate for professional development and training to extend beyond school counseling practitioners to principals and superintendents for future success. Without education, training, and professional development about school counseling, administrators are not likely to be aware of what conceptualizes school counseling or advocates for the profession.

Alabama Department of Education.

The authors credit the ALSDE for being among the first to implement a state plan based on the ASCA National Model and instilling the belief that school counselors can deliver a comprehensive model to *all* students. However, the study confirmed that ALSDE should continue to lead by: (1) providing professional development on ASCA National Model elements (e.g., leadership, advocacy, use of data, teaming and collaboration, accountability), (2) delineating school counseling and non-school counseling duties, especially addressing test coordination, (3) educating administrators/principals on the significance of the State Plan and the duties involved, and, (4) offering structure and guidance to school counselors as they implement the State Plan at the school level, as needed.

Implications

Since the implementation of the State Plan in 2003, the ALSDE, the Alabama School Counselor Association (ALSCA), and counselor educators have provided workshops on the new vision. Yet, this study not only supports the need for more professional development for school counselors as they undertake the journey to fully implement the State

Plan, but also for other individuals that work closely with and in some cases supervise school counselors (e.g., school administrators, principals, organizations that represent school administrators, teachers, other student services personnel, counselor educators). Awareness of the changing role of the transformed school counselor (Sears, Haag, & Granello, 2002) is vital for future success in the field.

The authors suggest that the ALSDE and ALSCA join forces to model effective collaboration, to provide practitioners with the professional development, and to offer the backing needed to successfully implement the State Plan. Together these entities can analyze current practice, compare it to ASCA National Model and the State Plan, and better understand what it will take to forward the implementation process. The authors also strongly believe that the professionals who are responsible for school counseling (i.e., from the ALSDE to the local coordinators) have an ethical responsibility to educate all school personnel, including principals and school counselors, as to the philosophy, process, state mandates, and expectations for implementing the State Plan.

Moving Forward With the Times

The ALSDE pioneered a powerful vision years before other states stepped forward for change. Successful school achievement is predicated on the collaboration of school counselors, teachers and school staff, higher education faculty, administration, and community leaders working together to provide comprehensive, coordinated programs and services on behalf of all

pupils and their families in Alabama. This snapshot of readiness to implement the State Plan presents the desire, willingness, and interest of school counselors to forge partnerships to bring school counseling into the educational mainstream and to move to a new paradigm based on the State Plan and the ASCA National Model. Based on this study, the school counseling community voiced the desire to join forces with the ALSDE and ALSCA to inform the future of school counseling. Nonetheless, if academic success for every student in Alabama is the goal, challenges outlined in this study lie ahead for all ♦

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Table 1

Your School Setting

Top Strengths:

- 98%** Regularly consult with parents, teachers, and administrators.
- 98%** Believe that all children can achieve at high levels.
- 97%** Counsel students individually about personal/social issues.
- 94%** Say that teachers send students to them to deal with personal problems.
- 94%** Provide leadership to promote every student's right to a quality education.

Top Challenges:

- 84%** Perceive that administrators work with school counselors to increase student academic performance.
 - 83%** Believe they are viewed as leaders at school.
 - 81%** Work to change systems that impede student success.
 - 75%** Work to increase the participation of underrepresented students in higher-level academics.
 - 52%** Consult with teachers to help them improve classroom management techniques.
-

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Table 2

Your Priorities

How important are the following activities?

Most Important:

95% Counseling students individually about personal and social problems.

88% Counseling students with behavioral problems

85% Working closely with school administrators and teachers on school improvement issues.

74% Advocating to change policies and practices that can negatively impact student success.

Least Important:

74% Advocating change policies and practices that can negatively impact student success.

65% Serving on school committees.

57% Attending academic, department, or grade level meetings.

49% Providing professional development for teachers.

39% Helping teachers improve classroom management skills.

*Responses are the total of “very important” and “extremely important”

Table 3

Your Work with Students

Since school started this year, how often have you worked with students (give %)?

Most Amount of Time:

- 92%** Personal/social problems
- 83%** Decision-making skills
- 83%** Personal problems that affect grades
- 81%** Managing emotions (stress, anger, coping)
- 79%** Improving grades

Least Amount of Time:

- 54%** Developing educational, career, and program planning
 - 41%** Teaching study skills
 - 38%** Test-taking strategies and study skills
 - 35%** Serious mental health issues (e.g., depression, addiction)
 - 34%** Diversity issues
-

*Total of “daily” and “almost daily” responses

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Appendix A

Your School Setting

Please indicate the extent to which, in your experience in your school, the following statements are accurate.
TOTAL% of somewhat accurate and very accurate

	Elementary	Middle/Junior High	K-12	High School	Total Population
a. Teachers work with school counselors to improve student achievement.	89.4%	95.0%	94.6%	92.3%	92.7%
b. Teachers regularly send students to the school counselor to deal with personal problems.	97.1%	95.1%	91.8%	89.8%	94.2%
c. Teachers and counselors work together to identify students who are not performing to their best level.	90.9%	93.3%	91.9%	90.7%	91.5%
d. Counselors demonstrate the belief that all children can achieve to high levels.	96.3%	93.8%	95.9%	94.5%	96.7%
e. School counselors are part of key decision-making teams.	87.2%	81.2%	83.8%	78.9%	85%
f. Teachers ask school counselors to consult with them on improving classroom management techniques.	62.2%	47.8%	51.3%	40.4%	51.7%
g. Administrators work with school counselors to increase student academic performance.	82.2%	86.6%	83.8%	81.7%	83.5%
h. My school has established strong collaborative relationships with local community organizations and agencies.	85.2%	83.0%	79.7%	83.4%	84.7%
i. Counselors are viewed as school leaders.	84.8%	84.4%	82.4%	77.3%	83.2%
j. School counselors develop strategies to change systems and practices that are impeding student success.	78.8%	83.5%	81.0%	76.0%	80.5%
k. School counselors work with faculty and administration to improve the school climate.	90.8%	91.5%	90.5%	87.2%	91.1%
l. School counselors provide leadership to promote every student's right to a quality education.	92.0%	95.5%	94.6%	91.0%	93.5%
m. School counselors monitor and evaluate the impact of the school-counseling program on student achievement and success.	91.1%	92.5%	85.1%	83.0%	89.8%
n. School counselors regularly consult with parents, teachers, and school administrators.	95.8%	99.1%	98.6%	98.7%	97.8%
o. School counselors are increasing the participation of underrepresented students in higher-level academics such as honors, IB, AP classes.	53.8%	73.7%	75.6%	80.5%	74.8%
p. School counselors use school data to assess student performance and develop necessary services.	87.0%	94.6%	93.2%	89.4%	90.2%
q. School counselors deliver guidance programs in classes.	97.0%	89.8%	91.9%	83.3%	92.2%
r. School counselors reduce social/institutional barriers that keep students from achieving	89.8%	85.3%	89.2%	80.8%	87.6%

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success.					
s. School counselors counsel students individually about personal/social issues.	98.4%	97.4%	97.3%	95.8%	97.4%
t. School counselors provide group counseling based on identified student needs.	93.4%	88.4%	83.8%	72.4%	86.5%
u. School counselors use the national standards for school counseling programs to deliver specific student competencies in academic, career, and personal-social development.	95.2%	95.1%	87.8%	86.2%	92.7%

Your Priorities

How important are the following activities or tasks for school counselors? TOTAL OF VERY AND EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

	Elementary	Middle/JHS	K-12	High School	Total Population
a. Help teachers improve classroom management skills.	43.3%	40.7%	43.2%	27.9%	38.8%
b. Use grades to identify under-performing students.	72.0%	86.6%	77.0%	83.0%	79.4%
c. Visit classes to help students develop long-term goals.	76.2%	78.1%	79.7%	73.7%	77.5%
d. Work with students in small groups on personal/social issues.	84.8%	81.7%	78.4%	71.2%	79.4%
e. Counsel students who have behavioral problems in classes.	91.5%	89.8%	90.5%	80.1%	87.9%
f. Refer students to community professionals for mental health problems.	81.8%	83.9%	86.5%	83.3%	83.7%
g. Work with students individually or in groups on career planning activities.	62.7%	79.0%	85.1%	90.0%	77.4%
h. Develop and implement prevention programs.	84.6%	82.6%	82.5%	76.3%	82%
i. Work closely with administrators and teachers on school improvement issues.	84.6%	85.3%	85.1%	83.1%	84.9%
j. Help students identify their future educational and career options.	66.4%	81.3%	90.5%	94.3%	81.1%
k. Evaluate the school counseling program effort to raise academic performance.	80.7%	83.1%	85.1%	81.1%	82.4%
l. Reduce social/institutional barriers that keep students from achieving their potential.	82.7%	79.9%	89.2%	80.8%	83.1%
m. Improve student access to academic intervention services.	81.1%	86.1%	85.1%	85.0%	84.8%
n. Counsel students individually about personal and social issues.	93.2%	93.8%	90.5%	92.3%	94.4%
o. Monitor student academic performance.	73.5%	87.5%	86.5%	87.1%	82.2%
p. Attend academic department or grade-level meetings.	49.7%	64.3%	54.0%	56.8%	56.5%

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q. Provide professional development activities to teachers.	48.4%	51.4%	47.3%	50.0%	49.4%
r. Advocate to change policies and practices that can negatively impact student success.	72.0%	71.4%	83.8%	73.1%	74%
s. Serve on school committees.	64.9%	67.0%	71.6%	61.5%	65.2%
t. Use data to identify specific areas of school improvement.	73.5%	75.5%	83.8%	75.3%	75.6%

Your Work with Students

Since school started this year, how often have you worked with % students on: TOTAL OF FREQUENTLY AND ALMOST DAILY

	Elementary	Middle/ JHS	K-12	High School	Total Population
a. Study skills (note taking, outlining, reading).	43.4%	52.2%	32.5%	31.7%	40.7%
b. Test-taking strategies.	34.5%	41.1%	36.5%	41.1%	38%
c. Personal/social issues.	93.7%	92.8%	90.5%	87.2%	91.7%
d. Decision-making skills.	85.5%	84.0%	82.4%	77.6%	83.1%
e. Preventing problems (e.g., alcohol, teen pregnancy, truancy, dropout, etc.).	46.0%	54.5%	68.9%	55.2%	54.5%
f. School discipline incidents.	58.1%	61.6%	55.4%	36.6%	54.1%
g. Developing educational and career plans.	26.6%	46.9%	74.4%	82.7%	52.8%
h. College admissions strategies.	1.9%	9.9%	74.3%	80.1%	34.7%
i. Managing emotions (stress, anger, coping, etc.).	85.7%	87.1%	75.6%	69.9%	81.1%
j. Strengthening interpersonal communication skills.	78.1%	78.1%	68.9%	60.0%	72.1%
k. Diversity issues.	37.3%	36.6%	28.4%	26.9%	34.4%
l. Educational program planning.	30.8%	50.0%	62.2%	75.0%	51.2%
m. Improving grades.	68.6%	90.6%	77.0%	85.0%	79.1%
n. Personal problems that affect grades.	80.9%	88.8%	82.4%	78.5%	82.6%
o. Serious mental health problems (depression, addiction, etc.).	29.5%	41.1%	44.6%	36.3%	35.2%
p. Time and task organizational skills.	50.1%	67.9%	41.9%	47.4%	53.6%