



The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA)

# 2012 National Survey of School Counselors

True North:  
Charting the Course  
to College and  
Career Readiness



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# 2012 National Survey of School Counselors

True North:  
Charting the Course  
to College and  
Career Readiness

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Produced for the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center by

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## An Open Letter to the American People

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**Counselors are ready to lead; administrators are prepared to support them; and students in schools across America need their help.**

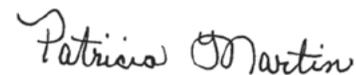
A single adult can change a child's life. In schools across the country, counselors are uniquely positioned to change countless lives. The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, with generous support from the Kresge Foundation, wants to leverage this unique but underutilized professional resource to improve college readiness for millions of students. Informed by the voices of counselors and administrators in all 50 states, the 2012 National Survey of School Counselors: *True North: Charting the Course to College and Career Readiness* provides powerful evidence that counselors and administrators share a common vision for what schools can be for students and how we ensure that all children have access to a high-quality education. Nearly 100 percent of administrators and counselors believe counselors should be leaders in our schools.

Despite the commitment and abilities of school counselors—and support from administrators for their work—we are failing to fully tap their potential. Too often, we fail to appropriately train, focus and provide incentives for counselors. Too often, they are not provided adequate training; they are overwhelmed with important, but misallocated work; and they are held accountable for the wrong things. Without a clear focus, they function as the jack-of-100-trades. As a result, schools fail to take advantage of the wonderful resource that counselors are, and family and community partners miss opportunities to support student's success.

We must be aspirational and realistic. As a nation, we need to ensure we are fully leveraging school counselors to advance college and career achievement, while aligning this clear mission with their training, support and accountability. Counselors are ready to lead; administrators are prepared to support them; and students in schools across America need their help. This year's report helps point the way.



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## Executive Summary

In 2011, the National Survey of School Counselors revealed that school counseling as a profession was at a crossroads. As one of our nation's greatest resources, our school counselors could either become central to accelerating student academic achievement in our schools or remain at the margins of educational progress. In 2012, the frustrations and hopes of a nationally representative sample of school counselors and administrators reflect the central message of this report: although counselors and administrators believe in the college and career readiness mission for counselors, a lack of focus, training, accountability and resources for counselors stands in the way of real progress. Counselors are ready to lead in the college- and career-ready mission, but their graduate schools fail to train them for this mission, schools pull them away from this critical work, and their administrators do not hold them accountable for the activities that usher more students to college. In short, though counselors are poised to meaningfully contribute, they are operating with a broken compass. Encouragingly, students in schools where counselors are trained and held accountable for college-going activities are more likely to go to college. There is a growing national movement to better utilize school counselors and with changes in policy and practice, counselors can emerge as invaluable resources in our nation's schools to boost college and career readiness at a time of fiscal constraint.

### Survey Overview

#### *1. Efficacy: Counselors and Administrators Agree on Counselors' Ability to Increase College and Career Readiness for Students*

In the 2011 National Survey of School Counselors, we found that school counselors, on average, have high expectations for themselves, their students, their schools and the education system; but reality in their schools falls far short of their hopes. The 2012 survey showed that counselor and administrator views were strikingly similar—on ideals and opportunities. More powerfully, they shared a belief in school counselors' ability to help boost student success. Faced with crowded classrooms, overwhelming caseloads, and dwindling budgets, counselors believe in their own efficacy—and their principals and vice principals agree.

- ✓ **Counselors believe in their own efficacy and identified specific areas where they could achieve the highest impact.** More than three-quarters of high school counselors agree on five items that they could effectively

improve, given administrative support and resources: the completion of a college-preparatory sequence of courses (82 percent); college application rates (83 percent); students gaining access to advanced classes and tests (81 percent); transcript audits of graduation readiness (78 percent); and high school graduation rates (77 percent).

- Counselors with a strong sense of self-efficacy are also more willing to be held accountable for improving measures related to college and career readiness. For example, among counselors who believe they can be effective at transcript audits of graduation readiness, 74 percent believe this is a fair measure of accountability. On the other hand, among counselors who do not believe they can be effective at transcript audits of graduation readiness, only 38 percent believe this is a fair measure of accountability.
- ✓ **Counselors and administrators have a shared vision of the mission of schools.** The mission "to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have equal access to a high-quality education" receives the highest ratings from school counselors and administrators, with 96 and 95 percent, respectively, rating it as an "8" or higher for how well it fits their ideal mission for the education system. Similarly, 92 percent of counselors and 93 percent of administrators reported that "ensuring that all students complete the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers" also fits a mutual ideal view of the education system.
- ✓ **Counselors and administrators agree that counselors are poised to take leadership roles in their school communities.** Nearly every administrator (98 percent) agreed with the statement, "It is important for school counselors to exercise leadership in advocating for students' access to rigorous academic preparation, as well as other college and career readiness counseling, even if others in the school don't see counselors in this leadership role."
  - More than four in five counselors (81 percent) say that "being part of the school's leadership team" should be an extremely important focus of the counselor's job.
- ✓ **Administrators and counselors agree on a path to achieving school goals.** In the 2011 survey, nearly all counselors (93 percent) said they support a strategic

approach to promote college and career readiness (NOSCA's Eight Components), including 57 percent who strongly support this approach. In 2012, we have evidence that administrators agree: for each of the Eight Components, at least seven-in-10 school administrators, overall, rate themselves as an "8" or higher on a zero-to-10 scale for the extent to which they support school counselors in their school in incorporating each of the Eight Components as part of their counseling philosophy.

- More than two-thirds of school administrators support school counselors in incorporating the Eight Components as part of their counseling practice, including 79 percent of school administrators who rate their support as an "8" or higher for "advancing students' planning, preparation, participation, and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals."

- ✓ **Counselors in low-income schools are particularly well positioned to lead systemic efforts to promote their students' college affordability planning.** Comparing counselors at schools with low levels (25 percent or less) of students on free or reduced-price lunches to counselors with high levels (75 percent or more) reveals that counselors at schools with higher numbers of students on free or reduced-price lunches are far better trained, have more support, a greater commitment and greater accountability when it comes to college affordability planning and using student FAFSA completion data to monitor and review student aid reports. Counselors at these more challenged schools are also more likely, in general, to be committed and held accountable to the Eight Components and their specific activities.

Although counselors and administrators agree on the vision for their schools and the path to get there, counselors are struggling to implement the very strategies to which they have expressed commitment, and they do not perceive themselves as succeeding in the areas they identify as important. Students' college-going rates reflect this need to better target the work of counselors to support student success. The following sections outline three areas of opportunity and challenge to chart the course to college and career readiness: training, accountability and resources.

## ***2. Training: Counselors' Preservice and In-Service Training Is Not Aligned with Student Outcomes***

Counselors are among the most highly educated professionals in the education system, with three-quarters of counselors holding a master's degree (83 percent). Yet nearly three in 10 (28 percent) believe their training did not prepare them well for their job and more than half (56 percent) feel only somewhat well trained. The 2012 survey provides insights into the preservice (graduate school) and in-service (professional development) training, with implications for the different types of educators that prepare counselors for their work at varying stages of their careers. The survey demonstrates a powerful correlation between counselor preparation—both during graduate school and through ongoing professional development—and their students' outcomes. The survey also identifies key areas where additional training and professional development for counselors could accelerate college and career readiness for students.

- ✓ **There is a strong correlation between counselors' preparation and their students' outcomes.** Counselors who report being better trained are more likely to work in schools with higher rates of college attendance. While 27 percent of counselors who say they have sufficient training on at least five of the Eight Components work at schools with higher rates of college attendance, only 19 percent of counselors who report sufficient training on four or fewer of the components work at schools with higher rates of college attendance. When looking specifically at college readiness, counselors who feel better trained on how to provide high school students with the right college application materials are more likely to have students who go to college. Though counselors were not asked to specify if they received these specific elements of training during preservice or in-service training, the results indicate a need for improved professional development opportunities throughout counselors' careers.
- ✓ **Graduate schools are not preparing counselors to focus on college and career pathways once they work in schools.** The majority of school counselors with a graduate degree specializing in school counseling indicate that their graduate school did not adequately prepare them for the challenges they face on a daily basis. When looking at the Eight Components of a college- and career-

ready framework—which is endorsed by administrators and counselors alike—seven of the eight elements were “inadequately” covered in graduate school. Only one element, “Promote College and Career Assessments” was rated as extensively, or adequately, covered during graduate school by a majority of counselors (56 percent).

✓ **Preservice and in-service training inadequately prepares counselors for college and career counseling.**

Despite the fact that counselors and administrators endorse the Eight Components, for each component, at least 40 percent—and in many cases more than half—of school counselors say that they need some additional training or extensive further training. A slim majority of counselors felt they had “sufficient” training on only three measures: academic planning for college and career readiness (57 percent); college aspirations (56 percent); and the college and career admission process (51 percent); indicating a need for improved professional development opportunities throughout counselors’ careers, in addition to improvements in the graduate school curriculum.

- *College access is identified as the most needed area of additional training.* Less than half of counselors (43 percent) say that they have sufficient knowledge and training on “College Affordability Planning,” which includes ways to “provide information about college costs, financing, and the financial aid and scholarship processes so that students are able to plan for college and afford a college education.” Counselors in schools with lower rates of college attendance are especially likely to say that they need additional training. Compared to 66 percent of counselors at schools with higher rates of college attendance, for example, only half (50 percent) of counselors at schools with lower rates of college attendance say that they have sufficient knowledge and do not need further training in “Academic Planning for College and Career.”

### **3. Accountability: Counselors and Administrators Support Certain Measures of Accountability**

The 2012 survey provided additional insights into the state of accountability systems for school counselors, building on the 2011 finding that a majority of school counselors support accountability measures and incentives for counselors to

meet the 12th-grade college- and career-ready goal (61 percent of counselors support this measure), with stronger than average support among counselors in urban public schools (65 percent, with 32 percent who strongly support it), schools with high minority populations (75 percent, with 44 percent who strongly support it), and schools with lower-income students (70 percent, with 38 percent who strongly support it). In an era of data-driven decision making, counselors and administrators express support for certain measures of accountability. These areas of consensus align with counselors’ unique contributions in supporting the college and career success of their students. Despite limited examples of schools and districts that are using data and accountability to drive decision making, the majority of accountability measures remain uneven and under-implemented in the counseling field. In many places, the accountability measures for counselors are actually discouraging counselors from their work to promote college and career readiness.

✓ **Counselors and administrators support multiple measures of accountability that align with their views of the counselor’s mission and unique role.**

High school and college measures were both endorsed: transcripts of graduation readiness (71 percent of administrators and 60 percent of counselors rate this as a “6” or higher on a 10-point scale), high school graduation rates (61 percent of administrators and 52 percent of counselors) and college application rates (57 percent of both administrators and counselors).

- Middle school administrators rated two measures as fair and appropriate, one of which was also endorsed by counselors: middle school completion rates (62 percent of administrators and 46 percent of counselors) and promotion from grade to grade (59 percent of administrators and 38 percent of counselors). These are the same measures that middle school counselors rate highest.

✓ **Accountability is linked to better student outcomes.**

Among all counselors, those with no system of accountability work at schools with the lowest rates of students going on to college. There is also a correlation between certain types of accountability and higher college attendance rates, *even after controlling for other important factors such as student caseload, years of experience, and education level of the counselor.*

- Students in schools where counselors are held accountable to college-going activities are more likely to go to college. In particular, three measures of counselor accountability were linked to higher rates of college attendance: completion of college-preparatory courses (76 percent of students whose counselors are held accountable to this measure are college going versus 73 percent of students whose counselors are not held accountable for this measure); college application rates (77 percent versus 73 percent); and college acceptance rates (77 percent versus 73 percent).

✓ **Current accountability systems are nonexistent, inconsistent or promote the wrong outcomes.**

One-in-five counselors (19 percent) reports that there is no accountability system in place at all at their schools.

- Of those systems that are in place, there is little consistency between them. The only item that a majority of high school counselors report being held accountable to is their high school graduation rate, and even then, only a slim majority of 52 percent of high school counselors report this. Between a quarter and a half of counselors are held accountable for the following measures: dropout rates (39 percent), college acceptance rates (39 percent), college application rates (39 percent), student access to advanced classes (38 percent), completion of college-preparatory sequence of courses (38 percent), and transcript audits of graduation readiness (36 percent). State test scores (29 percent), FAFSA completion (16 percent), and graduate employment rates (11 percent) round out the bottom of the list.
- In many cases, counselors are held accountable for activities that either do not directly promote student achievement or are inappropriate for counselors. Counselors are consistently held accountable for tasks that are better suited for other school personnel and pull counselors away from the college and career-going activities they are uniquely suited to provide their students. These accountability measures

include: administrative and clerical tasks (69 percent), coordinating tests (60 percent), and disciplinary actions (13 percent).

✓ **Counselors do not know how to demonstrate accountability for their interventions.**

Even if counselors are producing outcomes or taking steps toward improving efficacy, they feel ill-equipped to quantify or communicate their responsibilities and successes. Less than half (47 percent) of counselors overall say they “know how to show accountability for these types of interventions.” At schools with higher numbers of students on free or reduced-price lunches, more than half of counselors (54 percent) say they know how to show accountability (versus 44 percent of their counterparts at schools with fewer than one in four students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches).

#### ***4. Resource Alignment: Counselors and Administrators Identify Areas to Maximize College and Career Readiness***

The stakes around resource alignment are high. Over the next decade, the nation needs 22 million students to earn a college degree to meet the demands of the workforce, but America is expected to fall short of this goal by at least three million.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, student need is on the rise,<sup>2</sup> and schools are facing continued budget cuts.<sup>3</sup> In these austere conditions, counselors can be at the leading edge of making increased postsecondary and career readiness a reality, but they cannot do this work in isolation. The survey provided insights into areas where increased utilization and collaboration of existing resources could accelerate student achievement.

✓ **Counselors are not currently enrolled in Common Core State Standards implementation.**

Because of the focus on college readiness, the Common Core State Standards are tightly linked to counselors’ work—and counselors should be fully engaged in their implementation, yet only a third of counselors (37 percent) would rate themselves as an 8, 9 or 10 on a zero-to-10 scale in terms of knowledge about the Common Core State Standards. Even fewer counselors

1. Carnevale A., N. Smith, and J. Strohl. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2010).

2. Kids Count report: “America’s children are advancing despite the economy.” Annie E. Casey Foundation. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2012/0725/Kids-Count-report-America-s-children-are-advancing-despite-the-economy> in Knickerbocker, Brad. *Christian Science Monitor*. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2011/0817/Report-Child-poverty-rate-hits-20-percent-in-US-as-families-struggle>. August 17, 2011.

3. “Tight Budgets Put Some Superintendents on Part-Time Status.” *Education Week*. January 30, 2012. [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19parttime\\_ep.h31.html?qs=district+budgets](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19parttime_ep.h31.html?qs=district+budgets); “Parent, Community Groups Pressed to Fill K–12 Budget Gaps.” *Education Week*. March 13, 2012. [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24gift\\_ep.h30.html?qs=district+budgets](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24gift_ep.h30.html?qs=district+budgets); Ceasar, Stephen, et al. “Education Takes a Beating Nationwide.” *The Los Angeles Times*. July 31, 2011. <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/31/nation/la-na-education-budget-cuts-20110731>

have received training on the subject, with only 30 percent rating their training on the Common Core State Standards as an “8” or higher, even though administrators (88 percent agreeing with an “8” or higher) believe counselors should receive training in the Common Core State Standards. Administrators rated themselves fairly knowledgeable about the Common Core State Standards, with three-quarters giving themselves a knowledge rating of “8” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale.

- ✓ **Counselors’ in-school and out-of-school partners are not collaborating.** Less than one-third of counselors (32 percent high school and 30 percent of middle school) say that they intentionally collaborate with outside organizations and businesses to support college and career readiness activities. Only two out of five counselors (41 percent of high school and 38 percent of middle school counselors) say that the teachers in their schools support these types of interventions. Less than half of counselors (47 percent of high school and 39 percent of middle school counselors) say that they know how to apply interventions in ways that keep students’ parents and families actively involved.
  - The collaboration with out-of-school resources could be especially productive over the summer months, when between 10 and 20 percent of American high school seniors who plan to attend college in the fall do not end up attending.<sup>4</sup> Although more than half of high school counselors (54 percent) believe that helping students transition to college during the summer after they graduate is important, less than one-quarter (24 percent) work at schools that “assist seniors throughout the summer after they graduate to provide them with resources and support in order to aid their transition to college” (as indicated by a “6” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale). Although counselors typically are not under contract during the summer months, they are positioned during the school year to connect students to summer supports. Some schools and districts are extending counselors’ contracts through the summer months to support seniors in their transition to college.
- ✓ **Counselors can promote college affordability planning and FAFSA completion.** The lack of college affordability

planning can prevent qualified students from going to—or even dreaming about—going to college. School counselors are very committed to providing more access to college, but gaps exist. Just 35 percent of high school counselors nationwide rate their school’s success as “8” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale when it comes to using the FAFSA to monitor application progress. Likewise, while 67 percent of administrators and 40 percent of counselors believe FAFSA completion rates are a fair and appropriate measure of accountability, only 16 percent of high school counselors say they are held accountable for this measure.

## Paths Forward

The 2012 survey provided additional insights related to the potential of counselors to accelerate student achievement. In light of this new information, we provide below policy ideas as supplements to the recommendations we provided in 2011:

- ✓ **Act Now Through Existing Training and Tools for College and Career Readiness.** The findings from the 2012 survey show that counselors are ready to lead on advancing college and career readiness—and their administrators agree. From the state house to the schoolhouse, education leaders (including counselors themselves) do not have to wait for policy changes to strengthen this work—they are ready to act now to ensure that counselors can provide students the resources they need to be successful. The National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) provides training and tools for this work, including NOSCA’s Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling. These components and supporting tools are a means of institutionalizing practices and processes that will ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to successfully transition from high school to college or career of their choice. Free tools are available online.
- ✓ **Include Counselors as Integral Partners in Education Policy.** A range of laws, policies and codes that are set by federal, state and local governments affect school counselors and counseling programs. Many others, however, limit or exclude counselors. Education policies that do not intentionally engage these 130,000 education professionals are failing our students. Policies at the school, district, state and federal levels should recognize counselors as educators and include counselors as key players in education reform.

4. Castleman, Benjamin, and Lindsay Page. “A Trickle or a Torrent?” April 2, 2012. Harvard Graduate School of Education & the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.

✓ **Include Counselors in Common Core Implementation.**

Common Core State Standards aim to raise standards for all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity or socioeconomic background. Because of the focus on college readiness, the Common Core is tightly linked to the work of counselors, yet school counselors have been largely absent from implementation discussions. Moving forward, counselors must be included as leaders in the Common Core implementation discussion at the school, district and state levels. As new training materials are created for teachers, they should be created for counselors as well.

✓ **Provide Counselors, Teachers and Administrators Preservice and In-service Training that Aligns Counselors' Work to Students' College and Career Readiness.**

For both preservice (graduate school) and in-service (professional development) training for counselors, the focus should move toward systemic action. This training should emphasize counselors' schoolwide work with parents, families and the community, in addition to individual and small-group counseling. Graduate schools can take specific steps in curriculum and fieldwork performance measures to ensure professional school counselors are prepared to implement a comprehensive college and career readiness counseling program that links counselors' work with school and district goals. Further, college and career student outcome measures should also be added in preservice program requirements as part of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards.<sup>5</sup> As in graduate school, in-service training for counselors should include a focus on counselors' systemic work, their contributions to schoolwide improvement, and their role in college and career readiness for their students. Likewise, interdisciplinary training for counselors, teachers, administrators, and other school and district personnel can help these educators work as highly effective teams to meet school and district goals.

✓ **Align Counselor Accountability Measures with Student, School and District Goals.**

The 2012 survey showed that what gets measured gets done. Counselors who are held accountable for college-going activities are more likely to have students who go to college, across school demographics. We have examples of pilot accountability systems in place that are driving counselor effectiveness and student achievement, including those featured in the case studies of this report. Counselors, with school, district and state education leaders, should work together to align systems of reporting and accountability to student, school and district goals. These systems should be driven by and responsive to data that link students' secondary achievement to postsecondary success.

✓ **Accelerate FAFSA Completion for Students.**

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is among the key tools for providing qualified students the financial support needed to achieve postsecondary goals, yet each year at least 1.7 million students do not file the FAFSA because they incorrectly believe they are ineligible.<sup>6</sup> Every public and private high school in America can now use the FAFSA as an independently calculated data point to determine what percentage of students have completed this form and, through the FAFSA completion project, many schools and districts can have student-level data on FAFSA completion. Schools and districts can act on these data and accelerate their efforts to provide students the financial resources they need. Initiatives that promote FAFSA completion, particularly through family engagement in the process, should be replicated and scaled—and counselors can be key to this success. The U.S. Department of Education FAFSA completion project should be expanded so that more counselors have access to student-specific data to drive completion rates. Partnerships, like that between the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), should be replicated to provide data on FAFSA completion that allow for early intervention.<sup>7</sup>

5. Eight Essential Elements for Change (1997). The National Center for Transforming School Counseling. The Education Trust.

6. Kantrowitz, Marc. Reasons Why Students Do Not File the FAFSA. Student Aid Policy Analysis. <http://www.finaid.org/educators/20110118nofafsareasons.pdf> January 18, 2011. The analysis in this report was performed using the data analysis system for the 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS). The NPSAS is a large survey conducted every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. The 2007-08 NPSAS surveyed 114,000 undergraduate students and 14,000 graduate and professional students. Longitudinal comparisons in this report are based also on the 1986-87, 1989-90, 1992-93, 1995-96, 1999-2000 and 2003-04 NPSAS studies.

7. CPS FAFSA completion rates increased to 58.6 percent on March 24, 2010, from 44.1 percent on March 25, 2009. Illinois Government News Network. Press Release: "College Aid Applications Up"; ISAC Advises Quick Completion of FAFSA; *Agency reports 37 percent increase in eligible applications over last year.* March 29, 2010. <http://www.illinois.gov/pressreleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=2&RecNum=8326>

✓ **Support Collaboration Among Counselors, Teachers and Community Groups.** Although counselors are uniquely prepared to guide students on the path to college and careers, they cannot do this work in isolation—particularly at a time of constrained resources. Collaboration within schools and with out-of-school programs should be encouraged and strengthened. Teachers and administrators must be informed of counselors' unique role in schools and fully enrolled in counselors' work. They can build intentional "college-ready" teams of educators to support their students' success. Counselors can also build collaborative efforts with out-of-school and in-school service providers, college access groups, as well as across institutions to bolster resources for their students throughout the year. Counselors and their schools have the opportunity to redefine the counselor's role as a facilitator of resources who can put the systems in place to support all students.

## Introduction — *True North: Charting the Course to College and Career Readiness*

In the next decade, more than half of all new American jobs will require some postsecondary education,<sup>8</sup> yet the current college attainment rate for the nation is 39 percent.<sup>9</sup> The challenges appear well before students begin college: one in four public high school students fails to graduate on time,<sup>10</sup> and of those who graduate, one-third need remedial courses in college.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, school districts, which are aiming to prepare all their students for college and careers, are facing higher standards with ever-constrained budgets. In times like these, we must be strategic with all of our educational resources, so that students are prepared for the productive futures they deserve. School counselors are among these critical resources: these professionals are uniquely positioned in schools—and in students' lives—to ensure that students get the support they need to stay on track to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. This report, *True North: Charting the Course to College and Career Readiness*, demonstrates that school counselors and their administrators share a vision for their schools and agree on a path to realize it. In the past, the more than 130,000 school counselors nationally<sup>12</sup> have struggled to define their profession. Now, faced with an incontrovertible need to improve student achievement, school counseling is no longer at a crossroads. The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors, supported by a supplemental survey of school administrators, provided powerful evidence that school counselors and their administrators know true north—and they are poised to chart the course of their students' college and career success.

This report on school counseling in America, the 2012 National Survey of School Counselors, reveals that America's school counselors are ready and willing to be leaders in our education system—and their school administrators agree. This survey builds on the 2011 National Survey of School Counselors: *Counseling at a Crossroads*, which revealed deep concerns within the profession and shed light on opportunities to better utilize these valuable professionals in America's schools. In 2011, more than 5,300 middle school and high school

counselors shared the overwhelming gaps they saw between the ideal visions of their schools and their schools in reality. They also confirmed that counselors make unique, undervalued contributions to students and schools—and demonstrated an appetite for accountability on many of these measures.

In May and June of 2012, more than 3,300 educators (including 439 administrators and 2,890 school counselors from middle schools and high schools in all 50 states) demonstrated that they have a common vision for schools, a shared understanding of how to achieve that vision and near unanimous support for counselors as leaders in education reform. These educators also identified common barriers preventing counselor effectiveness—and ultimately student success. Though nearly 99 percent of counselors and administrators agree that school counselors should be leaders in their schools, more than half of the counselors state that they do not have sufficient knowledge or training to be successful. Though more than 95 percent of counselors and administrators agree that “ensuring [. . .] all students complete the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers” fits their ideal view of the education system, the vast majority of schools do not have clear missions for counselors and accountability systems in place to support these goals. Collectively, the 2011 and 2012 surveys show that counselors and administrators alike are poised to significantly accelerate student achievement. With the challenges schools, districts and states are facing in educating more students to meet the demands of our economy, our system must be strengthened to harness the capacities of our nation's counselors. *True North: Charting the Course to College and Career Readiness*, provides powerful evidence that counselors and administrators agree not just on the vision of what schools could be, but on the way forward to making this vision a reality for all students. Together, counselors and administrators are on a path toward schools that fully utilize school counselors so that all America's children can graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

8. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/FullReport.pdf>

9. U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey (ACS), Education Attainment Ages 25–34, Three-Year Averaged Estimates for 2007–2009 and 2008–2010; and U.S. Census Bureau: 2020 Population Projections. Retrieved from: <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018/>

10. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2011) *The Condition of Education 2011*; [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_scr.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_scr.asp)

11. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2011), *The Condition of Education 2011*. [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_rmc.asp#info](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_rmc.asp#info)

12. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook: School and Career Counselors Employment by industry, occupation, and percent distribution, 2010 and projected 2020. Elementary and secondary school counselors. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/school-and-career-counselors.htm#tab-6> Accessed August 11, 2012.

## Survey Overview

From May 1 to June 21, 2012, counselors across America were asked to participate in the Second Annual National Survey of School Counselors. The survey, completed by 2,890 counselors, including 806 middle school counselors and 2,084 high school counselors, was supplemented by a second survey of school administrators, which took place between May 17 and June 5, 2012. This second survey was completed by 439 school administrators, including 91 middle school administrators and 348 high school administrators. The combined survey design was built on the 2011 National Survey of School Counselors, as well as an exhaustive Literature and Landscape Review (available from the College Board under a separate cover). The counselor and administrator surveys were informed by six focus groups conducted among high school counselors, middle school counselors and school administrators in March 2012 to explore potential survey topics and to give some counselors an opportunity to express their views in their own words; two focus groups in Charlotte, N.C.; two in Dallas, Texas; and two in Chicago, Ill. Particular emphasis was placed on recruiting a diverse pool of participants in terms of school district, years in the profession, and personal demographic characteristics.

We are confident that this sample, once weighted, represents a true national sample of school counselors and administrators in America. Counselor and administrator survey invitations were made on a state-by-state basis and were proportional to the size of the state. The survey results were additionally weighted to proper proportions by state for a representative national sample. A second set of weights was then applied to match known measures of counselor and administrator population based on available information, including by ratios of private-to-public schools and Schoolwide Title I enrollment and eligibility.

It is important to note that although most counselors work in either a middle school or a high school, some work in both. For purposes of this report, counselors were allowed to classify themselves as working in middle school, high school or a combined K–12 school. Counselors who responded “K–12 school” were asked to choose the type of school that reflected the students they primarily counsel. They then chose between middle school and high school and were combined with the original groups. Administrators were defined as school-level leaders, and identified as either principals or vice

principals. (Please also see the methodology section of this report for additional information.)

The report outlines the combined survey findings along four major themes: (1) Efficacy; (2) Training; (3) Accountability; and (4) Resource Alignment. The report then provides recommendations—Paths Forward—for how schools, communities, states and the nation can better leverage school counselors to promote student success in school and in life. Appendixes A–C include a more detailed look at NOSCA’s Eight Components, as well as the related sample activities tested in the survey; Appendixes D and E provide a chart that offers a high altitude view of the broader findings of this survey. Appendix F provides data from the eight largest states. Appendix G is a profile of the demographics of America’s School Counselors and Appendix H provides additional information on survey methodology.

### **1. Efficacy: Counselors and Their Administrators Agree on Counselors’ Ability to Increase College and Career Readiness for Students**

In the 2011 National Survey of School Counselors, we found that school counselors, on average, have high expectations for themselves, their students, their schools and the education system; but reality falls far short of their hopes. The majority of counselors reported working in a broken system that does not align with their aspirations for themselves or for their students. They were also clear that within this broken system in need of reform, the counselors’ unique contribution remains the preparation of their students for college achievement and career success. More than nine in 10 counselors reported that the mission of schools should be that all students, regardless of background, have equal access to a high-quality education (95 percent rated this as an “8” or higher) but only 56 percent of all counselors and 49 percent of counselors in high-poverty schools see this as a reality in their schools.

In 2012, we wanted to identify the factors that contribute to school counselor success—or failure—in achieving this mission. In short, what do counselors and administrators identify as roadblocks to a counselor’s ability to promote student achievement? In the often contentious world of education reform, we braced for the rocks to be thrown at the

glass schoolhouse. In today's world, headlines like "School Reform Impossible,"<sup>13</sup> and "Education Reform: Can We Ever Turn Talk into Action?"<sup>14</sup> can dominate the conversation, drowning out the successes (including a 5 percentage point increase in fourth-grade reading proficiency from 2000 to 2011<sup>15</sup> and a 3.5 percentage point increase in the national high school graduation rate from 2001 to 2009<sup>16</sup>).

Rather than proving contentious, the 2012 survey showed that counselor and administrator views were strikingly similar—on a shared vision of schools, as well as on their challenges and opportunities. More powerfully, they shared a belief in school counselors' ability—in their own efficacy in helping to boost student success. Faced with crowded classrooms, overwhelming caseloads, and dwindling budgets, counselors believe in their own effectiveness—and their principals and vice principals are cheering them on. Rather than throwing stones, the more than 3,000 educators in the 2012 survey are building schoolhouses.

## Counselors in Low-Income Schools

Despite significant challenges, counselors at schools with more than 75 percent of the student body on free or reduced-price lunches also report that they generally succeed or fail based on the full complement of commitment, support, training and resources. Comparing counselors at schools with low levels (25 percent or less) of students on free or reduced-price lunches to counselors at schools with high levels (75 percent or more) reveals that counselors at schools with higher numbers of students on free or reduced-price lunches are better trained and have more support, a greater commitment and greater accountability *when it comes to college affordability planning and using student FAFSA completion data*. Counselors at these more challenged schools are also more likely, in general, to be committed and held accountable to NOSCA's Eight Components and their specific activities. Schools with higher proportions of students on free or reduced-price lunches tend to have less preparation in other areas of the school counseling profession, limited resources, and more challenges to help their students overcome. In these communities, because of counselors' commitment to equity and their position within schools, communities and students' lives, school counselors are particularly well suited to lead systemic efforts to promote their students' college and career readiness. See Appendix E for additional information.

## Counselors' Self-Efficacy

Across the disciplines, research shows the powerful link between self-efficacy and outcomes. Albert Bandura, former American Psychological Association president and current Stanford professor, pioneered this social cognitive theory, defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments."<sup>17</sup> In education, longitudinal studies have shown that self-efficacy beliefs are linked to academic achievement.<sup>18</sup> Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs "have been repeatedly associated with positive teaching behaviors and student outcomes."<sup>19</sup> In rural and urban schools alike, students of efficacious teachers experience greater achievement, regardless of student background.<sup>20</sup> In the 2012 National Survey of School Counselors, school counselors shared their belief in their own ability to change students' lives.

13. School Reform Impossible Without a Plan. *The Washington Times*.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/aug/1/simmons-school-reform-impossible-without-a-plan/> August 1, 2011.

14. "Can We Ever Turn Talk Into Action?" *The Herald*.

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20120723/OPINION02/707239977> July 23, 2012.

15. The Nation's Report Card. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). [www.nationsreportcard.gov](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov)

16. Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate, Common Core of Data, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

17. Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

18. Caprara, Gian, et al. "The contribution of personality traits and self-efficacy beliefs to academic achievement: A longitudinal study." *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. Volume 81, Issue 1, pages 78–96, March 2011. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1348/2044-8279.002004/full>; Schunk, Dale H. and Carol A. Mullen. "Self-Efficacy as an Engaged Learner." *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*. 2012, Part 2, 219–235. <http://www.springerlink.com/content/15r14w57j6574452/>

19. Henson, Robin. *Teacher Self-Efficacy: Substantive Implications and Measurement Dilemmas*. Invited keynote address given at the annual meeting of the Educational Research Exchange, January 26, 2001, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/EREkeynote.PDF>; Anderson, R., Greene, M., and Loewen, P. (1988). Relationships among teachers' and students' thinking skills, sense of efficacy, and student achievement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 34(2), 148–165; Moore, W., & Esselman, M. (1992, April). Teacher efficacy, power, school climate and achievement: A desegregating district's experience. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco; Ross, J. A. (1992). Teacher efficacy and the effect of coaching on student achievement. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 17(1), 51–65.; Ross, J. A. (1994). The impact of an in-service to promote cooperative learning on the stability of teacher efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10, 381–394.

20. Watson, S. (1991). A study of the effects of teacher efficacy on academic achievement of third-grade students in selected elementary schools in South Carolina. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, South Carolina State College, Orangeburg. (University Microfilms No. UMI 9230552)

Counselors identified which measures they “believe counseling staff at [their] school could be effective at improving” if they “had administrative support and resources.” A clear pattern of optimism and potential for growth emerged on a number of important student outcome-related measures. Counselors who believe that they can be more effective in improving college application rates tend to work at schools that have higher college attendance rates. As Table 1 shows, over three-quarters of high school counselors agree on five items that they could effectively improve: the completion of a college-preparatory sequence of courses (83 percent), college application rates (82 percent), students gaining access to advanced classes and tests (81 percent), transcript audits of graduation readiness (78 percent), and high school graduation rates (77 percent). Only the last item, graduate employment rates, fails to marshal a majority, although this item comes close with 48 percent of high school counselors agreeing that they could improve the measure. Counselors believe in themselves and their students. If provided appropriate support and resources, they believe they could move the needle on these key measures.

The 2012 survey also asked counselors to identify what they consider to be their “greatest assets” to their students and school communities. Counselors answered a series of questions about their commitment, support, success, training and resources for a college and career readiness framework

(the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy’s Eight Components) as well as questions about example activities for each element of the framework. Figure 1 illustrates that counselors, when asked to make evaluations of the college and career readiness framework on numerous dimensions, identify their greatest assets as commitment, data analysis skills, prioritization, ability to implement equity, the training they have sought out, and knowledge. At least half of counselors rate themselves as an “8” or higher for each of these aspects, again indicating a strong sense of self-efficacy.

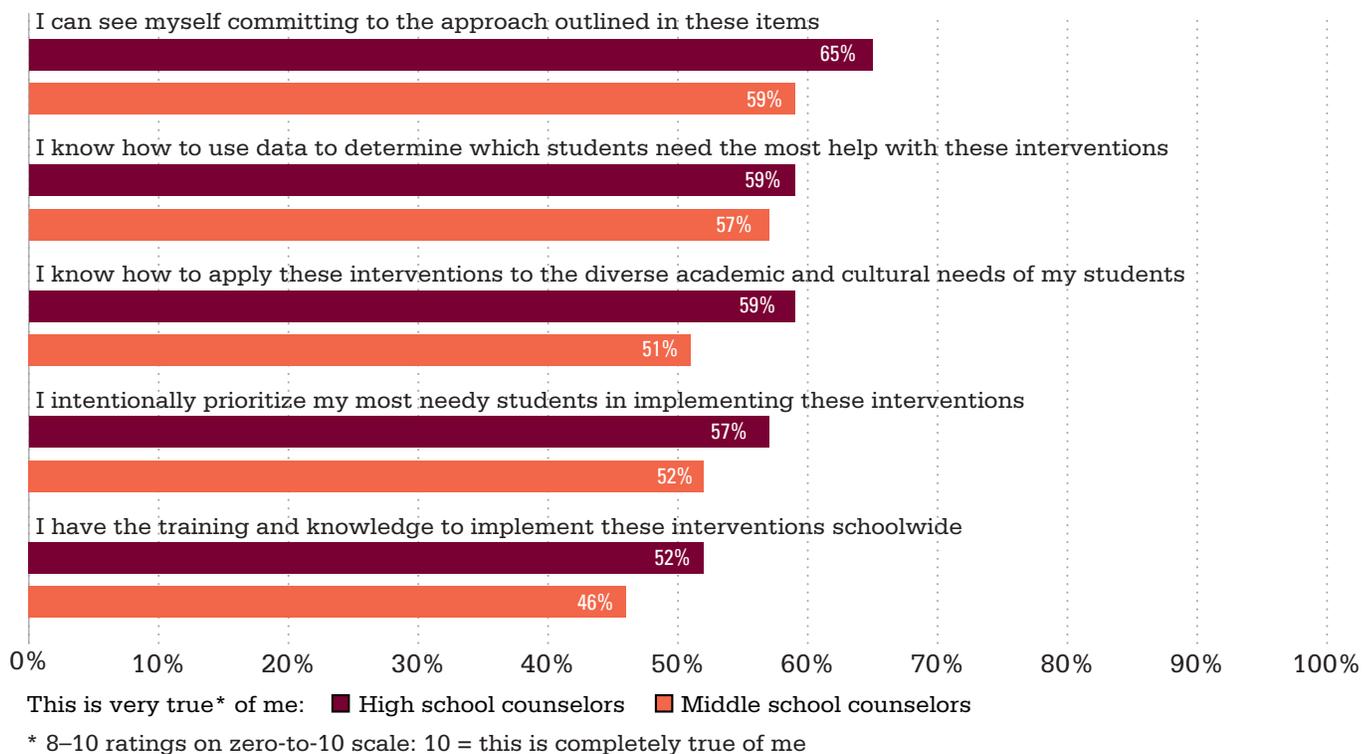
Of these assets, counselors’ greatest strength is their commitment. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of high school counselors and 59 percent of middle school counselors can see themselves committing to the approach outlined for a college and career readiness framework (in this case, NOSCA’s Eight Components), as indicated by a rating of “8” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale. Notably, the most committed counselors are in schools that tend to see the greatest challenges in promoting college and career readiness (see Table 2). Compared to 59 percent of counselors at schools in which fewer than one-fourth of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, 73 percent of counselors at schools with at least three-quarters of the student population on free or reduced-price lunches rate their personal commitment as an “8” or higher. The more work counselors have to do to achieve outcomes for their students, the more determination

**Table 1: Proportion of High School Counselors Who Believe They Could Be Very Effective\* in Improving Selected Measures**

	High School %	Public School %	Private School %	Free or Reduced Lunch (75%+) %	Lower College Attendance (up to 64%) %	Accountable to Student Outcomes %	Accountable to Outcomes and Activities %
Completion of college prep sequence of courses	83	83	80	85	86	84	86
College application rates	82	82	80	84	80	84	84
Students gaining access to advanced classes/tests	81	82	76	75	81	83	85
Transcript audits of graduation readiness	78	79	68	89	79	79	78
High school graduation rates	77	78	75	80	76	79	84
College acceptance rates	72	71	81	70	69	72	80
Dropout rates	66	66	63	67	67	65	74
FAFSA completion	63	64	52	71	70	64	68
State test scores	55	56	47	58	52	56	66
Graduate employment rates	48	48	41	57	50	49	59

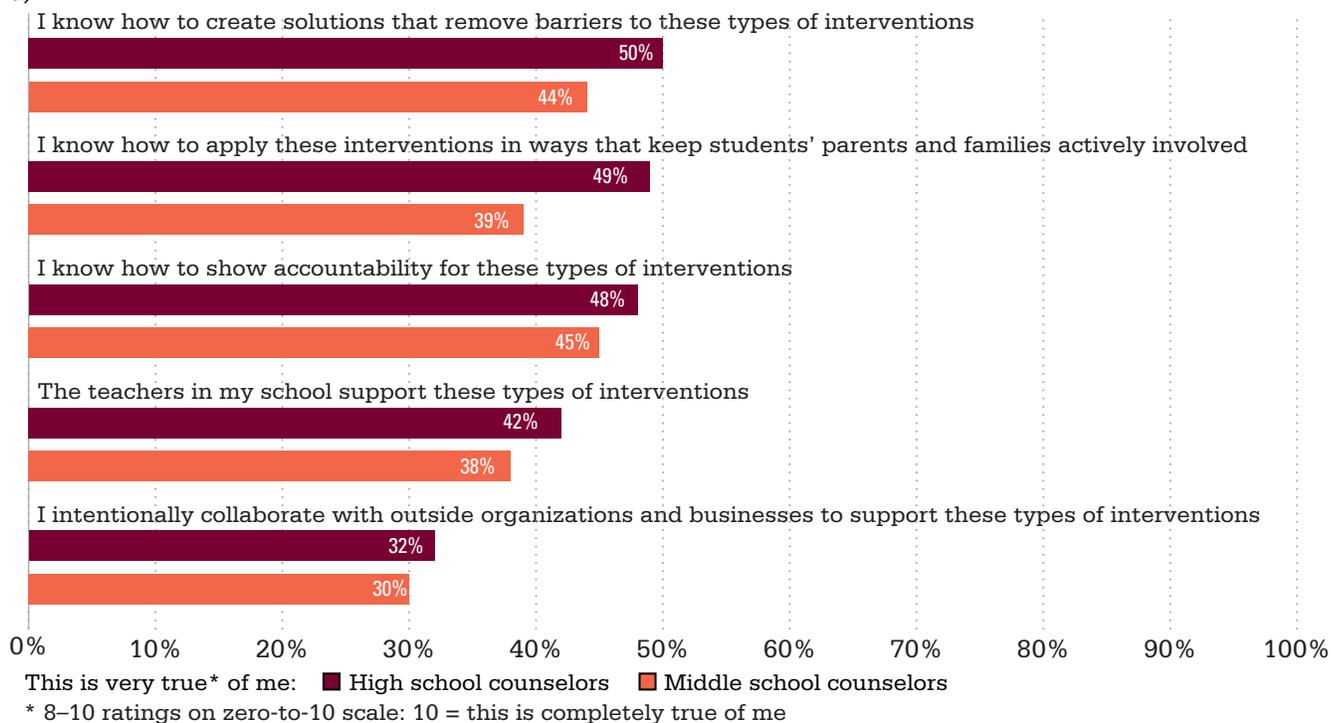
\*8–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = Counseling staff at my school could be extremely effective on this if we were committed to it and had administrative support and resources for it.

**Figure 1: Counselors' evaluations of the eight components and strategies as one overall approach to counseling students**



**Counselors' evaluations of the eight components and strategies as one overall approach to counseling students**

(cont'd)



**Table 2: Overall Evaluation of Counselors on the Eight Components and Example Action Items as One Overall Approach to Counseling**

	Committed to This Approach*	Have Training and Knowledge to Implement*	Know How to Show Accountability for These Interventions*	Know How to Create Solutions That Remove Barriers to These Interventions*
	%	%	%	%
All counselors	63	50	47	48
Middle school counselors	59	46	45	44
High school counselors	65	52	48	50
<b>Type of School</b>				
All public	63	50	47	48
Urban public	66	51	49	51
Suburban public	60	48	47	47
Rural public	62	52	43	47
All private	60	51	51	49
<b>Percent of student population that is minority</b>				
0 to 24%	58	48	42	45
25 to 49%	62	51	47	47
50 to 74%	65	51	51	52
75% or more	72	52	52	52
<b>Number of students in caseload</b>				
Fewer than 250	65	51	50	50
250-349	62	52	47	47
350-449	63	49	46	47
450 or more	63	49	46	49
<b>Percent of student population on free or reduced lunch</b>				
0 to 24%	59	48	44	47
25 to 49%	60	50	45	45
50 to 74%	64	51	47	50
75% or more	73	53	54	53
<b>Title I</b>				
Schoolwide	67	51	47	49
Not schoolwide	57	50	45	48
<b>College attendance rates (high school counselors only)</b>				
High college attendance (86% or more)	65	55	51	53
Lower college attendance (64% or less)	62	51	43	52
<b>Administrators</b>				
All administrators	76	54	NA	53
Middle school administrators	72	50	NA	42
High school administrators	77	55	NA	57

\*For each statement, 8–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = This is completely true of me/counselors in my school.

they appear to show. Most counselors feel confident that they contribute valuable skills to their school communities and are committed to doing so even in the face of diverse challenges.

## Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, Illinois: Increasing College Access and Counselor Professional Development Through Clear Goals, Data Use and Collaboration<sup>21</sup>

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is currently the third largest school district in the United States, with more than 400,000 students enrolled, 87 percent of whom are from low-income families.<sup>22</sup> Less than two-thirds of CPS' high school students graduate, though rates have been improving.<sup>23</sup> In 2004, only 44 percent of CPS' new high school graduates enrolled in college.<sup>24</sup>

Counseling teams have played a significant role in driving gains made by CPS students as a result of a restructured counseling model focused on college and career readiness, which began development in the 2000s. Educators at the forefront of the development and restructure of CPS school counselor programs believe that school counselors play an active role in improving student achievement. Based on 2010 survey data, schools implementing this model showed increased improvement at faster rates than non-implementers on four out of five measures of college and career readiness (college enrollment, high school graduation, attendance and incidents of misconduct).<sup>25</sup> And, from 2004 to 2011, college enrollment for CPS students increased 16 percentage points (44 percent to 60 percent).<sup>26</sup> Over this period, 47 percent more students enrolled in college (7,920 to 11,693) including an increase in enrollment for Latino students from 34 percent to 48 percent.

CPS' design model, which achieved these results, comprises a framework for a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program implemented by school counselors and supported by postsecondary staff. The model is framed around the question *"How are students different as a result of*

*what school counselors do?"* and is driven by the philosophy that counselors can advocate for students, helping to improve their academic and career achievement. A key component to supporting this framework is the systemization of data collection and distribution among the district office, network offices (each office supports a set of schools) and schools. These data are critical to the work of school counseling teams as counselors meet with their administrators to develop school-specific goals and action plans that will produce measurable results.

## Aligned, Attainable Goals

To begin formulating goals, Chicago educators aggregated preliminary data. The district office put out information about the types of students going to and staying in college, as well as information about the colleges themselves and FAFSA reports. Districtwide surveys were conducted to identify existing counselor responsibilities. As a result, counseling programs and school communities identified academic performance improvement, personal social/emotional management, college and career readiness, and college enrollment and persistence as their primary goals—all aligned with their broader aim to improve college access. In order to transform their goals into actions, CPS conducted subgroup analysis down to the school level. Attendance information, dropout rates, extracurricular involvement and test scores created a complete school picture for the counselor. These in-school data points were supplemented by data on employment after high school and work-based learning, as well as student exit questionnaires.

## A Data-Driven, Results-Oriented Plan

Armed with data relevant to their goals, counselors designed an implementation plan to address specific data elements around each of the counseling domains. Counselors worked with their principals to determine their school's top four metrics for focused work. Suggested data elements included attendance rates, graduation rates, PSAT/NMSQT® scores, SAT® scores, AP® enrollment, college application completion rates and college retention rates. They were then held

21. Interviews and email correspondence with Chicago Public Schools. June through August, 2012.

22. Chicago Public Schools Office of Finance. 2012. "Stats and Facts." Chicago Public Schools. Retrieved from: [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats\\_and\\_facts.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx)

23. "CPS to Hit Highest Graduation Rate on Record This School Year." June 9, 2012. Chicago Public Schools. Retrieved from: [http://www.cps.edu/News/Press\\_releases/Pages/06\\_11\\_2012\\_PR1.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/06_11_2012_PR1.aspx)

24. National Student Clearinghouse. 2011. "NSC College Enrollment Data 2010." Chicago Public Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/DataFiles/NSC%20College%20Enrollment%20Data%202010%20public.xls>

25. The CPS is an integrated model, driven by ASCA components. The impact on the four measures is baseline data; comparing nonimplementers to implementers and Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designees. Trend information is not yet available.

26. Choose Your Future. District Summary Reports. National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Data, 2004-2011. <http://www.chooseyourfuture.org/reports> Retrieved August 29, 2012.

responsible for executing this plan and participating in ongoing conversations with administrators about meeting mutual benchmarks in improving college access. CPS restructured professional development to be intentional in response to needs assessments, district initiatives, and national, state and local policy. Topics include leveraging school, staff and community resources to meet student needs; leading students, parents and teachers in the formulation of academic, social/emotional, and career plans, based on evidence of student needs; and expanded career exploration resources, and are available from a range of partners including the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Education Trust, Illinois Counseling Association, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA). Counselors have been provided with critical data tools (such as the "What's Next Illinois" Student portal, Dashboard and ChooseYourFuture.org.) that allow them to maximize their service delivery time.

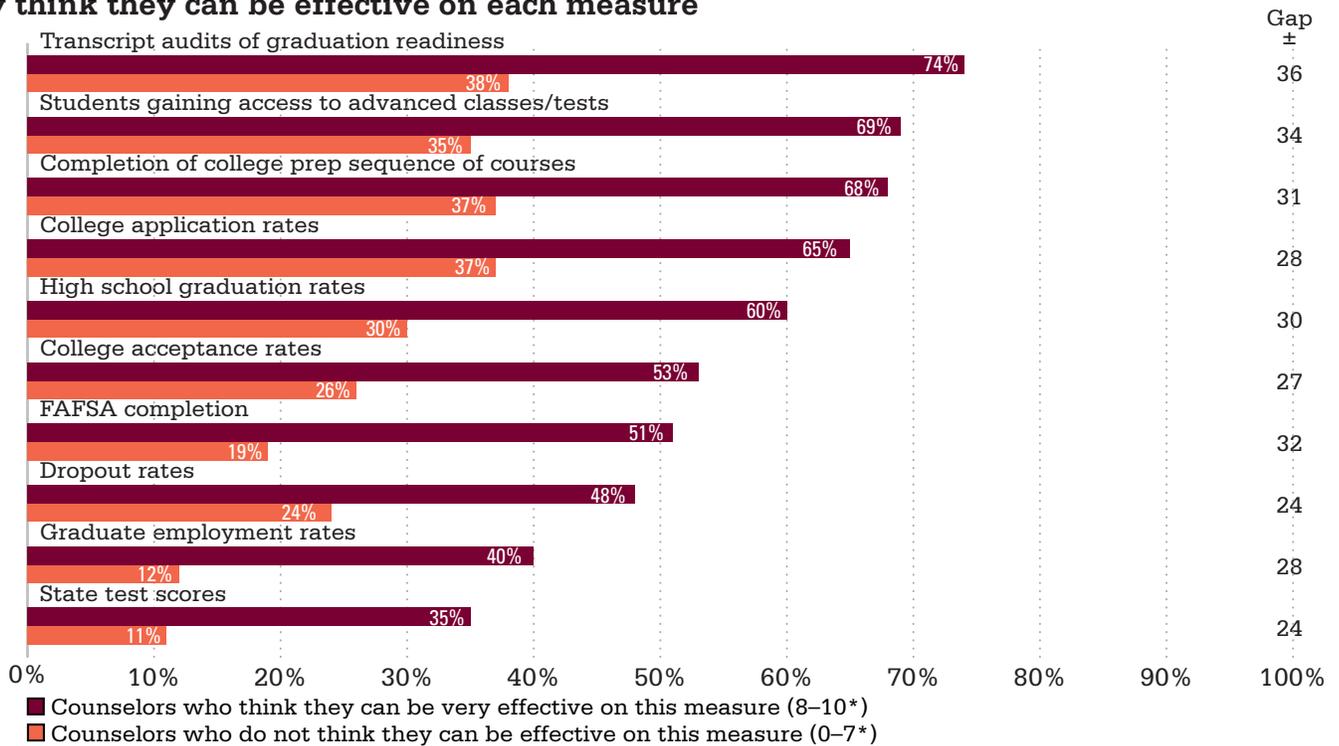
Utilizing outside resources has also been key to meeting these data-driven goals. Sustainable and effective improvement efforts, relationship building, and goal alignment occurred between staff departments and with outside stakeholders such as college access groups, university

partners, and college and career coaches. Proven models such as those provided by ASCA, the College Board's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling, AVID, and GEAR UP lent credibility and provided guidance for the new goals and strategies in CPS schools. These models brought credibility to the work by tapping into national resources. By leveraging stakeholders, collaborating with administration on a regular basis and finding ways to supplement existing counseling resources, responsibilities were manageable and clear, and the new data-driven systems approach has proven to be effective.

### Self-Efficacy and Accountability

Counselors with a strong sense of self-efficacy are also more willing to be held accountable for improving measures related to college and career readiness (see Figure 2). The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors shows a strong relationship between perceived efficacy and assessments of fairness of accountability measures. Counselors who say their counseling staff can be effective in improving their school's performance (an "8" or higher on a scale of zero to 10) on certain measures are more likely to say it is fair to be held accountable (a "6" or higher on a scale of zero to 10) to that measure than counselors who are more pessimistic about improving their school's performance on that measure (a "7" or lower on a scale of zero to 10).

**Figure 2: High school counselors who say it is fair to be held accountable (6–10\*) by whether they think they can be effective on each measure**



\*Ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = I can be extremely effective/it is completely fair

For example, among counselors who believe they can be effective at transcript audits of graduation readiness, 74 percent believe this is a fair measure of accountability. On the other hand, among counselors who do not believe they can be effective at transcript audits of graduation readiness, only 38 percent believe this is a fair measure of accountability.

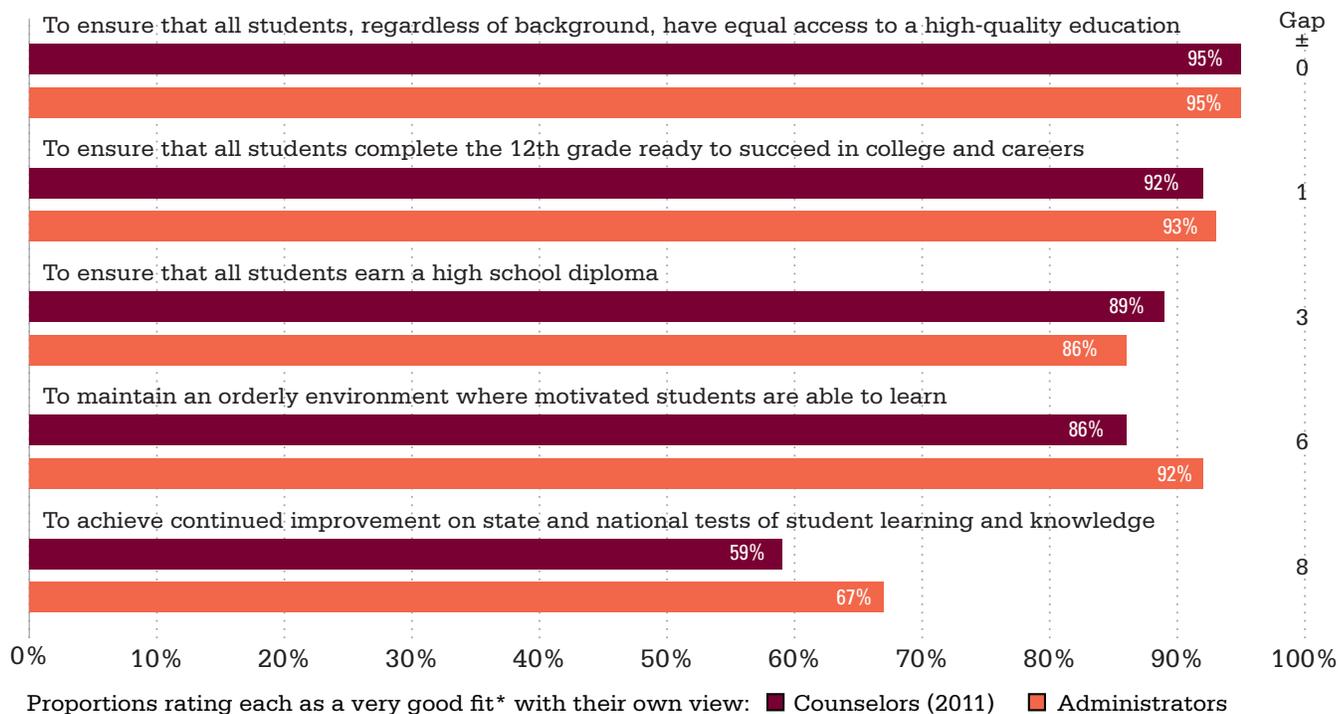
These results are shown in Figure 2, where the gap between those counselors with a more robust perception of their own efficacy and those who are more pessimistic is, at lowest, 24 percentage points (for dropout rates and state test scores). Among counselors with a low to moderate belief in their counseling staff's abilities, there is a striking lack of agreement about measures for which they could fairly be held accountable. Even the most popular item for all counselors, transcript audits of graduation readiness, only gains the support of 38 percent of the more pessimistic counselors. By comparison, only state test scores rate lower with counselors (35 percent) at schools where counselors are optimistic. Counselors who see room for improvement and believe they are capable of producing that improvement are more prepared to be held accountable for doing so.

### Administrators and Counselors Agree on Counselor Efficacy

The College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy has long identified the principal-counselor relationship as critical to student success. In 2008, in collaboration with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), NOSCA assembled research-based materials to support the principal-counselor relationship.<sup>27</sup> The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors sought to expand on this work—and revealed that administrators and counselors have more commonalities than differences in their views on school improvement as well as counselors' abilities, roles and pathways to success. While there are plenty of spaces in the education sphere in which clashing opinions and goal misalignment are the norm, this consensus is, perhaps surprisingly, not among them.

Most broadly, administrators and counselors have a shared vision of the mission of schools. As Figure 3 shows, school administrators are extremely similar to counselors in how

**Figure 3: What should be the mission of the education system?**



\*8–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = perfectly fits my view of what the mission of an ideal school system should be

27. Additional materials on the principal-counselor relationship are available at <http://nosca.collegeboard.org/research-policies/principal-counselor>

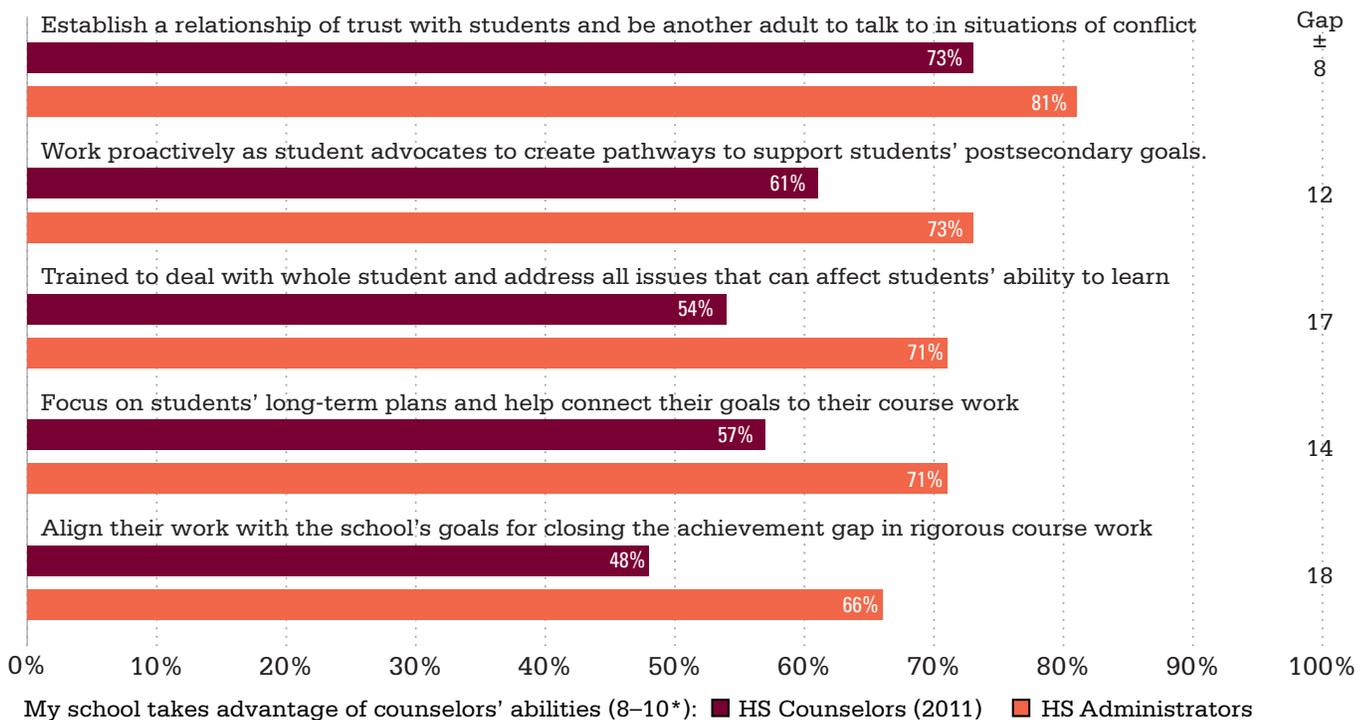
they see the ideal mission of the education system. Just as in the 2011 National Survey of School Counselors, the mission “to ensure that all students regardless of background, have equal access to a high-quality education” receives the highest ratings from school administrators with fully 95 percent (compared to 95 percent of counselors) rating it as an “8” or higher for how well it fits their ideal mission for the education system. Garnering similarly large majorities of support among both counselors and administrators (92 percent and 93 percent, respectively), “ensuring that all students complete the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers” also fits a mutual ideal view of the education system. Interestingly, these fundamental beliefs are agreed upon in schools with varying rates of attendance and numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Furthermore, administrators see counselors as indispensable to their school’s success in ensuring that all students reach the end of the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers. One principal explains, “Counselors are resource investigators. They’re great communicators—communicating access to resources that the teacher[s] can’t necessarily get into

because they have so many things to cover. Students want to prepare to go to college, but how do they prepare for the SAT? How do they find the money to go? Educating the kids on the nuts and bolts of the career readiness and the college readiness—that’s the unique skill set that [counselors] bring.”

Administrators and counselors also agree that counselors are poised to take leadership roles in their school communities and advocate for student equity and educational success for all students. In the 2011 survey, nearly every counselor (99 percent) stated that they should exercise leadership in advocating for students’ access to rigorous academic preparation, as well as for other college and career readiness counseling, even if others in the school do not see counselors in this leadership role. In 2012, nearly the same proportion of administrators (98 percent) agreed with the statement “It is important for school counselors to exercise leadership in advocating for students’ access to rigorous academic preparation, as well as other college and career readiness counseling, even if others in the school don’t see counselors in this leadership role.” Further, more than four in five counselors (81 percent, including 79 percent who strongly

**Figure 4: High school administrators believe they take more advantage of counselors’ abilities than do high school counselors**



\*8–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = My school takes full advantage of this unique role and special contribution

agree) say that “being part of the school’s leadership team” should be an extremely important focus of the counselor’s job. One counselor in Charlotte explained it simply: “I strongly agree that we should be leaders for advocacy for our students.”

Clearly, administrators believe counselors have tremendous potential to be successful. In fact, in many ways, administrators actually think they are more effectively taking advantage of counselors in achieving school goals than counselors do (see Figure 4). Compared to counselors surveyed in 2011, administrators feel that their schools do a better job taking full advantage of school counselors’ ability to “work proactively as student advocates and actively intervene to create pathways and support to ensure that all students have opportunities to achieve their postsecondary goals.” Student advocacy, importantly, is the aspect counselors most commonly chose (74 percent) as one of the two or three most important contributions counselors can make to achieve the goal of an education system in which all students graduate from the 12th grade ready for college and careers. However, whereas 61 percent of all counselors rated their schools as an “8” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale in 2011, 71 percent of school administrators in 2012 say that their school takes full advantage of this ability. Evidently, while school counselors

demonstrate a clear sense of self-efficacy, administrators’ perception of counselor ability and effectiveness is even stronger. Though a promising finding in terms of building strong counselor–principal teams in schools, this may also indicate a lack of understanding on the administrator’s part in terms of counselors’ day-to-day responsibilities (as will be further discussed in the training portion of this report).

### ***Administrators and Counselors Agree on a Path to Achieving School Goals***

The 2012 survey shows that in addition to sharing a similar educational vision and belief in counselor efficacy, counselors and administrators agree on a path to achieving mutual goals. In the 2011 survey, nearly all counselors (93 percent) said they support a strategic approach to promote college and career readiness (NOSCA’s Eight Components), including 57 percent who strongly support this approach. Overwhelming majorities of school counselors said each of the Eight Components were important to the goal of achieving a school where all students reach the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers. These findings demonstrate that counselors broadly support both the idea of a strategic approach to promoting educational outcomes as well as the components of such a strategy, as defined by a national framework. Counselors

**Table 3: Proportions of Counselors Who Are Very Committed\* to Each of the Eight Components**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %	High College Attendance (86%+) High School Only %	Lower College Attendance (up to 64%) High School Only %
<b>Academic planning for college and career readiness:</b> Advance students’ planning, preparation, participation, and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals	90	83	92	90	93	94	89
<b>Connect college and career exploration and selection processes:</b> Provide early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college or career that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations	89	83	91	89	88	91	90
<b>College aspirations:</b> Build a college-going culture by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college. Maintain high expectations by providing adequate supports and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college	87	80	89	86	96	87	87

**Table 3: Proportions of Counselors Who Are Very Committed\* to Each of the Eight Components**

(cont'd)	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %	High College Attendance (86%+) High School Only %	Lower College Attendance (up to 64%) High School Only %
<b>College and career admission processes:</b> Ensure that students and families have an early and ongoing understanding of the application and admission processes so they can find the postsecondary options that are the best fit with their aspirations and interests	85	72	90	85	90	91	89
<b>College and career assessments:</b> Promote preparation and participation in college and career assessments by all students	82	77	84	82	84	86	85
<b>Transition from high school graduation to college enrollment:</b> Connect students to school and community resources to help ensure a successful transition from high school to college	81	74	84	82	79	86	83
<b>College affordability planning:</b> Provide information about college costs, financing, and the financial aid and scholarship processes, so students are able to plan for and afford a college education	81	68	86	81	84	85	86
<b>Enrichment and extracurricular engagement:</b> Ensure equitable exposure to a wide range of extracurricular opportunities that build leadership, nurture talents and interests, and increase engagement with school	77	80	76	77	75	81	73

\*8–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = I am completely committed to this as part of my counseling philosophy

are also personally committed to each and every one of the Eight Components. When asked to rate each component on a zero-to-10 scale on which a “0” means “not at all committed” and a “10” means “extremely committed,” every component received an “8” or higher from a majority of counselors. At the top (see Table 3) is commitment to “academic planning for college and career readiness.” Nearly nine in 10 counselors (90 percent) say that they are extremely committed (rated an “8” or higher) to “advancing students’ planning, preparation, participation and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals.” This response shows that counselors understand the educational spaces in which they are best suited to promoting student outcomes and feel deeply compelled to engage with students in those spaces.

Administrators agree with counselors on the path to achieving these school goals (see Figure 5). School administrators were asked the same series of questions as counselors about their commitment, support, success, training and resources for NOSCA’s Eight Components, as well as example activities for each element of the framework. The 2012 survey shows that, like counselors, administrators support a strategic approach to college and career readiness, and are also personally committed to all of the Eight Components. For each of the Eight Components, at least seven out of 10 school administrators, overall, rate themselves as an “8” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale for the extent to which they support school counselors in their school incorporating each of the Eight Components as part of their counseling practice. At the top of the list, 79 percent of school administrators rate their support as an “8” or higher for “advancing students’ planning, preparation, participation and performance in a

rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals.” The lowest rated component, “connecting students to school and community resources to help ensure a successful transition from high school to college,” still receives high support from 72 percent of administrators. This lack of variation across the components and overall strong support demonstrates administrators’ commitment to and belief in counselors’ ability to succeed, as well as their confidence in their own capacity to encourage counselors to achieve professional and school goals.

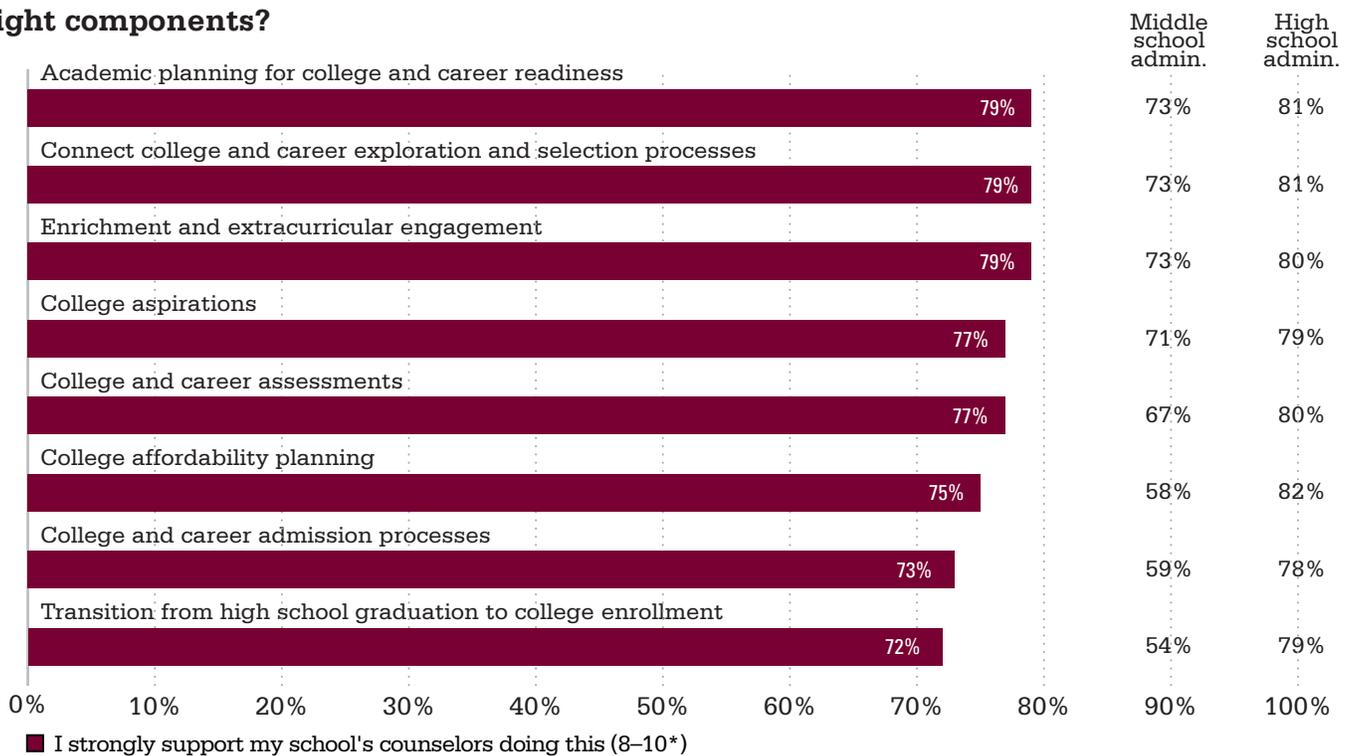
### Clifton Middle School, Houston, Texas: Early Action for Student Success<sup>28</sup>

Ruby Clifton Middle School in Houston, Texas, serves a diverse population of more than 1,000 young adults. As of 2011, 85 percent of Clifton students were eligible for free

or reduced-price lunches, 19 percent were considered ESL (English as a second language) and another 20 percent LEP (limited English proficiency).<sup>29</sup> At the Houston Independent School District high schools Clifton students go on to attend, more than 20 percent do not graduate in four years.<sup>30</sup>

In light of district and citywide educational challenges, counselors at Clifton Middle School decided to address college and career readiness issues with students by promoting college awareness, as well as encouraging the academic and personal behaviors and achievements proven to predict success in high school and beyond. With the support of their school principal and other educational leaders, the counseling department successfully conducts dozens of programs per year, including college financing workshops for parents and families, college-going culture activities, attendance recovery initiatives, and efforts to enroll students in more challenging courses. Their annual College and Career Night brings together over 200 college

**Figure 5: Administrators: How much do you support your school’s counselors on the eight components?**



\*Ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = completely supportive of my school’s counselors doing this to ensure all graduate college/career ready

28. Interviews and email correspondence with Clifton Middle School and Houston Independent School District. June through August, 2012.

29. Ruby Clifton Middle School Profile Houston Independent District and School Profiles 2010–2011. Retrieved from: [http://dept.houstonisd.org/profiles/Clifton\\_MS.pdf](http://dept.houstonisd.org/profiles/Clifton_MS.pdf)

30. “Completion Status and Dropout Report 2010–2011” July 9, 2012. Houston Independent District Research & Accountability. Retrieved from: [http://www.houstonisd.org/ResearchAccountability/Home/DA\\_DropoutAnalysis/Reports/Drop-Comp\\_12CompleteReport.pdf](http://www.houstonisd.org/ResearchAccountability/Home/DA_DropoutAnalysis/Reports/Drop-Comp_12CompleteReport.pdf)

and career representatives, business executives from across the country, college students, local politicians and district administrators in an effort to encourage Clifton students to plan their future. Local high school and even elementary school students are also welcome to attend this event that draws nearly 1,000 students, parents and families each year.

### Collaboration for Student Success

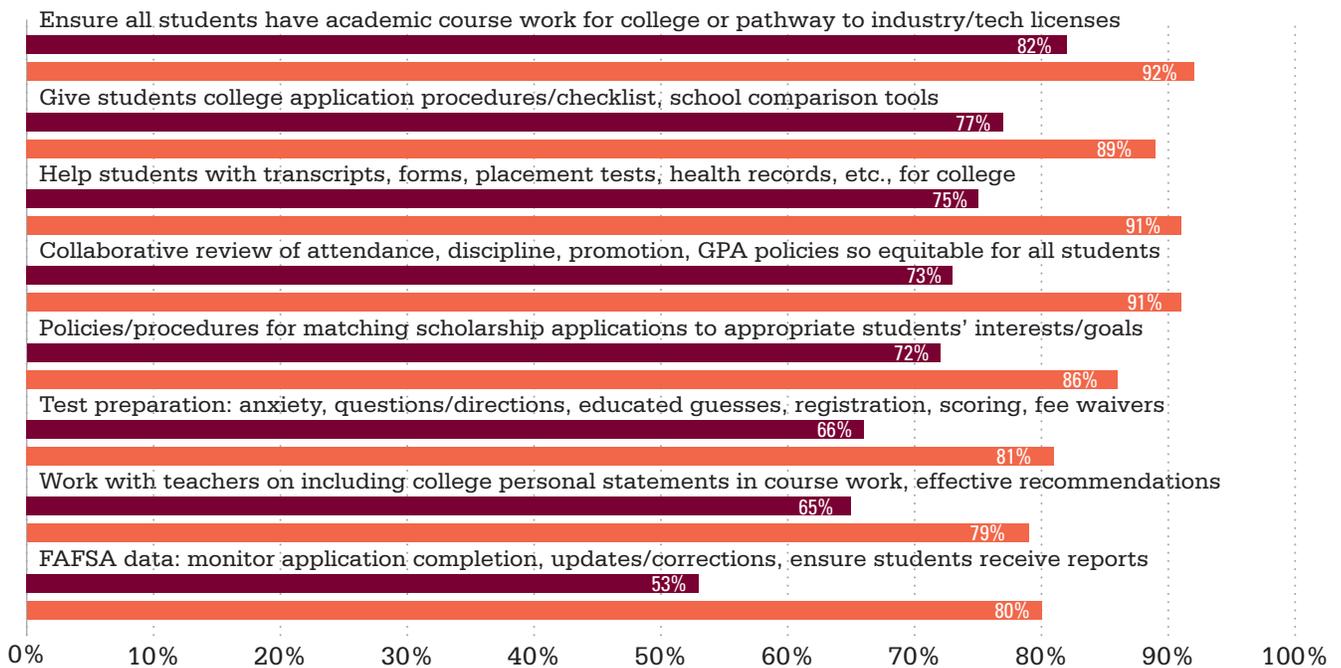
With only two counselors currently working at Clifton, support from other school leaders is vital to implementing new programs, setting goals and ensuring that counseling goals are integrated into school improvement plans. Clifton counselors have a common college-going message for students, and are working with teachers, principals, students and their families to ensure this message is received. To serve more than 1,000 middle school students, counselors at Clifton enlist the help of administrators, teachers, students, families and community partners to implement their ever-growing list of programs. For example, after counselors designed a school climate curriculum, teachers set aside time on Fridays to present these lessons. Counselors at Clifton call on local partners, such as mentors from local community colleges, to

teach students how to use college and career exploration technology tools. Clifton students even play a role in implementing guidance programs, taking ownership in preparing their peers for high school and college. Students have the option to sign up to work in the college-oriented "GO Center" during an elective period. After training to use the resources in this computer lab exploration center, students help their peers use technology-based tools to plan their futures.

### Roadblock to Counselor-Administrator Alignment

Although counselors and administrators agree on most key issues surrounding counselor efficacy, there are important gaps in understanding that prevent effectiveness. One counselor explains, "I know this is what I want to do; I'm passionate about it; my principal or administrators are committed. But it doesn't happen in my school. I wish it could, but it's not happening." Likewise, counselors and administrators give different ratings of administrator support. While a definitive majority of administrators believe they are providing the support their counseling staff needs to be successful in virtually every way (with more than two-

**Figure 6: High schools: How much does your administration support this activity to prepare students for college and career?**



Proportions who rate their administration/themselves as strongly supportive\* of activity: ■ HS counselors ■ HS administrators  
 \*6-10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = completely supportive of counselors' doing this activity

thirds feeling they support counselors in each of the Eight Components), counselors do not always fully concur when rating the support of administrators. More than three-fourths (76 percent) of school administrators say that they are personally committed to the approach outlined in these items. When counselors were asked to rate their level of support for specific activities, a majority endorsed all eight components (with mean ratings ranging from 5.8 to 8.1). This may indicate a lack of understanding on the administrators' part about how burdened counselors are with tasks that impede success to their core mission. (See Figure 6.)

These differences are important to note especially in light of administrators' vigorous support of counselor leadership in schools. This finding may indicate that administrators are not fully aware of how counselors' day-to-day responsibilities may limit a counselors' ability to work on more strategic schoolwide initiatives. Administrators may have higher support than counselors, as counselors have a more holistic understanding of what it takes to be successful. Furthermore, while counselors and administrators clearly both want counselors to advocate for students, it is unclear that both groups know just how much they are in agreement on these issues. If counselors feel alone or unsupported in pursuing educational outcomes or believe that there is a lack of administrative commitment to roles they *know* they are uniquely suited to fill in their school communities, they may be less likely to succeed in achieving their goals. Moreover, while sharing an ideal school vision is a crucial and overwhelmingly positive step in counselor-administrator cooperation, different perceptions of school realities could represent a breakdown in communication about school goals, strategies, priorities and outcomes.

The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors clearly indicates that counselors and administrators believe in counselors' ability to succeed, that administrators recognize the importance of and want to support counselors, and that counselors and administrators are both committed to a strategic approach to realizing a shared vision. Despite this promising foundation, counselors are struggling to implement the very strategies to which they have expressed commitment, and they do not perceive themselves as succeeding in the areas they identify as important. With more than 130,000 counselors in the education system (nearly the same number as school administrators), the stakes are too high to ignore these challenges.

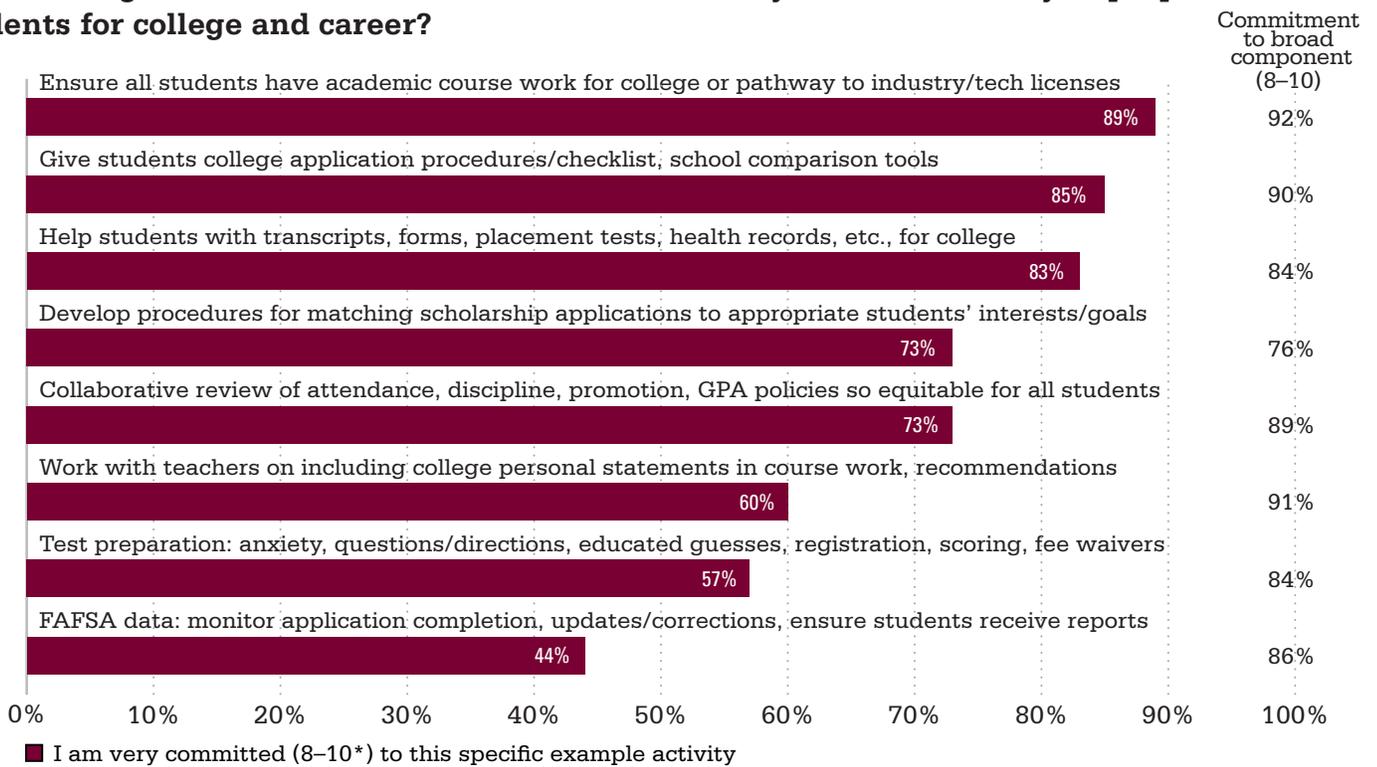
Counselors and administrators alike support NOSCA's Eight Components, but there is a breakdown between their

vision and what is happening in schools. For counselors and administrators, there is a gap between their commitment to these components and their perceptions of their school's success. As we have seen, when provided a college and career readiness framework (the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy's Eight Components), counselors are in favor of all of the components. In 2011, we found that nearly all counselors (93 percent) reported supporting this strategic approach to promoting college and career readiness by 12th grade, including 57 percent who strongly support this approach. However, more than one in three of all counselors (35 percent) and 43 percent of counselors in lower-income schools do not think they have the support and resources to be successful at promoting this mission. Furthermore, few rate their school as successful on each measure. For example, more than seven out of 10 counselors (72 percent) say the "College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes" component is very important, yet only 30 percent rate their school as successful in achieving this measure.

In many cases, high school counselors are less committed to example activities associated with the Eight Components than they are to the broader components themselves (see Appendixes B and C for example activities). While at least three-quarters of high school counselors say they are committed to each of the Eight Components, the proportion of high school counselors rating their commitment to the example activities ranges from 89 percent all the way down to 44 percent. In perhaps the most conspicuous example, while 86 percent of high school counselors express that they are strongly committed to the "College Affordability Planning" component, less than half (44 percent) are similarly committed to "using student FAFSA completion data to monitor application completion, to make application updates and corrections, and to ensure students receive and review aid reports," an action item associated with this component. Counselors want to help students but acknowledge that they are either not aware or questionably supportive of proven methods of producing the results they seek. (See Figure 7.)

The natural question that follows is "Where is the system breaking down?" The results indicate a gap between the perception that success is possible and the achievement of that success. The 2012 survey provides some insight, identifying factors that are detracting from counselor effectiveness. The more than 3,300 educators surveyed identified three key barriers obstructing counselors' ability to support their students: insufficient training; inadequate accountability systems; and inefficient resource alignment.

**Figure 7: High school counselors: How committed are you to this activity to prepare students for college and career?**



## Granite School District, Salt Lake City, Utah: Focus on College and Career Readiness Data to Increase Equity and Access for all Students<sup>31</sup>

Utah's Granite School District (GSD), among the 50 largest school districts in the nation, includes 89 schools and serves a diverse student population. Nearly half (49 percent) of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches and this number is as high as 95 percent in some schools. Nearly half (47 percent) of students identify with a minority background, 24 percent are Limited English Proficient, and the community includes many immigrants and refugees. As of 2012, only two-thirds of students in the district graduate from high school.

Despite these challenges, including high caseloads for counselors, recent student exit surveys report that students are receiving more counseling services than before. Students also report that the counseling resources and services available to them have significantly improved. Counselor leaders in GSD explain that these changes are the result of a districtwide effort to enhance and

improve counseling goals and expectations based on college and career readiness components, to develop the systems needed for counselors to meet these goals, and to implement the accountability measures to drive the program, process and results forward. In Granite, counselors are considered essential to the school leadership team, highlighting the importance of effective counselor-administrator relationships.

## Transforming Goals

In January 2011, Granite District's board of education approved a new department called "College and Career Readiness," with an emphasis on readiness for all students. Influenced by NOSCA's Eight Components and Urban School Counseling Initiative (USCI), Granite School District leadership designed a blueprint for college and career readiness counseling that supports the vision and goals identified by the superintendent and the board of education. The blueprint is designed to align school counseling data goals with district priorities, integrating the counseling program systemically into the district's education program and supporting district priorities for student achievement. By the 2014-15 school year, Granite

31. Interviews and email correspondence with Utah's Granite School District. June through August, 2012.

School District's transformation plan will be complete, maintaining a strategic structure, greater accountability, K–12 implementation, data integration and district goal alignment.

## Data for Equity

In a large district with counselors facing heavy caseloads, detailed and organized data on each student are important for academic planning and college and career readiness. At the district level, reports can be created for district, school or individual counselors to determine progress. Using data on course enrollment, Granite counselors are working to ensure that students' course placements are responsive to their needs, abilities and future goals. For example, counselors are reevaluating course limits for advanced courses.

## Expectations and Accountability

GSD now employs a variety of measures to help counselors manage their interactions with students and ensure that all students have access to the counseling resources they need. Counselors are providing information, tools and perspectives to students and their families that make college and career readiness an expectation for *all* students. Expected outcomes for *all* students (especially students from underrepresented populations) include establishment of a college-going culture in all schools wherein students aspire to go to college; advancement of student course planning beyond high school graduation requirements; and access and exposure to experiences and information to make informed decisions about college and career. To achieve these results, a preservice counselor intern program provides schools with additional counseling resources, adding between four and eight extra staff members per year.

## 2. Training: Counselors Preservice and In-Service Training Is Not Aligned with Student Outcomes

Counselors are among the most highly educated professionals in schools, with well over three-quarters (83 percent) of counselors holding a master's degree. Counselor preservice training occurs at the graduate level and typically includes

both academic course work and an internship or practicum experience with supervised clinical work.<sup>32</sup> Course work in counselor training programs usually includes counseling techniques, counseling theories, human growth and development, group counseling, career development, crisis intervention, coordination of services, legal and ethical issues, and advocacy. Further, each of the nation's states has established standards for school counselors through either the state legislature or a governmental agency such as the State Department of Education.<sup>33</sup> Most counselors participate in some sort of in-service training as well, but research and surveys about counselor in-service training are limited in number and scope.<sup>34</sup> Despite this preparation and ongoing professional development, the 2011 survey found that only a small minority of counselors felt very well prepared for their job (16 percent rate their training as a 9 or 10 on a zero-to-10 scale, with a mean rating of 6.6 for all counselors). In the 2012 National Survey of School Counselors, we aimed to explore this serious gap in the preparation of school counselors and the needs of their students. The survey provides insights into the preservice (graduate school) and in-service (professional development) training, with implications for the different types of educators that prepare counselors for their work at varying stages of their careers.

### *Preservice and In-Service Training and Student Outcomes*

The 2012 survey demonstrates a significant correlation between counselor preparation and their students' outcomes. Counselors who report being better trained are more likely to work in schools with higher rates of college attendance. While 27 percent of counselors who say they have sufficient training on at least five of the Eight Components work at schools with higher rates of college attendance, only 19 percent of counselors who report having sufficient training on four or fewer of the components work at schools with higher rates of college attendance. These findings suggest that counselors who are effectively trained can match their commitment to improving outcomes with the proven activities that promote these outcomes. In short, counselors who receive training to produce results have a greater chance of supporting their students' success.

32. School Counselors Literature and Landscape Review. Civic Enterprises for the College Board. 2011.

33. American School Counselor Association. (2010). "State Certification Requirements." American School Counselor Association. Retrieved from: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=325&sl=133&contentid=242>

34. School Counselors Literature and Landscape Review. Civic Enterprises for the College Board. 2011.

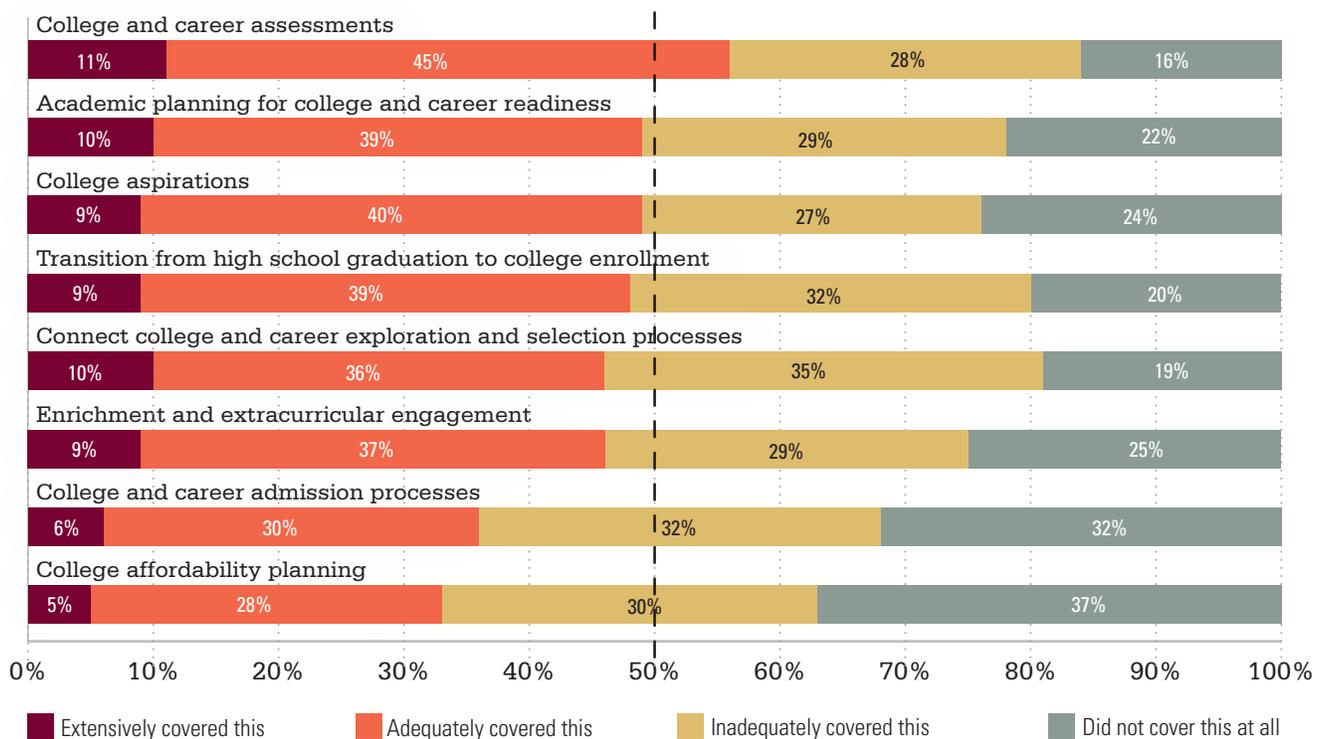
### Preservice and In-Service Training Inadequately Prepares Counselors for College and Career Counseling

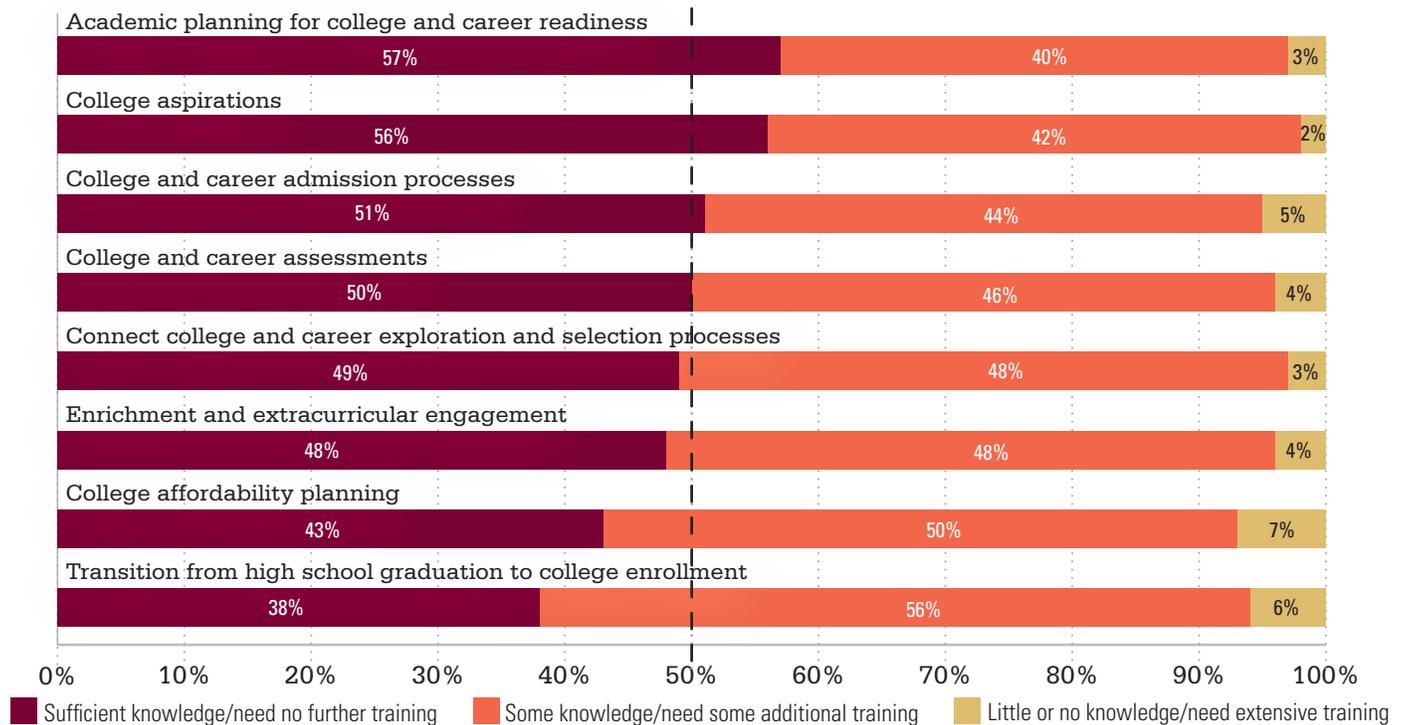
The 2012 survey shows that the majority of counselors know that their education and ongoing professional development is insufficient to provide them with the tools they need to achieve their goals. To understand how well graduate school counseling programs cover the concepts and goals captured in the Eight Components, counselors holding the pertinent degrees evaluated their graduate programs. The majority of school counselors with a graduate degree specializing in school counseling reported that their graduate school did not adequately prepare them to enter America's schools and successfully adopt a college and career readiness framework (see Figure 8). The majority of counselors reported that their preservice training is not effective. Only for "promot[ing] preparation and participation in college and career assessments by all students" ("Promote College and Career Assessments") do more than half of school counselors (56 percent) say that their graduate program in school counseling covered this component extensively or adequately.

Despite the fact that counselors and administrators endorse NOSCA's Eight Components, for each component, at least

40 percent—and in many cases more than half—of school counselors say that they need some additional training or extensive further training (see Figure 9). Though counselors were not asked to specify if they received these specific elements of training during preservice or in-service training, the results indicate a need for improved professional development opportunities throughout counselors' careers. If counselors feel inadequately trained in something, then both their preservice and in-service training were insufficient. As such, before counselors can effectively implement components of a college and career framework, they must acquire the requisite training and knowledge base relative to that component. It is important to note that while the College Board's "Eight Components" system itself is relatively young, introduced by NOSCA in 2010, its principles are based in school counseling college and career readiness. The idea that counselors should perform "college and career assessments" or that "college affordability planning" falls into the counselors' realm of responsibilities is well established. As explained previously, these concepts are fundamental and familiar to counselors. It is with this understanding and commitment that the majority of counselors report an enthusiasm for using a college- and career-ready framework.

**Figure 8: Counselors: How well did the training in your graduate school counseling program cover these components?**



**Figure 9: Counselors: How much knowledge/training do you have in these components?**

The 2012 survey further shows that the relatively extensive training measures in which counselors participate, both during preservice and in-service training, are not providing counselors what they need to know or preparing them to deal with the issues to *which they feel most committed*. This represents an important missed connection between professional school counselor training and practice. As we have seen, there is a significant gap between counselors' strong commitment to a strategic approach for promoting college and career readiness (NOSCA's Eight Components) and their commitment to example activities within this approach. Counselors are supportive of the overarching plan and believe they can be effective within it, but they see a disconnect between their commitment and the activities that could advance college and career readiness for students. This suggests that even when the broader focus of counselor training is aligned with real counselor concerns, systems-oriented approaches, or 21st-century school goals, preservice and in-service training inadequately communicates the application of these principles.

### ***College and Career Readiness: Where the Training Gap Hits the Hardest***

Interestingly, while significant training gaps are evident for all Eight Components, counselors across the board feel most

confident in their knowledge of the components related to preparing students to apply for college. For example, more than half (57 percent) of school counselors say that they have sufficient knowledge and do not need further training on "Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness," concerning how to "advance students' planning, preparation, participation, and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals." Similarly, 56 percent of school counselors say that they have sufficient knowledge and do not need further training on "College Aspirations," regarding how to "build a college-going culture by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college" and "maintain high expectations by providing adequate supports and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college."

In contrast, some of the greatest training deficiencies appear in the components that deal with the logistical and financial realities of getting students onto college campuses following high school graduation. One administrator from Dallas explains, "A lot of the counselors ... come in with the soft skills. They're good with people. They're good with kids. But they're missing a lot of those technical skills ... they need to know so many details, or things in so much depth. But they can't ever get there because they're covering so

much breadth.” Less than half of counselors (43 percent) say that they have sufficient knowledge and training on “College Affordability Planning,” which includes ways to “provide information about college costs, financing, and the financial aid and scholarship processes so that students are able to plan for college and afford a college education.” Even fewer counselors (38 percent) say they have sufficient knowledge and training on “Transition from High School to College Enrollment,” which involves “connect[ing] students to school and community resources to help ensure a successful transition from high school to college.” Even if counselors are effective at preparing students academically and emotionally to apply for college, enrollment numbers will not rise without ensuring that once students are accepted they can pay for college and actually go. The financial aid process can be daunting for families from across the socioeconomic spectrum—and counselors are in a position to help.

Counselors in schools with lower rates of college attendance are especially likely to say that they need additional training. Compared to 66 percent of counselors at schools with higher rates of college attendance, for example, only half (50 percent) of counselors at schools with lower rates of college attendance say that they have sufficient knowledge and do not need further training in “Academic Planning for College and Career.” This need for further knowledge and training is particularly poignant given that findings mentioned earlier demonstrate that “Academic Planning for College and Career” is one of the components to which *all* counselors, regardless of college attendance, say they are the most personally committed. It also suggests that with the proper training, both preservice and ongoing in-service school counselors could be an important resource for schools with lower rates of college attendance to increase the number of students who are academically prepared to attend and excel in college.

### **3. Accountability: Counselors and Administrators Support Certain Measures of Accountability**

Accountability measures remain uneven and under-implemented in the counseling field, though we have examples of effective and high-impact accountability systems at the school level that are driving student outcomes. Although education professionals have adopted broad school-based changes to focus on data and accountability as the result of legislation, specific provisions regarding school counselors are typically absent. In this accountability vacuum, professional counseling organizations have been leading

advocates for increasing data-driven counseling practices promoting the conviction among educators that what gets measured gets done.

The 2011 National Survey of School Counselors found that more than six in 10 counselors (61 percent) support accountability measures and incentives for counselors to meet the 12th-grade college- and career-ready goal, with stronger than average support among counselors in urban public schools (65, with 32 percent who strongly support these measures); counselors in schools with high minority populations (75, with 44 percent who strongly support these measures) and counselors in schools with lower-income students (70, with 38 percent who strongly support these measures). The survey also found that the majority of high school counselors endorsed certain accountability measures as fair and appropriate in assessing counselor effectiveness. Middle school counselors, though less enthusiastic about accountability measures, also endorsed certain measures. In 2012, counselors and their administrators provided additional insights on these measures, including those on the current state of accountability systems in schools. We found that counselors are more likely to support accountability measures related to practicing specific example activities associated with a college and career readiness framework (NOSCA’s Eight Components) than specific measures of student outcome. We also found that accountability systems are often broken, disjointed or misaligned to student outcomes that schools hope to achieve.

#### ***Counselors and Administrators Endorse Certain Measures of Accountability***

The first, and often limiting, obstacle to widespread effective accountability systems is that it is sometimes difficult for counselors and leaders to agree upon the measures to which they feel it is appropriate and fair for counselors to be held accountable. The 2011 and 2012 surveys show that in an era of data-driven education, counselors support multiple measures of accountability that align with their views of their mission and unique role (see Table 4). In 2012, we found that administrators showed a strong alignment with school counselors’ beliefs on accountability preferences, especially at the high school level. High school administrators favored similar measures as those favored by high school counselors, with administrators having slightly higher favorability ratings for measures of accountability than did counselors. High school and college measures were both endorsed: transcripts of graduation readiness (82 percent of administrators and 60 percent of counselors rate this as a “6” or higher on a

10-point scale), high school graduation rates (75 percent of administrators and 52 percent of counselors) and college application rates (74 percent of administrators and 57 percent of counselors).

Middle school administrators rated two measures as fair and appropriate, one of which was also endorsed by middle school

counselors: middle school completion rates (62 percent of administrators and 46 percent of counselors) and promotion from grade to grade (59 percent of administrators and 38 percent of counselors). These are the same measures that middle school counselors rate highest.

**Table 4: Proportion of High School Administrators and Counselors Who Believe It Is Fair\* to Use This Measure or Changes in This Measure to Assess Effectiveness of School Counselors**

	High School Counselors %	High School Administrators %
Transcript audits of graduation readiness	60	82
Completion of college prep sequence of courses	59	78
Students gaining access to advanced classes/tests	58	75
College application rates	57	74
High school graduation rates	52	75
College acceptance rates	43	63
Dropout rates	37	63
FAFSA completion	36	67
Graduate employment rates	23	49
State test scores	22	45

\*6–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = completely fair to use this measure or changes in this measure to assess counselors' effectiveness

## Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, Florida: Using Accountability Systems to Drive Student Achievement<sup>35</sup>

Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) in Tampa, Fla., (also featured in the 2011 report, "Counseling at a Crossroads"<sup>36</sup>) serve an extraordinarily diverse student population, in terms of ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds, as well as learning styles and career pathways. For example, the county's student body of 195,000 is 22 percent black or African American, 29 percent Hispanic, 41 percent white, and 8 percent Asian or multiracial. Furthermore, 58 percent of the student body is economically disadvantaged and 14 percent are considered students with disabilities.

While many schools serving such a wide range of student needs struggle to improve test scores and college access, Hillsborough County has made enormous progress in

increasing opportunities for college and career success. The district requires each school in Hillsborough County to set college and career readiness goals for which counselors and other staff members are held accountable. These goals vary by school, but across the district the goals of high school counselors all include increasing AP enrollment, SAT participation, and FAFSA completion. Counselors were purposefully engaged in the college and career process, as they are especially equipped to help students and schools achieve gains in these areas.

As a result of these goals and accountability for reaching them, student outcomes were achieved across the district, especially in schools and areas where equity matters most. In the past five years, high school graduation in the district has improved by seven percentage points and AP enrollment has increased by 119 percent. Furthermore, these gains have extended to traditionally underserved student populations. For example, from 2007 to 2012, AP enrollment almost tripled for both black and Hispanic HCPS students (from 1,170 in 2006-07 to 3,370 in 2011-12 for blacks and 2,519 in 2006-07 to 7,204 in 2011-12 for Hispanics). Moreover, both of these groups saw a greater than 75 percent increase in the number of students receiving a score of a 3 or better on an AP Exam. To take a look at just one HCPS school, Leto Comprehensive High

35. Interviews with Hillsborough County Public Schools. April through August 2012.

36. Bridgeland, John and Mary Bruce. "2011 National Survey of School Counselors: Counseling at a Crossroads." July 2011. Civic Enterprises in partnership with Hart Research Associates and the College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy.

School, where 84 percent of the student body is from a minority group (68 percent are Hispanic) and 81 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, its graduation rate increased from 62 percent to 82 percent, it nearly tripled its AP enrollment, almost doubled its PSAT/NMSQT participation, and almost tripled its SAT participation rate over the past five years. The success of Hillsborough students can be linked to the district's initiatives that focus, evaluate and reward counselors efforts to increase their students' college and career success.

## Focus, Evaluate and Reward

Hillsborough County educators are clear: counselors' focused efforts on college and career readiness can improve student outcomes. They have created counselor evaluations and accountability measures to assess student needs, evaluate existing school goals and set new ones, identify schoolwide issues and develop professional development resources so that counselors can be effective at meeting college and career readiness goals. Hillsborough County Public Schools, in partnership with the Gates Foundation, hopes that the outcome of these programs and the data they will produce will serve as a proof point for the nation that well-designed accountability programs can help elevate the school counseling program and drive student achievement.

School counselors in Hillsborough County are evaluated based on virtually every aspect of their roles and responsibilities in schools, including student outcome measures such as AP enrollment and performance. Evaluators interview the counselors, observe them at work and analyze student progress driven by the counselor's efforts. The peer evaluator supports counselor development by collaboratively planning the next steps in the counselor's program. The results of every observation and the counselor's ratings are posted in the district's Performance Management System for review. A new compensation plan rewards counselors who are advancing school and district goals. A higher annual salary is provided for counselors whose compiled evaluations from principals (30 percent), peer evaluators (30 percent) and student data (40 percent) reflect outstanding performance in assisting students. On the other hand, counselors who consistently perform unsatisfactorily on evaluations receive targeted support to improve—and their continued employment is dependent upon it. In Hillsborough County, focusing counselors' work toward college and career readiness,

providing ongoing peer support to improve their work and rewarding outcomes allows the district to more effectively meet its goals.

## Accountability Is Linked to Better Student Outcomes

The 3,300 counselor and administrators in the 2012 survey showed linkages between accountability systems and student outcomes. Among all counselors, those with no system of accountability work at schools with the lowest rates of students going on to college (only 21 percent of these counselors work at schools with higher rates of college attendance). More significantly, there is a correlation between the number of measures that counselors are held accountable to and college attendance rates. This correlation between accountability and increased college attendance rates holds true even after controlling for other important factors such as student caseload, years of experience, and education level of the counselor. Further, the 2012 Survey showed that what gets measured, gets done. The items counselors are held accountable to matter. Students in schools where counselors are held accountable to college-going activities are more likely to go to college. In particular, three measures of counselor accountability were linked to higher rates of college attendance: completion of college-preparatory courses (76 percent of students whose counselors are held accountable to this measure are college going, versus 73 percent of students whose counselors are not held accountable for this measure), college application rates (77 percent versus 73 percent) and college acceptance rates (77 percent versus 73 percent).

Evidence for the positive results of evaluation and accountability systems can be found in other areas of education as well. Accountability measures implemented on a schoolwide level in several states and districts have helped schools to reach performance goals as a whole.<sup>37</sup> Accountability systems resulting in the best student outcomes had clearly defined goals, realistic expectations of progress and were easily understood and considered fair by all.<sup>38</sup> For example, Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) conducted research at schools in North Carolina and Kentucky regarding the results of newly applied accountability programs that found that setting schoolwide student performance goals

37. "The New Accountability. CPRE Policy Brief." 1999. Susan H. Fuhrman. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpre.org/new-accountability>

38. "The New Accountability. CPRE Policy Brief?" 1999. Susan H. Fuhrman. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpre.org/new-accountability>; "The Linking Study — First Year Results: A Report of the First Year Effects of an Experimental Study of the Impact of Feedback to Teachers on Teaching and Learning." 2012 Jonathan Supovitz. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpre.org/linking-study-first-year-results>

and holding educators responsible for reaching them allowed teachers to put forth more energy into student instruction.<sup>39</sup> Educators felt a responsibility for reaching goals and were motivated by the positive outcomes that resulted.<sup>40</sup> Seven years later, CPRE conducted research in four new sites and confirmed the positive relationship between student achievement and evaluation.<sup>41</sup>

### Support for Student-Outcome Measures

The 2012 survey also asked counselors and administrators to rate the fairness of accountability measures in both counselor activity and student-outcome-related areas. Promisingly, high school counselors show some cohesion, with more than half supporting five of the specific student-outcome-related activities. The table below shows the following three highest items ranging from 58 to 60 percent of counselors rating the item as a “6” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale, with “10” being completely fair: students gaining access to advanced classes and tests, completion of a college-preparatory sequence of courses and transcript audits of graduation readiness.

At the bottom of the scale, only 23 percent of high school counselors agree that it is fair to be held accountable for

graduate employment rates, and 22 percent think they should be held accountable for state test scores. These findings suggest that there is somewhat qualified hope for the creation of accountability systems with specific measures that high school counselors can truly support. Confirming the findings of the 2011 survey, it appears that many counselors have a desire for at least some forms of accountability, if only in the areas in which they feel confident that they can make an impact. These areas tend to include activities typically in the domain of the counselor’s work (such as those related to course selection and transcripts) and exclude “outside” activities more closely tied to the classroom or workplace (test scores and graduate employment).

### Current Accountability Systems Are Nonexistent, Inconsistent or Promote the Wrong Outcomes

One in five counselors (19 percent) reports that there is no accountability system in place at all at their schools. Of those systems that are in place, there is little consistency between them (see Table 6). This inconsistency across accountability systems indicates a lack of alignment between education

**Table 5: Proportion of High School Counselors Who Believe It Is Fair\* to Use This Measure or Changes in This Measure to Assess Effectiveness of School Counselors**

	High School %	Public School %	Private School %	Free or Reduced Lunch (75% +) %	Lower College Attendance (up to 64%) %	Accountable to Student Outcomes %	Accountable to Outcomes and Activities %
Transcript audits of graduation readiness	60	60	56	69	57	59	64
Completion of college prep sequence of courses	59	58	67	68	58	58	67
Students gaining access to advanced classes/tests	58	59	56	70	58	60	66
College application rates	57	55	72	75	48	54	64
High school graduation rates	52	52	51	66	50	53	61
College acceptance rates	43	40	61	56	37	40	51
Dropout rates	37	37	33	51	35	37	44
FAFSA completion	36	37	29	62	39	34	41
Graduate employment rates	23	24	19	42	23	21	34
State test scores	22	22	22	38	23	21	32

\*6–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = completely fair to use this measure or changes in this measure to assess counselors’ effectiveness

39. “Changing teacher compensation: Cross-site analysis of the effects of school-based performance award programs.” 1998. Kelley, C., Milanowski, A., and Heneman, H. G. III. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

40. “Changing teacher compensation: Cross-site analysis of the effects of school-based performance award programs.” 1998. Kelley, C., Milanowski, A., and Heneman, H. G. III. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

41. “Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation as a Foundation for Knowledge and Skill-Based Pay.” 2006. Heneman, H. G. III, Milanowski, A., Kimball, S. M., and Odden, A. Retrieved from: [http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/policybrief/885\\_rb45.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/policybrief/885_rb45.pdf)

goals and counselors' ability to support these goals. High school counselors report a wide range of specific student outcome-related activities that their "school uses ... to assess counselor effectiveness." Between one-quarter and one-half of counselors are held accountable for the following: dropout rates (39 percent), college acceptance rates (39 percent), college application rates (39 percent), student access to advanced classes (38 percent), completion of college-preparatory sequence of courses (38 percent), and transcript audits of graduation readiness (36 percent). State test scores (29 percent), FAFSA completion (16 percent), and graduate employment rates (11 percent), round out the bottom of the list.

The 2012 survey also showed that in many cases, counselors are held accountable to activities that either do not directly promote student achievement or are inappropriate for counselors. As detailed in the 2011 survey, much of the confusion and poor deployment of school counselors across the education system seems to arise from what has been described as a "general lack of understanding by critical stakeholders about what school counselors do that impacts student outcomes."<sup>42</sup> Some tasks identified as "inappropriate" by counselors' associations, such as administrative duties, are regularly performed by counselors and could be undertaken by staff with little or no background in school counseling.<sup>43</sup> Yet, in 2012, counselors reported that they are held accountable to tasks that are better suited for other school personnel and

that pull counselors away from the college and career-going activities they are uniquely suited to provide their students. These accountability measures include: administrative and clerical tasks (69 percent), coordinating tests (60 percent), and disciplinary actions (13 percent). One school administrator explains, "I think a counselor in the ideal is able to ... help students matriculate to high school, help with the [college] application process, and so forth. But, unfortunately, in my experience, they've become case managers. They end up dealing with paperwork and IEPs (Individualized Education Programs), and they're dealing with multiple jobs as one individual." This lack of consistency suggests that counselors and school leaders are unaware of the elements of a comprehensive and effective accountability system, do not know how to implement such a system or some combination of the two.

### *Counselors Do Not Know How to Show Accountability*

The 2012 survey indicates that even if more consistent or widely supported accountability systems are put in place, counselors are not sure how to demonstrate their own skills, competency or results related to their work on interventions like those described in the Eight Components. Even if counselors are producing outcomes or taking steps toward

**Table 6: Proportion of High School Counselors Who Say They Are Held Accountable for Student Outcome Measures and Non-Student Outcome Measures**

	Student Outcome Measurements %		Non-Student Outcome Measurements %
High school graduation rates	52	School counseling program development	74
Dropout rates	39	Administrative and clerical tasks	69
College acceptance rates	39	Coordinating tests	60
College application rates	39	Scheduling IEP and 504 meetings	35
Students gaining access to advanced classes/tests: AP, IB, Honors, Dual Enrollment courses	38	Creating the master schedule	33
Completion of college prep sequence of courses	38	Attendance checking and verification	23
Transcript audits of graduation readiness	36	Disciplinary actions	13
State test scores	29	Substitute teaching	8
FAFSA completion rates	16	Writing IEPs	3
Graduate employment rates	11	Other	26
		None of these	5

42. McGannon, W. 2005. The Current Status of School Counseling Outcome Research. National Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, 7.

43. American School Counselor Association. 2005. School Counseling Principles: Foundations and Basics. Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

improving efficacy, they feel ill-equipped to quantify or communicate their responsibilities and successes.

Less than half (47 percent) of counselors overall say they “know how to show accountability for these types of interventions.” Counselors in schools that face more diverse populations are more confident in their ability to show accountability. More than half of counselors (54 percent) at schools with higher numbers of students on free or reduced-price lunches say they know how to show accountability (versus 44 percent of their counterparts at schools with fewer than one out of four students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches).

#### 4. Resource Alignment: Counselors and Administrators Identify Areas to Maximize College and Career Readiness Resources

The data show that resources matter. In an analysis looking at counselors’ 2012 ratings of personal commitment, training, administrative support, district support and resources to predict the extent to which each specific activity occurs effectively enough in their school to help all students succeed, resources are the strongest predictor. Yet the nation continues to face a time of fiscal austerity; resources are scarce. Districts and state governments are cutting budgets for schools and educational programming<sup>44</sup> and, because of increasing poverty, student need is on the rise.<sup>45</sup> We need to do more with the resources we have. Schools, districts, states and the nation, as well as the many community partners that support student success, need to ensure that we are leveraging and aligning current resources to maximize impact.

The stakes of this resource alignment are high. Over the next decade, the nation needs 22 million students to earn a college degree to meet the demands of the workforce, but America is expected to fall short of this goal by at least three million.<sup>46</sup> If we could boost K–12 and postsecondary education, we would

in turn boost the nation’s economic growth. Last year alone, if America had met the Grad Nation goal of a 90 percent high school graduation rate, there would have been more than 580,000 additional high school graduates from the Class of 2011. These additional graduates have the potential to earn \$6 billion more in income with a high school diploma compared with their earnings as dropouts. These additional earnings could create a ripple effect through the national economy, generating more than 37,000 new jobs and increasing the gross domestic product by \$6.6 billion.<sup>47</sup> Counselors are positioned to help make increased postsecondary and career readiness a reality, improving high school and college graduation rates—which in turns helps individuals financially and the economy as a whole. Administrators recognize counselors as a key resource for schools. In addition to the elements in previous sections of this report, 33 percent of administrators (one in three) said that if they could hire just one more staff member for their schools, they would hire a counselor (with the rest choosing to hire a teacher). Considering the size of typical counseling departments compared with the number of teachers in most schools, this is highly significant. Administrators see the value counselors add to their school communities and see counselors as critical members of the educational team.

Social innovators are increasingly looking toward “collective impact”<sup>48</sup> to drive improvements in schools. The coordination of many stakeholders could amplify the impact of the work, but this collaboration can be laborious, difficult and time intensive. In the 2012 survey, we looked at multiple issues related to collaboration. We made the unsurprising discovery that providing additional resources for college and career readiness could help ensure that all students graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and careers. Perhaps more significantly, in a time of fiscal constraint when increasing resources may not be viable, the 2012 survey also provided insights into areas of possible alignment to better maximize current resources related to counselors’ work.

44. “Tight Budgets Put Some Superintendents on Part-Time Status.” *Education Week*. January 30, 2012. [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19parttime\\_ep.h31.html?qs=district+budgets](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19parttime_ep.h31.html?qs=district+budgets); “Parent, Community Groups Pressed to Fill K-12 Budget Gaps.” *Education Week*. March 13, 2012. [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24gift\\_ep.h30.html?qs=district+budgets](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24gift_ep.h30.html?qs=district+budgets); Caesar, Stephen, et al. “Education Takes a Beating Nationwide.” *The Los Angeles Times*. July 31, 2011. <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/31/nation/la-na-education-budget-cuts-20110731>

45. Kids Count report: “America’s children are advancing despite the economy.” Annie E. Casey Foundation. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2012/0725/Kids-Count-report-America-s-children-are-advancing-despite-the-economy-in-Knickerbocker>, Brad. *Christian Science Monitor*. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2011/0817/Report-Child-poverty-rate-hits-20-percent-in-US-as-families-struggle>. August 17, 2011.

46. Carnevale, A., N. Smith, and J. Strohl. “Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018.” (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2010).

47. Balfanz, Robert, John Bridgeland, Mary Bruce, and Joanna Hornig Fox. “Building a Grad Nation. Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic. 2012 Annual Update.” Previously unpublished Alliance for Excellent Education analysis of data from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. March 2012. [http://www.civicerprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/Building-A-Grad-Nation-Report-2012\\_Full\\_v1.pdf](http://www.civicerprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/Building-A-Grad-Nation-Report-2012_Full_v1.pdf)

48. Kania, John and Mark Kramer. “Collective Impact.” *The Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Winter 2011. [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

## William M. Raines High School, Jacksonville, Florida: Maximizing Talent to Promote a College-Going Culture<sup>49</sup>

William M. Raines High School in Jacksonville, Fla., is the oldest historically black high school in Duval County.<sup>50</sup> Raines remains 98 percent African American,<sup>51</sup> in contrast with the 44 percent African American population in Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) altogether.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, 82 percent of Raines's students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches,<sup>53</sup> whereas only 55 percent of all DCPS students are eligible.<sup>54</sup>

Despite struggling test scores, Raines made *Newsweek's* 2010 "Catching Up List" in a review of America's best high schools for increasing AP enrollment and test-participation rates.<sup>55</sup> More than twice as many Raines students took AP Exams in 2010 than in 2006.<sup>56</sup> For the 2011-12 graduating class, 76 percent of the seniors were accepted to a college or university. In August of 2012, Raines was removed from Florida's "Intervene" list, demonstrating tremendous growth from its former status as one of the state's lowest performing schools. Educators at Raines credit a determined and rigorous counseling department for these recent academic and college access improvements. Counselors at Raines maximize their staff talent to ensure that every student has access to college and career readiness resources.

### Maximizing Resources

While counselors in most DCPS high schools share their departments' responsibilities and take on caseloads divided by student last name or grade, tasks and roles at Raines are assigned based on the strengths, interests and performance of individual counselors. For

example, counselors adept in data analysis take on those responsibilities, while others take charge in developing and maintaining outside partnerships. Supervisors note that this asset-based approach allows counselors to take ownership of programs and initiatives, and creates a greater sense of accountability. Raines also partners with the University of North Florida, so that eager counselors in training can complete internship and practicum requirements while providing additional resources to the students who need them most.

In addition to matching staff talents to school and student needs, Raines's counselors also respond to data so that they can use their time and resources effectively. For example, using early warning systems (which track data elements that predict if a student is on track to graduate), counselors provide appropriate supports to the students who need them, when they need them. This allows counselors to identify and address dropout-specific concerns in a quick and timely fashion; it also allows for early intervention, which is less resource intensive, and for the more significant interventions often needed to get students who have dropped out reenrolled. Counselors also monitor and react to college-going data elements, including AP course and dual enrollment.

### Common Core State Standards<sup>57</sup>

The state-led Common Core State Standards Initiative has the goal to "provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers, parents and families know what they need to do to help them."<sup>58</sup>

This new educational approach has tremendous potential to change the way American students learn and to quantify that change, providing new and important measures for college and career readiness. Because of the focus on college readiness, the Common Core is tightly linked to counselors' work—and

49. Interviews and email correspondence with William M. Raines High School, Jacksonville, Florida. June through August, 2012; Stone, Carolyn B. 2012. Interviews with Dr. Carolyn B. Stone, Professor of Leadership, School Counseling and Sports Management at the University of North Florida College of Education and Human Services. June 27, 2012.

50. "About William M. Raines." 2012. Duval County Public Schools. Retrieved from: [http://www.duvalschools.org/wmrh/About\\_RHS/About\\_Default.html](http://www.duvalschools.org/wmrh/About_RHS/About_Default.html)

51. "William M. Raines High School, #165." 2012. Duval County Public Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.duvalschools.org/reseval/Schools/SchoolResearchData.asp?School=165>

52. "DCPS at a Glance." 2012. Duval County Public Schools. Retrieved from: [http://duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcp/just\\_the\\_facts.asp](http://duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcp/just_the_facts.asp)

53. "William M. Raines High School, #165." 2012. Duval County Public Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.duvalschools.org/reseval/Schools/SchoolResearchData.asp?School=165>

54. "DCPS at a Glance." 2012. Duval County Public Schools. Retrieved from: [http://duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcp/just\\_the\\_facts.asp](http://duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcp/just_the_facts.asp)

55. "America's Best High Schools: The Catching-Up List." Jul 13, 2010. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2010/07/14/america-s-best-high-schools-the-catching-up-list.html>

56. "William M. Raines High School, #165." 2012. Duval County Public Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.duvalschools.org/reseval/Schools/SchoolResearchData.asp?School=165>

57. The standards contain clearly defined benchmarks for each grade level, and are based upon extensive research of the education systems of numerous districts, states, and even other nations. They incorporate best practices from each of these systems, including more in-depth coverage of math topics and an emphasis on speaking, listening, and presentation skills. (Gewertz, C. [2012, January 12]. Common-Core Standards Drew on Ideas From Abroad. *Education Week*, 31, 21–23); to date, all but five states have adopted the Common Core math and English Arts standards; (Ash, K. 2012, March 1). Common Core Raises PD Opportunities, Questions. *Education Week Teacher PD Sourcebook*, 2, 4–5. Driven in part by President Obama and Secretary Arne Duncan's Race to the Top funds, which rewarded states for adopting internationally recognized, evidence-based education standards, the Common Core was quick to catch on. Furthermore, the Common Core movement has given rise to two new assessment consortia, SMARTER Balanced and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC); (Gewertz, C. [2012, February 29]. Educators in Search of Common-Core Resources. *Education Week*, 31, 12–13.)

58. Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012). Mission. Retrieved from: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

counselors should be fully engaged in its implementation. Just as counselors demonstrate nearly unanimous support for an ideal educational mission that includes “ensuring that all students complete the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers” and see themselves as especially poised to further that mission in their school communities, the Common Core State Standards holds as one of its most critical guiding principles “align[ment] with college and work expectations.”<sup>59</sup> Both counselors and the creators of the Common Core seek to address the same fundamental need in the American education system, and offer unique methods of approaching that need.

The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors shows that counselors have not been provided the support required to define their role in Common Core Implementation. The more than 130,000 counselors nationwide are critical members of the education community, yet they are being underutilized in this important national initiative to raise standards. Counselors may be responsible for supporting the classroom teacher’s curriculum around these standards through classroom guidance activities and college and career readiness counseling, so an understanding of the system is invaluable to their continuing involvement in student outcomes. Administrators rated themselves fairly knowledgeable about the Common Core State Standards, with three-quarters giving themselves a knowledge rating of “8” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale. On the other hand, only a third of counselors (37 percent) would rate themselves as an “8,” “9” or “10” on a zero-to-10 scale in terms of knowledge about the Common Core. Even fewer counselors have

received training on the subject, with only 30 percent rating their training on the Common Core as an “8” or higher (see table below). More than half of the 315 districts participating in a 2012 survey indicated they had not provided Common Core based professional development for teachers of mathematics or English language arts—the two Common Core subject areas—and were not planning to provide such professional development for those teachers during the 2011-12 school year.<sup>60</sup> However, administrators state that counselors should receive training in the Common Core State Standards, with 88 percent agreeing with an “8” or higher. This acknowledgment of a need for training, especially for middle school counselors but also for all counselors and administrators, demonstrates that educators in general (not just teachers) tend to realize the importance of a basic familiarity of the framework to their work and school goals more broadly.

### *Collaboration with In-School and Out-of-School Partners*

The greatest challenges for counselors in adopting a college and career readiness framework as an overall approach to counseling students requires not just the efforts of counselors, but the involvement and support of families, teachers and the community. According to one administrator, “an effective counselor is a link between the school and the community or the parent.” Yet collaboration among these key groups is lacking (see Table 8). In schools, though counselors’ and administrators’ views align, counselors do not see much support from the teachers in their school for counselors adopting a college and career readiness framework

**Table 7: Administrators’ Assessment\* of Their Knowledge and Counselors’ Need for Training on Common Core State Standards**

	All Administrators %	Middle School %	High School %
<b>I am knowledgeable about standards</b>			
8-10	75	76	75
6-7	15	14	15
0-5	9	10	9
Mean	8.2	8.1	8.2
<b>Counselors should be trained in standards</b>			
8-10	88	89	87
6-8	6	7	6
0-5	4	4	4
Mean	9.0	9.0	9.0

\*Based on ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = statement is completely true

59. Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012). About the Standards. Retrieved from: <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>

60. Ash, K. (2012, March 1). Common Core Raises PD Opportunities, Questions. *Education Week Teacher PD Sourcebook*, 2, 4–5.

to counseling students. Only two out of five counselors (42 percent of high school and 38 percent of middle school counselors) say that the teachers in their school support these types of interventions. As in the findings on the relationship between administrators and counselors, this may indicate a lack of understanding on the teacher's part about the role of the school counselor, which could be overcome.

In addition to limited in-school collaboration, counselors struggle to collaborate with other partners. For example, less than half of counselors (49 percent of high school and 39 percent of middle school counselors) say that they know how to apply interventions in ways that keep students' parents and families actively involved. Family and parental involvement appears to be an especially large problem, not only at middle schools but also in schools with lower rates of college attendance. Compared to high schools with higher rates of attendance (56 percent), just 41 percent (a difference of 15 points) of counselors at high schools with lower rates of college attendance say that they know how to keep parents and families actively involved.

Collaboration with community groups is also lacking. With caseloads remaining high (the average is 367 students per counselor) and resources a key indicator of student outcomes, these outside resources and counselor efforts should be linked. In theory, they are; each year, millions of philanthropic dollars are invested in education—and the top priorities of funders often align with the role of the school counselor.<sup>61</sup> In *Grantmakers for Education (GFE)'s Benchmarking 2011* (the most recent available) the majority of 184 education grant-making organizations fund initiatives related to school counseling, including funding K–12 (93 percent), strengthening connections between high school and postsecondary school (56 percent); improving transitions from middle school to high school (49 percent) and strengthening school-to-career pathways (41 percent). Key priorities included areas related

to counselors' work, including high school reform and college and career readiness (69 percent).<sup>62</sup> Yet school counseling was not mentioned once in the *Benchmarking* report. This lack of alignment between counseling and philanthropic investments in education is reflected in the 2012 survey where less than one-third of counselors (32 percent high school and 30 percent middle school) say that they intentionally collaborate with outside organizations and businesses to support college and career readiness activities. Counselors in more challenged schools are more likely to collaborate, but at minimal levels. Counselors in schools with 75 percent or more of students on free or reduced-price lunches are more likely to say that they collaborate with these organizations and businesses to match services to interventions (39 percent compared to 25 percent in schools with fewer than 25 percent of students on free or reduced-price lunches).

### *College Affordability and FAFSA Completion*

Students dream about going to college—and our economy depends on an increase in postsecondary attainment. According to a 2012 poll, nearly all young people want to go to college,<sup>63</sup> yet affordability is often a barrier to their success. The average tuition of college went up 15 percent between 2008 and 2011.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, the average outstanding student loan balance per borrower is \$23,300,<sup>65</sup> surpassing \$1 trillion nationwide.<sup>66</sup> College affordability planning is a vital and complex process for students and families, ranging from factors including public versus private institutions, two-year or four-year degrees, scholarships and federal student aid. Research shows that students foreclose on the idea of a college education as early as the ninth grade because of misperceptions of college cost.<sup>67</sup> For many students, school counselors can help them obtain the resources they need to afford college. Counselors are committed to this cause, but resource gaps exist.

61. *Benchmarking 2011*. Grantmakers for Education. Retrieved from: [http://edfunders.org/downloads/GFEReports/GFE\\_Benchmarking2011\\_FINAL\\_12.13.11.pdf](http://edfunders.org/downloads/GFEReports/GFE_Benchmarking2011_FINAL_12.13.11.pdf)

62. *Benchmarking 2011*. Grantmakers for Education. Retrieved from: [http://edfunders.org/downloads/GFEReports/GFE\\_Benchmarking2011\\_FINAL\\_12.13.11.pdf](http://edfunders.org/downloads/GFEReports/GFE_Benchmarking2011_FINAL_12.13.11.pdf)

63. In 2012, 97 percent of young people reported they plan to complete either a 2 or 4 year degree. This is up 10 percentage points from a 2005 poll which showed 87 percent of young people want to go to college. Wolniak, G.C., Neishi, K.M., Rude, J.D., & Gebhardt, Z. (2012, August). *The State of Our Nation's Youth: 2012-2013*. Alexandria, VA: Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc. <http://www.horatioalger.org/2012SONYFinal.pdf>; Bridgeland, J. M., et al. 2006. *The Silent Epidemic: Perspective of High School Dropouts*. Civic Enterprises.

64. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2010, Institutional Characteristics component and Spring 2011, Student Financial Aid component. National Average Percent Change: 4.6.

65. Brown, Meta, et al. "Grading Student Loans." Federal Reserve Bank of New York. March 5, 2012. <http://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2012/03/grading-student-loans.html>

66. Chopra, Rohit. Too Big to Fail: Student debt hits a trillion. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. March 21, 2012. <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/too-big-to-fail-student-debt-hits-a-trillion/>

67. Cox, Erin. Email and Phone Correspondence. ACCESS. January, 2012.

**Table 8: Overall Evaluation of Counselors' Collaborations in Applying the Eight Components and Example Action Items**

	Know How to Keep Students' Parents and Families Involved* %	Teachers Support These Interventions* %	Collaborate with Outside Groups to Match Programs and Services* %
All counselors	47	41	31
Middle school counselors	39	38	30
High school counselors	49	42	32
<b>Type of school</b>			
All public	46	39	32
Urban public	45	42	35
Suburban public	48	39	29
Rural public	46	36	32
All private	54	53	26
<b>Percent of student population that is minority</b>			
0 to 24%	45	37	29
25 to 49%	49	36	30
50 to 74%	44	41	33
75% or more	46	44	38
<b>Number of students in caseload</b>			
Less than 250	50	46	36
250-349	48	41	30
350-449	45	40	31
450 or more	44	37	29
<b>Percent of student population on free or reduced lunch</b>			
0 to 24%	48	37	25
25 to 49%	43	36	32
50 to 74%	46	42	33
75% or more	47	42	39
<b>Title I</b>			
Schoolwide	45	40	33
Not schoolwide	47	34	33
<b>College attendance rates (high school counselors only)</b>			
High college attendance (86% or more)	59	42	33
Lower college attendance (64% or less)	41	35	34
<b>Administrators</b>			
All administrators	NA	NA	39
Middle school administrators	NA	NA	31
High school administrators	NA	NA	41

\* For each statement, 8–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = This is completely true of me/counselors in my school.

“Financial fit” of a college is a complex equation—and federal aid is a significant factor. Federal aid can help reduce the costs to students, though it does not always close the gap. Last year, students borrowed \$117 billion in federal student loans.<sup>68</sup> However, many students did not apply for the FAFSA because they incorrectly believed they were ineligible; of the nonapplicants, 33.1 percent would have qualified for a Pell Grant, and 17.1 percent would have qualified for the maximum Pell Grant.<sup>69</sup> One Dallas administrator explains the difficulty of successfully completing the FAFSA form: “For my personal experience, my family didn’t know how to do that [FAFSA], so we depended on the school to help us. And where I work, the same thing with those kids. Those kids don’t know, their families don’t know how, so they depend on us, the school, to walk them through that.”

Counselors can help students and their families understand the financial aid process, as well as open resources to students. In 2011, the majority of counselors explained that they are extremely committed to the concept of college affordability and planning, which was described as “providing information about college costs, financing, and the financial aid and scholarship processes, so students are able to plan for and afford a college education.”<sup>70</sup> However, in 2012, less than half of counselors (44 percent) reported being committed to “using student FAFSA completion data to monitor application completion, to make application updates and corrections, and to ensure students receive and review aid reports.”

The gap between counselors expressed commitment to the general idea of college planning and the specific action of

**Figure 10: High schools: How much does your administration support this activity to prepare students for college and career?**



68. Chopra, Rohit. Too Big to Fail: Student debt hits a trillion. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. March 21, 2012. <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/too-big-to-fail-student-debt-hits-a-trillion/>

69. National Postsecondary Student Aid Study; <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/> Retrieved January 14, 2012.

70. In 2011, 86 percent of high school counselors and 68 percent of middle school counselors rated the component “College Affordability and Planning” an 8 or higher on a 0–10 scale. Though middle school counselors rate lower on this commitment, they are still strongly devoted to setting their students up to succeed in college and career as 80 percent say they are extremely committed to nurturing students’ college aspirations by working to build a college-going culture in their schools.

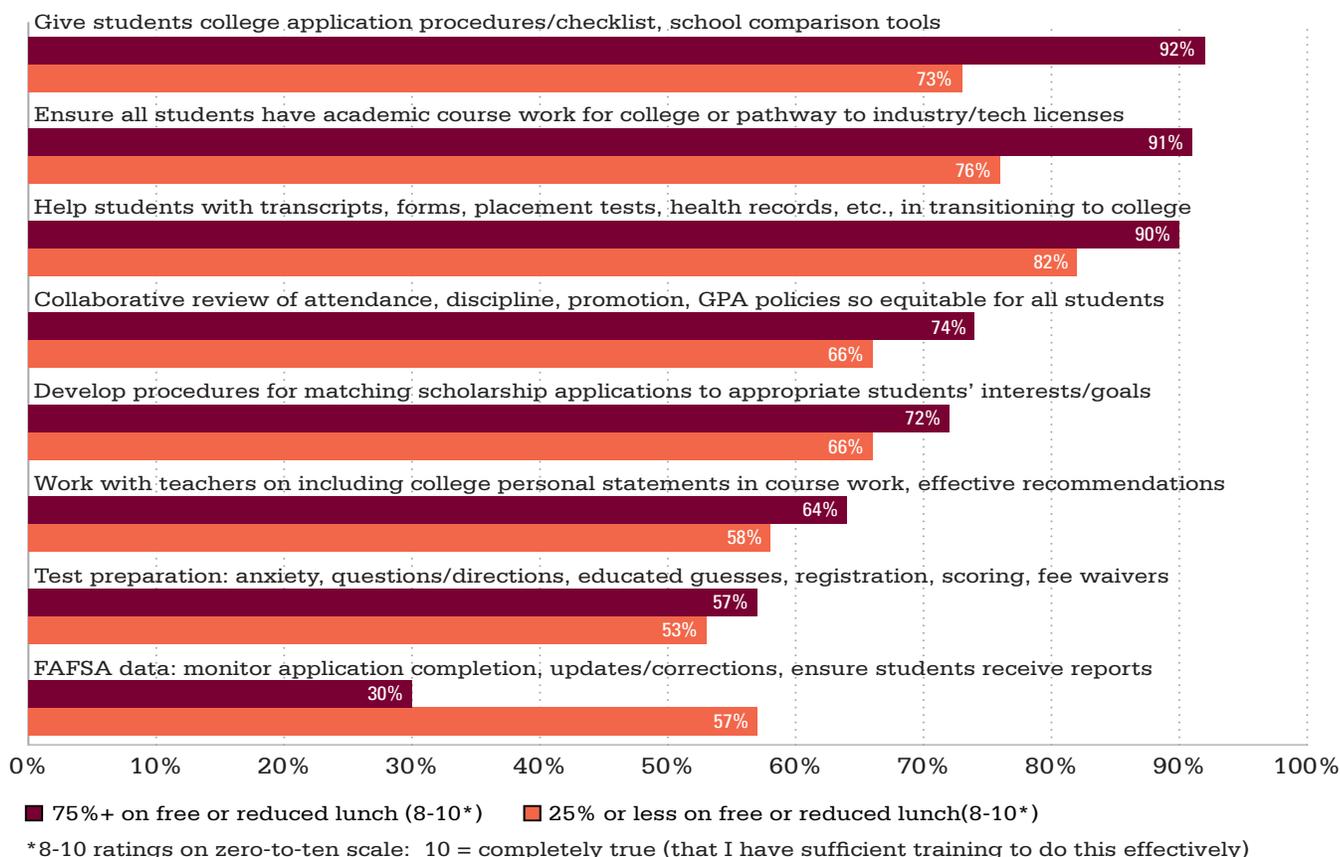
FAFSA completion indicates a misalignment of resources. Counselors can help students and their families with this essential paperwork, but a misunderstanding is evident. Just 35 percent of high school counselors nationwide rate their school's success as "8" or higher on a zero-to-10 scale when it comes to using FAFSA to monitor students' application progress. Likewise, while 67 percent of administrators and 36 percent of counselors believe FAFSA completion rates are a fair and appropriate measure of accountability, only 16 percent of high school counselors say they are held accountable for this measure.

The gap between commitment, need and accountability may be attributable to a misunderstanding of their administrator's support of this strategy. The largest discrepancy between high school administrators' self-reported support and high school counselors' perception of administrator support is in counselors' use of FAFSA data to monitor student progress on applications. Compared with just 53 percent of high school counselors who rate administrative support as a "6" or higher,

fully 80 percent (27 points higher) of high school administrators rate their own level of support as a "6" or higher.

In addition to a gap on administrator-counselor understanding of support for FAFSA completion as a strategy, the gap in counselors' commitment to this strategy versus the concept of college affordability may be attributable to training. As mentioned, some of the greatest training deficiencies reported by counselors relate to college finances. More specifically, in 2012, less than half of counselors say that they have sufficient knowledge and training on "College Affordability Planning" (43 percent) or "using student FAFSA completion data to monitor application completion, make application updates and corrections, and ensuring students receive and review aid reports" (42 percent). Just half (50 percent) of middle school counselors rate their training as an "8" or higher for "providing early information to parents and students about ways to plan and pay for college, including information about grants, scholarships, loans, work-study and savings plans."

**Figure 11: High school counselors at advantaged and disadvantaged schools: Do you have sufficient training for each activity?**



Optimistically, counselors at schools with at least 75 percent of the student body on free or reduced-price lunches are more likely to feel sufficiently trained in enacting the example for “College Affordability Planning.” A majority of these counselors (57 percent, 30 high school counselors at schools with 25 percent or less students on free or reduced-price lunches) say they are effective at using FAFSA data to monitor student progress. At the middle school level, the same pattern emerges, with 57 percent of middle school counselors at disadvantaged schools (compared to 44 percent of middle school counselors at more advantaged schools) reporting that they are sufficiently trained to provide early information about planning and paying for college.

### **Yonkers Public Schools, Yonkers, New York: Increasing Scholarship Dollars<sup>71</sup>**

In Yonkers Public Schools (YPS), money is tight. Both students and schools have experienced the effects of the nation’s struggling economy. More than three-quarters (77 percent) of YPS students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. In September of 2011, YPS suffered a \$41 million cut to its already tight budget, resulting in staff and programming cuts to virtually every department.<sup>72</sup> Despite these pressing concerns and large caseloads, YPS counselors continue to work tirelessly toward increasing graduation rates and scholarship dollars received by students in an effort to increase college access. Though the effects of recent YPS budget cuts remain to be seen, the data show that investment in school counselors got results. From 2006 to 2012, YPS more than tripled the amount of money students received in scholarships, reaching more than \$50 million for the most recent graduating class. YPS is an example of a district that focused counselors’ work on a specific goal, and as a result was able to link students to the resources they need for postsecondary success.

### **Increasing Awareness and Resources to Get Results**

To ensure that YPS students graduate from high school and complete college, YPS counselors promote awareness of the financial side of college admission and enrollment.

Students, parents, and families are provided information on the required elements of college enrollment and success as well as resources to defray the costs of higher education. FAFSA completion and scholarship essay workshops, college-oriented posters all over schools, and relationships with community organizations are several measures that help students find the funds they need to open the doors to college options.

In addition to raising awareness, YPS counselors also leveraged community partnerships to supplement the resources they provide to students. For example, Yonkers students benefit from “College Goal Sundays,” an initiative that New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association and the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, funded through the Lumina Foundation and the federal College Access Challenge Grant. These events are held at local YMCAs, and augment the work of counselors by providing students with access to volunteers who work in college financial aid offices.<sup>73</sup> In order to ensure student participation in these events, school counselors make significant publicity efforts including outreach to students’ parents during senior class Financial Aid Night. Additionally, counselors connect students to Yonkers Partners in Education (YPIE), a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of college readiness support systems including SAT preparation programs, career exploration opportunities, fully funded college visits and assistance with FAFSA completion and scholarship applications.<sup>74</sup> School administrators, counselors and the YPIE college advisors meet regularly to discuss the latest information regarding college attainment and affordability. Counselors take the lead on maintaining these relationships knowing that increased awareness and resources can increase college access for students, even in times of financial difficulty for the district.

### **Summer Melt**

“Summer melt” affects between 10 and 20 percent of American high school students planning on attending college each year.<sup>75</sup> Especially prevalent in low-income communities, summer melt happens when high school seniors who are accepted to college and who indicate intentions to enroll in college after high school graduation do not end up attending in the fall. There are many reasons for summer melt, especially

71. Interviews and email correspondence with Yonkers Public Schools. April through August, 2012.

72. “Impacts of Cuts to Yonkers Public Schools.” 2012. Yonkers Public Schools. Retrieved from: [http://www.yonkerspublicschools.org/docs/budget/YPS-Two-Year-Impact-of-Cuts.pdf&sa=U&ei=k6sRULGJJqjV6wG-pIG4DQ&ved=0CAUQFjAA&clint=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNE6KDcpPAxKI0KFuW\\_O2WacZuj1Ng](http://www.yonkerspublicschools.org/docs/budget/YPS-Two-Year-Impact-of-Cuts.pdf&sa=U&ei=k6sRULGJJqjV6wG-pIG4DQ&ved=0CAUQFjAA&clint=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNE6KDcpPAxKI0KFuW_O2WacZuj1Ng)

73. College Goal Sunday New York. “What is College Goal Sunday?” 2006. New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association and the New York State Higher Education Services Corp. Retrieved from: <http://www.collegegoalsundayny.com/Program.aspx>

74. “High School College and Career Centers.” 2012. Yonkers Partners in Education. Retrieved from: <http://ypie.org/what-we-do/high-school-college-career-centers>

75. Castleman, Benjamin, and Lindsay Page. “A Trickle or a Torrent?” April 2, 2012. Harvard Graduate School of Education & the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.

for first-generation college-goers: confusion about financial aid forms and tuition bills, unanticipated expenses such as health insurance and lack of familiarity with college Web portals represent a mountain of obstacles first-generation college goers are expected to climb during a period of time when they traditionally lack school-based assistance.

As evidenced in the findings of the 2012 National Survey of School Counselors, counselors are personally committed to their jobs and believe that they are able to make a difference in student outcomes. Following this reasoning, some of these counselors also believe that their work should not end when the school year ends. Although over half of high school counselors (54 percent) believe that helping students transition to college during the summer after they graduate is important, less than one-quarter (24 percent) report working at schools that “assist seniors throughout the summer after they graduate to provide them with resources and support in order to aid their transition to college” as indicated by a “6” or higher on a zero-to-10 scale. Furthermore, counselors at more traditionally underserved schools place particular value on summer work. Nearly three in four high school counselors (72 percent) who work at schools in which more than three-quarters of the student body receive free or reduced-price lunches say that assisting students in the summer after they graduate is important, but less than a third of these schools (31 percent) are providing these services (see Table 9). Though counselors typically are not under contract during the summer months, they are positioned during the school year to connect students to summer supports. Some schools and districts are extending counselors’ contracts through the summer months to support seniors in their transition to college.

**Table 9: Proportions of High School Counselors Who Say that Helping Seniors Transition to College Throughout the Summer After They Graduate Is Important\* and that Their School Does This\***

	"Assisting seniors throughout the summer after they graduate to provide them with resources and support in order to aid their transition to college"		
	I Believe This Is Important* %	My School Does This* %	Gap ±
High school counselors	54	24	30
Race of counselor			
White counselors	49	23	26
African American counselors	82	27	55
Hispanic counselors	66	22	44
Region			
Northeast	55	24	31
Midwest	49	20	29
South	51	24	27
West	50	20	30
Type of school			
All public	55	23	32
Urban public	61	25	36
Suburban public	47	17	30
Rural public	54	29	25
All private	51	34	17
Percent of student population that is minority			
0 to 24%	47	22	25
25 to 49%	49	22	27
50 to 74%	63	16	47
75% or more	69	28	41
Percent of student population on free or reduced lunch			
0 to 24%	38	20	18
25 to 49%	54	19	35
50 to 74%	67	25	42
75% or more	72	31	41
Title I			
Schoolwide	67	27	40
Not Schoolwide	43	20	23
Number of students in caseload			
Fewer than 250	55	29	26
250-349	53	25	28
350-449	55	25	30
450 or more	55	14	41
College attendance rates (high school only)			
High college attendance (86% or more)	43	23	20
Lower college attendance (64% and below)	60	22	38

\*6–10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale: 10 = completely true statement

## Paths Forward

For too long, counselors have gone underutilized in our nation's schools. These education professionals are uniquely positioned in the education pipeline to support the college and career aspirations of their students, and there is a growing national movement to support their work. With a national college attainment rate for the nation of just 39 percent,<sup>76</sup> coming at a cost to the economy of more than \$11 billion per year,<sup>77</sup> now is the time to support counselors in their desire to be student advocates and school leaders. In the first National Survey of School Counselors report in 2011, we outlined a comprehensive set of policies and strategies in schools, communities, states and the nation to boost the role of the counselor in schools. With a clear mission, accountability for results, and reforms that include counselors, our schools can fulfill the mission to accelerate student readiness for college and careers.

The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors provided additional insights into counselors' and administrators' potential to accelerate progress. In light of this new information, we provide, below, supplemental policy to accelerate our progress in utilizing school counselors to promote student achievement.

**Act Now Through Existing Training and Tools for College and Career Readiness:** The findings from the 2012 survey show that counselors are ready to lead in advancing college and career readiness—and their administrators agree. From the state house to the schoolhouse, education leaders (including counselors themselves) can act now to ensure counselors can provide students the resources they need to be successful. Counselors and their administrators agree on a vision for schools—and a path to get there. They do not need to wait to accelerate this work in schools. There is a growing national movement to better utilize school counselors, especially to promote college and career readiness. Organizations including the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC and the National

College Access Network (NCAN), as well as other local, state and national organizations, are helping counselors emerge as invaluable resources in our nation's schools. The National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) promotes the importance of school counselors and supports their work through a variety of means—research, partnerships, publications, advocacy and select technical assistance. NOSCA's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling is a means of institutionalizing practices and processes that will ensure all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to successfully transition from high school to college or to a career of their choice. Free tools are available online to advance the Eight Components in schools, an approach that helps school counselors inspire and prepare students for college success and opportunity—especially students from underrepresented populations. For more information, please visit <http://nosca.collegeboard.org/tools-resources>.

### Include Counselors as Integral Partners in Education

**Policy:** A range of laws, policies and codes that are set by federal, state and local governments affect school counselors and district-level counseling programs, yet often limit or exclude counselors. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded less than \$15 million—just 0.04 percent of the \$38.9 billion appropriated to elementary and secondary education programs in Fiscal Year 2010—to create or expand counseling programs.<sup>78</sup> The primary federal legislation on education, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as updated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, is largely quiet on school counselors.<sup>79</sup> State laws affecting school counselors and counseling programs vary widely across the country,<sup>80</sup> and many do not include counselors in their definition of “educator.” Education policies that do not intentionally engage these 130,000 education professionals are failing our students. Policies—at school, district, state and federal levels—should recognize counselors as educators.

76. U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey (ACS), Education Attainment Ages 25–34, Three-Year Averaged Estimates for 2007–2009 and 2008–2010; and U.S. Census Bureau: 2020 Population Projections. Retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/new-state-state-college-attainment-numbers-show-progress-toward-2020-goal>

77. *The Economic Benefits of Helping High School Dropouts Earn Both High School Diplomas and College Degrees*. December 2011. [http://www.all4ed.org/files/States\\_sebps.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/States_sebps.pdf); an estimated \$11 billion in gross national product would be added to the economy if 60 percent of the 650,000 new high school graduates (one half of those who currently drop out) earned a college credential or degree.

78. U.S. Department of Education. (2011). “Education Department Budget History Table.” Elementary and Secondary Education Budget History Tables. Retrieved from: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/history/edhistory.pdf>; U.S. Department of Education. (2010). “U.S. Department of Education Awards Nearly \$15 Million in Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Grants.” Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program. Retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/category/program/elementary-and-secondary-school-counseling-program>

79. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U. S. C. § 6301. (2002). Retrieved from: [www.ed.gov/nclb/](http://www.ed.gov/nclb/)

80. American School Counselor Association. (2010). “School Counseling Mandates for Each State.” American School Counselor Association. Retrieved from: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=535>

## Denver Public Schools, Denver, Colorado: Focusing Counseling Initiatives to Promote Student College and Career Goals<sup>81</sup>

Colorado ranks in the top five states in the United States for the number of degree holders per capita, but only about one-fifth of Colorado ninth-grade students will earn a college degree, placing the state in the bottom quartile nationally.<sup>82</sup> To address this disparity, the state of Colorado is taking steps to provide guidance to students as they navigate their way toward higher education and career readiness. Denver Public Schools (DPS) are taking these efforts even further, with counselors at the center of the district's college and career readiness initiatives. Though the results of these efforts are still to come, what is clear is that DPS—even in tough economic times—is placing their bets on counselors.

### Focus, Districtwide Buy in and Action for Results

In recent years, counselors' work in DPS has been refined to focus on college and career readiness. In 2009, the Colorado State Board of Education began to require every student to have an individual career and academic plan (ICAP) beginning in the ninth grade. Many states and districts have similar plans that do not spur action or results. What sets DPS apart is that they are leveraging this state mandate to target counselors' work and drive resources to students. DPS's version of the ICAP, the Personalized Education Plan (PEP), became a vehicle to develop a goal-oriented approach for the counseling program. As a result, counselors' focus has shifted from strictly transcripts and grades to comprehensive college and career readiness.

DPS counselors have set out to exceed state expectations—and have brought together leaders across the district to achieve a shared goal of increasing student achievement. The PEP process now begins for students in sixth grade rather than ninth grade, as the ICAP mandates. The PEP also includes more comprehensive benchmarks than ICAP for each year of high school and middle grades. In addition to the focusing framework of the PEP, at the district level, DPS now has a director of counseling in

the Office of College and Career Readiness to support districtwide and school-specific activities. In order to strengthen the counseling program, district leadership has assembled a counselor's leadership advisory board comprising more than a dozen counselors, which meets monthly to set strategy, drive progress and communicate decision making with their peers across the district.

As a result of a common goal and a clear focus, counselors are taking specific actions to advance college and career readiness in schools. DPS uses new data-driven solutions to provide students what they need. For example, as a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA completion project district, the U.S. Department of Education now provides DPS verifiable and actionable information to use in increasing FAFSA completion among its student population.<sup>83</sup> In addition to FAFSA completion initiatives, counselors are taking on other aligned responsibilities such as looking at remediation rates and tracking college completion. Because DPS leaders believe that what gets measured gets done, information surrounding PEPs is published districtwide. In this process, DPS has discovered that schools with few or no counselors face difficulties implementing new state guidelines. Thus, even when facing budget cuts, many schools are maintaining or even adding counselors to their staff because of counselors' ability to promote college and career readiness among students.

### Include Counselors in Common Core Implementation:

Common Core State Standards aim to raise standards for all students, regardless of race, address or socioeconomic background. Implemented effectively, high-quality uniform standards could ensure that all students are held to the same high academic bar; promote equitable student access to cutting-edge educational content, opportunities and resources; and simplify family understanding of and involvement in their children's education.<sup>84</sup> Because of the focus on college and career readiness, the Common Core is tightly linked to counselors' work. In schools across the country, Common Core is now at the heart of preparing students for college and career readiness. Counselors are positioned to guide students in this process, informed by the Common Core. The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors revealed that one of the most universally agreed upon elements in school counselors' vision of the ideal educational mission—by counselors and

81. Interviews and email correspondence with Denver Public Schools. July through August, 2012.

82. "About Us." 2012. College in Colorado Partner Network. Retrieved from: [http://www.cicpartnernetwork.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=40&layout=blog&Itemid=60](http://www.cicpartnernetwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=40&layout=blog&Itemid=60)

83. U.S. Department of Education. "ED Announces FAFSA Completion Project Expansion." <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/05/ed-announces-fafsa-completion-project-expansion/> Retrieved September 6, 2012.

84. *Communities of Color: A Critical Perspective in the Common Standards Movement*. (2010). Washington, D.C.: Campaign for High School Equity.

administrators—is “to ensure that all students regardless of background, have equal access to a high-quality education.” Counselors can help schools achieve this mission, linking their work to the Common Core. Given that the Common Core will require an overhaul of virtually all previously used curricula and lesson plans used in school districts across the country, an abundance of new, intensive, multimedia training resources are in development for teachers.<sup>85</sup> With access to these same resources, counselors can advance their knowledge of the Common Core and support the success of schools and students.

**Provide Counselors, Teachers and Administrators Preservice and In-service Training that Aligns Counselors’ Work to Students’ College and Career Readiness:** The 2012 survey provided overwhelming evidence that counselors are not being provided adequate preservice or in-service training that aligns their efforts to students’ college and career readiness outcomes. The literature also supports the fact that many counselor training programs are poorly aligned to current and 21st-century projections for the counseling field.<sup>86</sup> For both preservice (graduate school) and in-service (professional development) training for counselors, the focus should move toward systemic action. This training should include an emphasis on counselors’ schoolwide work, with parents, families and the community, in addition to individual and small-group counseling. For professional school counselors earning their Master of Education degree or a Master of Arts degree that specializes in school counseling, an understanding of college and career readiness counseling should be a programmatic expectation. Graduate schools can take a variety of steps, including developing curricular inserts on the topic integrated across existing programs, offering a separate course in college and career readiness counseling and establishing concrete performance measures in both didactic and field experiences that demonstrate systemic knowledge and skills in this area. College and career student outcome measures should also be added in preservice program requirements as part of CACREP standards.<sup>87</sup>

As in graduate school, in-service training for counselors should include a focus on counselors’ systemic work with students, parents, families and communities as well as the counselors’ role in school improvement. In-service training should emphasize the counselors’ role in college and career readiness for their students, as well as the counselors’ role in supporting teachers and their administrators in this work.

Likewise, interdisciplinary training for counselors, teachers, administrators, and other school and district personnel can help these educators work as highly effective teams to meet school and district goals. Preservice and in-service training for administrators, as well as teachers and other on-site supervisors, should aim to close the gap of misunderstanding of the counselor’s role in schools, reflecting a shared desire by both administrators and counselors to have counselors as key advocates for their students’ college and career success.

**Align Counselor Accountability Measures with Student, School and District Goals:** The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors showed that what gets measured gets done. Counselors who are held accountable for college-going activities are more likely to have students who go to college, across school demographics. We have examples of pilot accountability systems in place that are driving counselor effectiveness and student achievement. Counselors should work together with school, district and state education leaders to align systems of reporting and accountability to student, school and district goals. Schools, districts and states should use data tied to postsecondary enrollment to drive decision making, including attendance, behavior and course performance in reading and mathematics (the “ABCs” of staying on track to graduate).

**Accelerate FAFSA Completion for Students:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is among the key tools for providing qualified students the financial support needed to achieve postsecondary goals, yet each year at least 1.7 million students do not file the FAFSA because they incorrectly believe themselves to be ineligible.<sup>88</sup> Initiatives that promote FAFSA completion, particularly through engaging

85. Hirsh, S. (2012, February 1). Common-Core Work Must Include Teacher Development. *Education Week*, 31, 22–24.

86. School Counseling Competencies CACREP 2009 Standards. Retrieved from: <http://www.cacrep.org/doc/2009%20Standards%20with%20cover.pdf> 8-20-2011; American School Counselor Association. (2005). *School Counseling Principles: Foundations and Basics*. American School Counselor Association. Coker, K. & Schrader, S. (2004). Conducting a School-Based Practicum: A Collaborative Model. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(4), 263–267. See also the 2011 Literature and Landscape Review on School Counselors; Civic Enterprises for the College Board, available at [http://www.civicerprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/school\\_counselors\\_literature\\_and\\_landscape\\_review.pdf](http://www.civicerprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/school_counselors_literature_and_landscape_review.pdf)

87. Eight Essential Elements for Change (1997). The National Center for Transforming School Counseling. The Education Trust.

88. Kantrowitz, Marc. Reasons Why Students Do Not File the FAFSA. Student Aid Policy Analysis. <http://www.finaid.org/educators/20110118nofafsareasons.pdf> January 18, 2011. The analysis in this report was performed using the data analysis system for the 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS). The NPSAS is a large survey conducted every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. The 2007-08 NPSAS surveyed 114,000 undergraduate students and 14,000 graduate and professional students. Longitudinal comparisons in this report are based also on the 1986-87, 1989-90, 1992-93, 1995-96, 1999–2000 and 2003-04 NPSAS studies.

families, should be replicated and scaled—and counselors can be key to this success. For example, the U.S. Department of Education has provided new tools to help counselors promote FAFSA completion. Select state departments of education and school districts are also coordinating efforts to advance this work. For example, the U.S. Department of Education helps high school counselors monitor FAFSA completion rates, enabling them to better help students access higher education. School officials can now track FAFSA submission and completion rates at individual high schools, which will help them ensure that students are filling out the FAFSA and are therefore able to determine their eligibility for federal student aid—a key factor in families’ college decisions.<sup>89</sup> Some local and state education agencies (LEAs and SEAs) are partnering to share data to track which students still need to fill out their FAFSA. In Chicago, where Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has partnered with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to provide data on FAFSA completion that allows for early intervention, FAFSA completion percentage is up nearly 15 percentage points in one year.<sup>90</sup> Every public and private high school in America can now use the FAFSA as an independently calculated data point to determine what percentage of students have completed this form and, through the FAFSA completion project, many schools and districts can have student-level data on FAFSA completion. Schools and districts can act on these data and accelerate their efforts to provide students the financial resources they need.

### **Support Collaboration Among Counselors, Teachers and Community Groups:**

In tough economic times, students’ needs are increasing<sup>91</sup> and school budgets are constrained.<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, counselors face an average reported caseload of one counselor to 367 students. Though counselors could be at the leading edge of initiatives that guide students on

the path to college and careers, they cannot be expected to do it alone. Yet, in the 2012 survey, less than half say that the teachers in their school support college and career interventions. Less than one-third of counselors say that they intentionally collaborate with outside organizations and businesses to support college and career readiness activities. Counselors and their schools have the opportunity to redefine the counselor’s role as a facilitator of resources who can put the systems in place to support all students.

Meanwhile, more than \$4.9 billion philanthropic dollars are invested in education each year, including \$1.6 billion in our K–12 schools.<sup>93</sup> Though some of these dollars are directly supporting students and schools, many of these dollars are supporting important wraparound services for students, ranging from academic tutoring to social/emotional supports. Counselors, because they see the whole student year after year, are uniquely positioned to help coordinate these services in schools—and often do. Counselors can also build collaboration with out-of-school and in-school service providers and college access groups, as well as across institutions. Further, though students and counselors are often constrained by a 10-month contract, counselors are positioned to help ensure students make the transition from grade to grade, school to school and into university, by tapping into outside supports. For example, in several Massachusetts school districts, as well as in several schools in Philadelphia and Michigan, near-age peers are offering summer college mentoring to small groups of students. In Dallas, Denver and several Massachusetts districts, text message campaigns are being piloted as an innovative, cost-effective and scalable initiative to help students overcome “summer melt” and successfully enroll in university in the fall following their senior year.

89. FAFSA Completion Data Tool. U.S. Department of Education. <http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/clcf/FAFSACompletion.html>

90. CPS FAFSA completion rates increased to 58.6 percent on March 24, 2010, from 44.1 percent on March 25, 2009. Illinois Government News Network. Press Release College Aid Applications Up; ISAC Advises Quick Completion of FAFSA *Agency reports 37 percent increase in eligible applications over last year.* March 29, 2010. <http://www.illinois.gov/pressreleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=2&RecNum=8326>

91. “Kids Count report: America’s children are advancing despite the economy.” Annie. E. Casey Foundation. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2012/0725/Kids-Count-report-America-s-children-are-advancing-despite-the-economy-in> Knickerbocker, Brad. Christian Science Monitor. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2011/0817/Report-Child-poverty-rate-hits-20-percent-in-US-as-families-struggle>. August 17, 2011.

92. “Tight Budgets Put Some Superintendents on Part-Time Status.” *Education Week*. Jan. 30, 2012. [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19parttime\\_ep.h31.html?qs=district+budgets](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19parttime_ep.h31.html?qs=district+budgets); “Parent, Community Groups Pressed to Fill K-12 Budget Gaps.” *Education Week*. March 13, 2012. [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24gift\\_ep.h30.html?qs=district+budgets](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24gift_ep.h30.html?qs=district+budgets) Ceasar, Stephen, et al. “Education Takes a Beating Nationwide.” *The Los Angeles Times*. July 31, 2011. <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/31/nation/la-na-education-budget-cuts-20110731>

93. Distribution of Foundation Grants by Subject Categories, circa 2010. FC Stats: The Foundation Center’s Statistical Information Service. [http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/statistics/pdf/04\\_fund\\_sub/2010/10\\_10.pdf](http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/statistics/pdf/04_fund_sub/2010/10_10.pdf)

## Conclusion

School counselors and their administrators share a vision for their schools and agree on a path to realize it. Through the perspectives of more than 3,300 of our nation's educators, we learned that counselors and administrators alike believe that all students should complete the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers—and that school counselors can lead the way in achieving this goal. Counselors are uniquely positioned within schools to change children's lives. They can provide and align resources that students need to achieve college and career success. Significant obstacles exist, however. Across America, we are failing to appropriately equip, focus and provide incentives for counselors' work. Rather, we are often underutilizing or misdirecting school counselors who are uniquely positioned to accelerate the academic and career success of our nation's students. Fortunately, faced with an incontrovertible need to improve student achievement, school counseling is no longer at a crossroads. We are on a path toward school systems that fully leverage these 130,000 school counselors so that all students can graduate from high school ready for college and careers. With a clear mission, appropriate training, accountability that encourages improving student outcomes and aligned resources to support their work, school counselors are ready to lead. The 2012 National Survey of School Counselors, supported by a supplemental survey of school administrators, provided powerful evidence that school counselors and their administrators know true north—and they are poised to chart the course of their students' college and career success.

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## College Board Annual National Counselor Survey Advisory Committee

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Advisory Committee Member	Institution
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Ginger Taylor, School Counselor & Portland Evening and Summer Scholars Administrator	Benson Polytechnic High School
Jay Tucker, Counseling Department Chairperson	Delaware Valley High School

## Appendix A: Full Wording of the Eight Components

1. **College Aspirations:** Build a college-going culture based on early college awareness by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college and the resilience to overcome challenges along the way. Maintain high expectations by providing adequate supports, building social capital and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college.
2. **Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness:** Advance students' planning, preparation, participation, and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals.
3. **Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement:** Ensure equitable exposure to a wide range of extracurricular and enrichment opportunities that build leadership, nurture talents and interests, and increase engagement with school.
4. **Connect College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes:** Provide early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college or career that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations.
5. **College and Career Assessments:** Promote preparation, participation and performance in college and career assessments by all students.
6. **College Affordability Planning:** Provide students and families with comprehensive information about college costs, options for paying for college, and the financial aid and scholarship processes and eligibility requirements, so they are able to plan for and afford a college education.
7. **College and Career Admission Processes:** Ensure that students and families have an early and ongoing understanding of the college and career application and admission processes so they can find the postsecondary options that are the best fit with their aspirations and interests.
8. **Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment:** Connect students to school and community resources to help the students overcome barriers and ensure the successful transition from high school to college.

## Appendix B: Full Wording of High School Example Activities for the Eight Components

1. **College Aspirations:** Collaborating with teachers and administrators to review attendance, discipline, promotion/retention and GPA policies to ensure equity for all student groups.
2. **Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness:** Ensuring that all students have a program of study that meets the requirements for admission to in-state universities or creates a pathway to industry and technology licenses and certifications.
3. **Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement:** Developing policies and procedures to distribute scholarship applications so all students receive materials that match their interests, talents, and educational and career goals.
4. **College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes:** Working with teachers to include elements of college applications such as personal statements into their courses and helping them to write recommendations that highlight student assets.
5. **College and Career Assessments:** Providing test preparation that includes overcoming test anxiety, types of test questions and directions, how to make an educated guess, registration, scoring and fee waivers.
6. **College Affordability Planning:** Using student FAFSA completion data to monitor application completion, to make application updates and corrections and to ensure that students receive and review aid reports.
7. **College and Career Admission Processes:** Providing students with college application completion procedures and checklists, calendars and school comparison tools to assist them with completing applications and making their final decisions.
8. **Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment:** Helping 12th-grade students request final transcripts, fill out forms, take placement tests, and gather health records and IEP information, as needed, as they make the transition from graduation to college.

## Appendix C: Full Wording of Middle School Example Activities for the Eight Components

1. **College Aspirations:** Collaborating with teachers to connect their course content to college and careers so students understand how their interest, talents and abilities link to postsecondary goals.
2. **Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness:** Examining enrollment, performance and completion data for rigorous, honors and accelerated courses, reviewing policies to ensure equity for all students.
3. **Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement:** Teaching students how to identify and research colleges, career and technical schools that offer majors and extracurricular activities that appeal to students' interests and abilities.
4. **College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes:** Providing students with information about different types of institutions (e.g., two- and four-year, public and private, in-state and out-of-state).
5. **College and Career Assessments:** Creating opportunities for all students, especially underserved groups, to learn how to use assessments to link their academic planning and career and college exploration to future career options.
6. **College Affordability Planning:** Providing early information to parents and students about ways to plan and pay for college, including information about grants, scholarships, loans, work-study and saving plans.

## **Appendix D: Chart on Topline Survey Findings**

This chart offers a high altitude view of the broader findings of this survey on NOSCA's eight components and the specific example activities. This chart can be viewed as a road map illuminating potential strategies for the role of counselors in improving student achievement and to help identify areas where counselors are well supported in their efforts to help students reach the end of 12th grade ready to succeed in college and their careers. It also helps identify the roadblocks and barriers that challenge counselors in their efforts to help all students achieve success.

Overview of All High School Counselors

	Eight Components			Example Strategies							
	High Commitment (8-10)*	Have Sufficient Training (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	High Commitment (8-10)*	Should be Accountable (6-10)*	Have Training (8-10)*	Have Admin Support (6-10)*	Have District Support (6-10)*	Have Resources (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	
Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment	84%	40%	62%	83%	87%	86%	75%	67%	77%	81%	Helping 12th-grade students transition from high school to college
College and Career Admission Processes	90%	59%	69%	85%	93%	85%	77%	68%	75%	75%	Providing students with college application completion materials
Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness	92%	64%	75%	89%	86%	86%	82%	76%	71%	73%	Ensuring that all students have a program of study
Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement	76%	50%	57%	73%	84%	73%	72%	64%	62%	61%	Developing policies and procedures to distribute scholarship applications
College Aspirations	89%	59%	75%	73%	72%	74%	73%	64%	59%	53%	Collaborating with teachers and administrators
Connect College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes	91%	53%	70%	60%	68%	67%	65%	54%	50%	44%	Working with teachers to include elements of college applications in course work
College and Career Assessments	84%	52%	67%	57%	71%	61%	66%	56%	45%	43%	Providing test preparation
College Affordability Planning	86%	49%	71%	44%	54%	42%	53%	46%	40%	35%	Using student FAFSA completion data



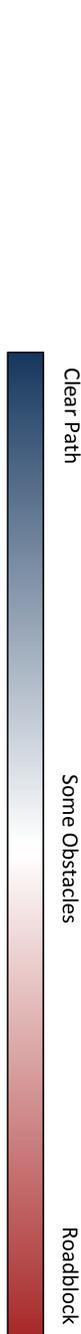
\*Ratings on zero-to-10 scales: In each case, 10 = most positive response; full descriptions in Appendixes A and B

## **Appendix E: Chart on Topline Survey Findings, by Free or Reduced-Price Lunches**

The following chart offers the same high-altitude perspective, but this time by the differences between schools with a low number of students on free or reduced-price lunches and schools with a high number of students on free or reduced-price lunches.

Overview of HS Counselors at Schools with High Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program (75%+)

	Eight Components			Example Strategies							
	High Commitment (8-10)*	Have Sufficient Training (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	High Commitment (8-10)*	Should be Accountable (6-10)*	Have Training (8-10)*	Have Admin Support (6-10)*	Have District Support (6-10)*	Have Resources (8-10)*		Have Success (8-10)*
Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment	88%	52%	69%	84%	88%	82%	69%	61%	78%	76%	Helping 12th-grade students transition from high school to college
College and Career Admission Processes	94%	56%	69%	79%	90%	73%	70%	69%	65%	66%	Providing students with college application completion materials
Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness	96%	65%	75%	90%	86%	76%	79%	71%	62%	63%	Ensuring that all students have a program of study
Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement	81%	47%	64%	78%	87%	66%	75%	64%	57%	56%	Developing policies and procedures to distribute scholarship applications
College Aspirations	98%	64%	76%	79%	77%	66%	73%	62%	59%	52%	Collaborating with teachers and administrators
Connect College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes	93%	55%	75%	66%	75%	58%	64%	57%	36%	44%	Working with teachers to include elements of college applications in course work
College and Career Assessments	91%	61%	66%	64%	79%	53%	65%	56%	42%	39%	Providing test preparation
College Affordability Planning	90%	51%	78%	72%	78%	57%	64%	57%	54%	54%	Using student FAFSA completion data



\*Ratings on zero-to-10 scales: in each case, 10 = most positive response; full descriptions in Appendixes A and B

Overview of HS Counselors at Schools with Low Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program (Up to 24%)

	Eight Components			Example Strategies							
	High Commitment (8-10)*	Have Sufficient Training (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	High Commitment (8-10)*	Should be Accountable (6-10)*	Have Training (8-10)*	Have Admin Support (6-10)*	Have District Support (6-10)*	Have Resources (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	
Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment	81%	41%	60%	81%	88%	90%	75%	71%	80%	83%	Helping 12th-grade students transition from high school to college
College and Career Admission Processes	91%	66%	73%	88%	95%	92%	80%	77%	81%	78%	Providing students with college application completion materials
Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness	93%	67%	78%	92%	85%	91%	85%	86%	77%	78%	Ensuring that all students have a program of study
Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement	76%	51%	56%	69%	78%	72%	68%	70%	65%	61%	Developing policies and procedures to distribute scholarship applications
College Aspirations	86%	63%	75%	70%	70%	74%	73%	67%	57%	51%	Collaborating with teachers and administrators
Connect College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes	92%	52%	70%	54%	62%	64%	61%	56%	50%	40%	Working with teachers to include elements of college applications in course work
College and Career Assessments	84%	49%	66%	51%	65%	57%	63%	62%	39%	36%	Providing test preparation
College Affordability Planning	82%	45%	63%	28%	40%	30%	42%	36%	31%	21%	Using student FAFSA completion data



\*Ratings on zero-to-10 scales: in each case, 10 = most positive response; full descriptions in Appendixes A and B

Overview of Gap: HS Counselors with High Free Lunch Program - Low Free Lunch Program

	Eight Components				Example Strategies						
	High Commitment (8-10)*	Have Sufficient Training (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	High Commitment (8-10)*	Should be Accountable (6-10)*	Have Training (8-10)*	Have Admin Support (6-10)*	Have District Support (6-10)*	Have Resources (8-10)*	Have Success (8-10)*	
Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment	7	11	9	3	0	-8	-6	-10	-2	-7	Helping 12th-grade students transition from high school to college
College and Career Admission Processes	3	-10	-4	-9	-5	-19	-10	-8	-16	-12	Providing students with college application completion materials
Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness	3	-2	-3	-2	1	-15	-6	-15	-15	-15	Ensuring that all students have a program of study
Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement	5	-4	8	9	9	-6	7	-6	-8	-5	Developing policies and procedures to distribute scholarship applications
College Aspirations	12	1	1	9	7	-8	0	-5	2	1	Collaborating with teachers and administrators
Connect College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes	1	3	5	12	13	-6	3	1	-14	4	Working with teachers to include elements of college applications in course work
College and Career Assessments	7	12	0	13	14	-4	2	-6	3	3	Providing test preparation
College Affordability Planning	8	6	15	44	38	27	22	21	23	33	Using student FAFSA completion data



\*Ratings on zero-to-10 scales; in each case, 10 = most positive response; full descriptions in Appendixes A and B

## Appendix F: Data from Eight States

In addition to the national survey of 1,600 counselors, the eight largest states were targeted for an oversample so that we could report state-specific information: California (218 completes), Florida (186), Illinois (177), New York (237), Ohio (173), Pennsylvania (221), Texas (291), and Virginia (139). Their results on select findings presented in this report are below.

**Counselor's Job:** Please check all of the following that are a part of your job.

<i>THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE BY ALL COUNSELORS</i>									
	All Counselors	CA	FL	IL	NY	OH	PA	TX	VA
Personal-needs counseling	93	86	97	93	96	94	95	91	89
Student scheduling	89	83	87	90	91	94	87	91	93
Career counseling	83	76	70	87	84	86	92	77	86
College counseling	83	91	71	89	81	93	81	85	88
Academic testing	78	64	90	81	53	88	84	87	87
Family and community outreach	74	70	72	72	79	65	79	71	79
Developing a master schedule	42	41	36	29	40	49	33	44	34
Occupation counseling and job placement	32	29	21	34	38	25	38	28	32
Teaching	31	24	32	30	25	21	27	22	27
Other non-guidance activities	80	74	83	72	73	81	79	87	86

**The Role of Counselors:** Please take a moment to think about the role of counselors in schools and rate the degree to which you believe each of the following *should be* an important focus of the counselor’s job. Please use a zero-to-10 scale, on which a 10 means the component should be an extremely important focus of the counselor’s job, and a zero means the component should not be an important focus at all.

<i>THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE OF COUNSELORS WHO SAY SHOULD BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT (RATING OF “8–10”)</i>						
	<u>Mean</u>	<b>Should Be Extremely Important</b> <u>8–10</u>	<u>6–7</u>	<b>Should Not Be Important At All</b> <u>0–5</u>	<b>Not Sure</b>	
<b>Students’ personal, social and emotional development</b>					-	[132–133]
All counselors	9.4	93	4	2	1	
California	9.2	87	8	3	2	
Florida	9.6	96	3	1	-	
Illinois	9.4	92	5	2	1	
New York	9.5	95	3	1	1	
Ohio	9.4	92	6	1	1	
Pennsylvania	9.3	91	6	3	-	
Texas	9.4	95	2	3	-	
Virginia	9.5	94	3	1	2	
<b>Students’ academic development</b>						[134–135]
All counselors	9.2	91	6	2	1	
California	9.4	91	7	1	1	
Florida	9.4	95	2	3	-	
Illinois	9.3	91	6	3	-	
New York	9.1	91	5	4	-	
Ohio	9.1	89	9	2	-	
Pennsylvania	9.1	93	5	2	-	
Texas	9.2	92	5	2	1	
Virginia	9.4	94	5	1	-	
<b>Students’ college readiness</b>						[136–137]
All counselors	8.9	86	9	4	1	
California	9.1	90	6	3	1	
Florida	8.9	86	8	5	1	
Illinois	9.0	89	8	3	-	
New York	8.9	86	9	5	-	
Ohio	8.8	86	9	4	1	
Pennsylvania	8.8	84	13	3	-	
Texas	9.0	86	9	3	2	
Virginia	9.0	88	9	2	1	

(cont'd)	Mean	Should Be Extremely Important 8–10	6–7	Should Not Be Important At All 0–5	Not Sure	
<b>Students' career development</b>						[138–139]
All counselors	8.9	85	11	4	-	
California	8.9	86	9	4	1	
Florida	8.8	83	10	7	-	
Illinois	9.1	90	9	1	-	
New York	8.8	84	14	2	-	
Ohio	8.8	83	13	4	-	
Pennsylvania	9.1	92	6	2	-	
Texas	8.7	83	11	6	-	
Virginia	8.8	83	14	3	-	
<b>Helping students navigate the college application and financial aid processes</b>						[148–149]
All counselors	8.8	85	7	7	1	
California	8.9	85	8	6	1	
Florida	8.6	78	10	10	2	
Illinois	9.3	92	6	2	-	
New York	9.0	91	5	4	-	
Ohio	9.1	91	3	4	2	
Pennsylvania	9.0	86	8	5	1	
Texas	8.7	84	9	6	1	
Virginia	8.7	87	9	4	-	
<b>Building a college-going culture</b>						[146–147]
All counselors	8.7	81	12	6	1	
California	9.3	91	5	3	1	
Florida	8.8	81	13	6	-	
Illinois	8.8	86	10	4	-	
New York	8.7	78	16	6	-	
Ohio	8.9	86	11	2	1	
Pennsylvania	9.2	72	17	11	-	
Texas	9.1	89	6	4	1	
Virginia	8.6	79	14	7	-	
<b>Being part of the school's leadership team</b>						[144–145]
All counselors	8.7	81	12	6	1	
California	8.8	84	9	7	-	
Florida	8.8	84	9	7	-	
Illinois	8.6	81	13	6	-	
New York	8.2	73	16	11	-	
Ohio	8.6	77	17	5	1	
Pennsylvania	8.3	72	20	8	-	
Texas	9.0	89	6	5	-	
Virginia	8.8	85	11	4	-	

(cont'd)	Mean	Should Be Extremely Important 8-10	6-7	Should Not Be Important At All 0-5	Not Sure	
<b>Responding to students with disruptive behavior or to students facing an emotional crisis</b>						[142-143]
All counselors	8.7	80	11	8	1	
California	8.1	70	14	15	1	
Florida	8.7	80	10	9	1	
Illinois	8.7	81	13	6	-	
New York	8.7	81	15	3	1	
Ohio	8.9	82	11	5	2	
Pennsylvania	8.4	76	13	11	-	
Texas	9.0	86	6	7	1	
Virginia	8.6	83	7	10	-	
<b>Performing administrative or clerical tasks such as test coordinator, hall duty, or lunch room duty</b>						[140-141]
All counselors	2.2	5	8	87	-	
California	2.4	8	10	82	-	
Florida	2.5	8	7	85	-	
Illinois	2.3	4	22	85	-	
New York	1.8	4	7	88	1	
Ohio	2.1	7	7	86	-	
Pennsylvania	1.9	4	4	92	-	
Texas	2.0	5	9	86	-	
Virginia	2.2	5	6	89	-	

**Goals:** Please rate the degree to which each of the following goals are important to you personally using a zero-to-10 scale, on which a 10 means the goal is extremely important and a zero means the goal is not at all important.

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE OF COUNSELORS WHO SAY EXTREMELY IMPORTANT (RATING OF "8-10")*

	Mean	Should Be Extremely Important 8-10	6-7	Should Not Be Important At All 0-5	Not Sure	
<b>To ensure that all students reach the end of the 12th grade and earn a high school diploma, ready to succeed in college and career</b>						[150-151]
All counselors	9.6	95	3	1	1	
California	9.8	98	1	-	1	
Florida	9.5	95	2	2	1	
Illinois	9.5	95	4	1	-	
New York	9.5	95	2	1	1	
Ohio	9.6	95	4	1	-	
Pennsylvania	9.4	92	6	2	-	
Texas	9.8	99	1	-	-	
Virginia	9.7	94	3	1	2	
<b>To help students mature and develop the interpersonal skills they will need to succeed in the adult world</b>						[154-155]
All counselors	9.4	92	6	1	1	
California	9.3	90	8	2	-	
Florida	9.5	94	3	2	1	
Illinois	9.4	92	8	-	-	
New York	9.5	96	4	-	-	
Ohio	9.1	91	7	2	-	
Pennsylvania	9.1	88	9	3	-	
Texas	9.5	96	3	1	-	
Virginia	9.5	96	2	-	2	
<b>To make sure that students from low-income, disadvantaged, and immigrant backgrounds get the extra attention and support they need to achieve success equal to other students</b>						[152-153]
All counselors	9.1	88	8	4	-	
California	9.2	90	3	6	1	
Florida	9.1	91	4	3	2	
Illinois	9.2	91	4	4	1	
New York	9.1	88	9	3	-	
Ohio	9.0	87	9	3	1	
Pennsylvania	8.6	76	12	10	2	
Texas	9.3	92	4	4	-	
Virginia	9.2	92	6	2	-	

The following is a list of eight components of a counseling system that focuses on ensuring all students graduate from the 12th grade college and career ready.

**Commitment:** Please rate the degree to which you are personally committed to each of the following components as part of your counseling philosophy on a zero-to-10 scale, on which a 10 means you are completely committed, and a zero means you are not committed to the component at all.

**Components of a college and career focused system:**

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE OF COUNSELORS WHO SAY COMPLETELY COMMITTED (RATING OF "8-10")*

<i>Components of a college and career focused system:</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Completely Committed 8-10</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>Not Committed 0-5</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	
<b>Advancing students' planning, preparation, participation, and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals</b>						[158-159]
All counselors	9.1	90	8	2	-	
California	9.4	93	7	-	-	
Florida	9.0	88	6	6	-	
Illinois	9.2	89	9	1	1	
New York	9.2	89	6	3	2	
Ohio	9.0	89	9	1	1	
Pennsylvania	8.9	90	7	3	-	
Texas	9.2	92	7	1	-	
Virginia	9.2	92	6	2	-	
<b>Providing early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college or career that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations</b>						[162-163]
All counselors	9.0	89	8	3	-	
California	9.2	92	7	1	-	
Florida	8.8	82	11	6	1	
Illinois	9.1	89	7	3	1	
New York	8.9	88	8	3	1	
Ohio	9.0	88	10	1	1	
Pennsylvania	8.8	85	10	4	1	
Texas	9.1	91	8	1	-	
Virginia	9.1	92	6	2	-	
<b>Building a college-going culture by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college. Maintaining high expectations by providing adequate supports and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college</b>						[156-157]
All counselors	8.9	87	9	4	-	
California	9.3	93	5	2	-	
Florida	8.9	85	10	5	-	
Illinois	9.1	90	8	2	-	
New York	8.7	81	9	8	2	
Ohio	8.8	85	11	2	2	
Pennsylvania	8.5	80	13	7	-	
Texas	9.2	90	8	2	-	
Virginia	9.0	89	9	2	-	

(cont'd)		Completely Committed		Not Committed	Not Sure	
<i>Components of a college and career focused system:</i>	Mean	8–10	6–7	0–5		
<b>Ensuring that students and families have an early and ongoing understanding of the application and admission processes so they can find the postsecondary options that are the best fit with their aspirations and interests</b>						[168–169]
All counselors	8.8	85	9	5	1	
California	9.1	89	7	4	-	
Florida	8.6	79	12	9	-	
Illinois	9.2	92	5	2	1	
New York	9.0	89	6	3	2	
Ohio	8.9	88	8	3	1	
Pennsylvania	8.5	80	13	6	1	
Texas	8.9	86	10	4	-	
Virginia	9.0	90	8	2	-	
<b>Promoting preparation and participation in college and career assessments by all students</b>						[164–165]
All counselors	8.7	82	12	6	-	
California	8.8	84	12	4	-	
Florida	8.5	76	14	8	2	
Illinois	9.0	87	10	2	1	
New York	8.5	79	12	8	1	
Ohio	8.8	86	11	3	-	
Pennsylvania	8.5	77	14	8	1	
Texas	8.9	84	13	3	-	
Virginia	9.0	89	7	4	-	
<b>Connecting students to school and community resources to help ensure a successful transition from high school to college</b>						[170–171]
All counselors	8.7	81	12	6	1	
California	9.0	88	9	3	-	
Florida	8.7	79	11	10	-	
Illinois	8.9	84	15	1	-	
New York	8.7	83	8	6	3	
Ohio	8.4	78	16	6	-	
Pennsylvania	8.3	77	14	9	-	
Texas	8.8	86	9	5	-	
Virginia	8.7	85	10	5	-	

(cont'd)		Completely Committed		Not Committed	Not Sure	
Components of a college and career focused system:	Mean	8–10	6–7	0–5		
<b>Providing information about college costs, financing, and the financial aid and scholarship processes, so students are able to plan for and afford a college education</b>						[166–167]
All counselors	8.6	81	11	7	1	
California	8.9	86	7	7	-	
Florida	8.4	73	15	11	1	
Illinois	9.1	89	9	2	-	
New York	8.7	84	9	6	1	
Ohio	8.7	83	11	4	2	
Pennsylvania	8.3	74	15	9	2	
Texas	8.9	86	9	5	-	
Virginia	8.6	82	13	5	-	
<b>Ensuring equitable exposure to a wide range of extracurricular opportunities that build leadership, nurture talents and interests, and increase engagement with school</b>						[160–161]
All counselors	8.5	77	14	8	1	
California	8.8	84	11	5	-	
Florida	8.4	75	16	9	-	
Illinois	8.5	77	16	7	-	
New York	8.5	77	12	8	3	
Ohio	7.9	67	23	9	1	
Pennsylvania	8.0	69	19	12	-	
Texas	8.6	80	9	10	1	
Virginia	8.5	80	15	5	-	

**Success:** Please rate the degree to which you believe you are personally successful in accomplishing this component using a zero-to-10 scale, on which a 10 means that you are extremely successful in accomplishing this component and a zero means you are not at all successful in accomplishing it.

**Components of a college and career focused system:**

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE OF COUNSELORS WHO SAY COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL (RATING OF "8-10")*

<i>Components of a college and career focused system:</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Completely Successful 8-10</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>Not Successful 0-5</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	
<b>Building a college-going culture by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college. Maintaining high expectations by providing adequate supports and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college</b>						[172-173]
All counselors	8.2	72	18	9	1	
California	8.6	79	13	7	1	
Florida	8.2	72	16	12	-	
Illinois	8.4	76	20	4	-	
New York	8.0	69	20	9	2	
Ohio	8.3	71	21	6	2	
Pennsylvania	7.7	64	20	14	2	
Texas	8.2	75	14	11	-	
Virginia	8.5	79	18	2	1	
<b>Advancing students' planning, preparation, participation, and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals</b>						[174-175]
All counselors	8.2	71	20	8	1	
California	8.5	75	17	7	1	
Florida	8.1	74	13	12	1	
Illinois	8.5	81	14	4	1	
New York	8.3	74	18	6	2	
Ohio	8.2	72	23	5	-	
Pennsylvania	8.0	66	24	8	2	
Texas	7.9	67	21	11	1	
Virginia	8.5	82	14	3	1	
<b>Providing early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college or career that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations</b>						[178-179]
All counselors	8.0	68	20	11	1	
California	8.2	72	15	12	1	
Florida	7.8	65	20	14	1	
Illinois	8.3	72	23	5	-	
New York	8.1	70	19	9	2	
Ohio	7.9	64	26	8	2	
Pennsylvania	7.8	63	23	13	1	
Texas	7.9	68	18	14	-	
Virginia	8.3	77	16	5	2	

(cont'd)		Completely Successful		Not Successful	Not Sure	
<u>Components of a college and career focused system:</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>8-10</u>	<u>6-7</u>	<u>0-5</u>	<u>Sure</u>	
<b>To make sure that students from low-income, disadvantaged, and immigrant backgrounds get the extra attention and support they need to achieve success equal to other students</b>						[210-211]
All counselors	8.0	67	20	11	2	
California	8.5	76	16	8	-	
Florida	8.2	74	11	13	2	
Illinois	8.1	69	21	9	1	
New York	8.0	69	18	11	2	
Ohio	7.6	55	28	13	4	
Pennsylvania	7.6	54	28	15	3	
Texas	8.1	70	18	11	1	
Virginia	7.9	66	19	14	1	
<b>Promoting preparation and participation in college and career assessments by all students</b>						[208-209]
All counselors	7.9	65	20	13	2	
California	7.9	65	18	14	3	
Florida	7.7	63	16	18	3	
Illinois	8.3	72	22	5	1	
New York	7.7	63	20	14	3	
Ohio	7.8	62	26	10	2	
Pennsylvania	7.7	63	19	16	2	
Texas	7.7	63	20	16	1	
Virginia	8.0	70	14	14	2	
<b>Providing information about college costs, financing, and the financial aid and scholarship processes, so students are able to plan for and afford a college education</b>						[212-213]
All counselors	7.7	63	20	15	2	
California	8.0	65	21	12	2	
Florida	7.4	59	17	21	3	
Illinois	8.1	70	22	8	-	
New York	7.9	66	20	11	3	
Ohio	8.0	66	20	10	5	
Pennsylvania	7.6	62	19	14	5	
Texas	7.6	63	17	18	2	
Virginia	7.6	61	22	16	1	

(cont'd)		Completely Successful		Not Successful	Not Sure	
Components of a college and career focused system:	Mean	8-10	6-7	0-5		
<b>Ensuring that students and families have an early and ongoing understanding of the application and admission processes so they can find the postsecondary options that are the best fit with their aspirations and interests</b>						[214-215]
All counselors	7.7	63	20	15	2	
California	8.1	68	19	12	1	
Florida	7.5	62	18	19	1	
Illinois	8.1	73	16	10	1	
New York	8.0	70	15	12	3	
Ohio	8.0	65	23	9	3	
Pennsylvania	7.5	59	19	17	5	
Texas	7.5	57	25	18	-	
Virginia	7.9	70	17	12	1	
<b>Ensuring equitable exposure to a wide range of extracurricular opportunities that build leadership, nurture talents and interests, and increase engagement with school</b>						[176-177]
All counselors	7.6	58	24	17	1	
California	7.9	64	22	13	1	
Florida	7.6	59	20	19	2	
Illinois	7.8	60	27	12	1	
New York	7.8	60	24	13	3	
Ohio	7.4	51	29	15	5	
Pennsylvania	7.1	48	29	22	1	
Texas	7.6	59	22	19	-	
Virginia	7.6	64	20	15	1	
<b>Connecting students to school and community resources to help ensure a successful transition from high school to college</b>						[216-217]
All counselors	7.5	58	23	17	2	
California	8.0	67	21	11	1	
Florida	7.5	62	17	19	2	
Illinois	7.9	66	19	13	2	
New York	7.6	60	20	17	3	
Ohio	7.6	58	29	9	4	
Pennsylvania	7.3	53	26	18	3	
Texas	7.5	59	20	20	1	
Virginia	7.5	63	22	14	1	

**The Eight Components:** For the next few questions, please think about the eight components of a college and career readiness framework and the example activities listed in the previous questions as one overall approach to counseling students. Please indicate the degree to which each statement is true using a zero-to-10 scale on which a zero means the statement is not true at all and a 10 means the statement is completely true.

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL COUNSELORS WHO SAY COMPLETELY FAIR (RATING OF "8-10")*

Components of a college and career focused system:	Mean	Completely True 8-10	6-7	Not True At All 0-5	Not Sure	
<b>I can see myself committing to the approach outlined in these items</b>						[1263-1264]
All counselors	7.8	63	20	15	2	
California	7.8	62	19	16	3	
Florida	7.5	61	17	21	1	
Illinois	8.1	72	14	12	2	
New York	7.6	59	20	18	3	
Ohio	7.7	59	28	11	2	
Pennsylvania	7.6	61	22	14	3	
Texas	7.9	69	15	14	2	
Virginia	7.7	66	19	13	2	
<b>I know how to use data to determine which students need the most help with these interventions</b>						[1265-1266]
All counselors	7.5	59	22	18	1	
California	7.7	64	18	16	2	
Florida	7.6	64	15	20	1	
Illinois	7.8	67	18	14	1	
New York	7.4	54	24	20	2	
Ohio	7.3	51	29	17	3	
Pennsylvania	7.1	48	29	22	1	
Texas	7.5	58	23	18	1	
Virginia	7.6	61	22	16	1	
<b>I know how to apply these interventions to the diverse academic and cultural needs of my students</b>						[1269-1270]
All counselors	7.4	57	23	18	2	
California	7.9	64	21	12	3	
Florida	7.4	58	18	22	2	
Illinois	8.0	71	18	10	1	
New York	7.4	56	22	19	3	
Ohio	7.1	53	26	19	2	
Pennsylvania	7.1	51	25	23	1	
Texas	7.5	62	17	20	1	
Virginia	7.6	66	22	11	1	

(cont'd)		Completely True		Not True At All	Not Sure	
<i>Components of a college and career focused system:</i>	Mean	8-10	6-7	0-5		
<b>I intentionally prioritize my most needy students in implementing these interventions</b>						[1308-1309]
All counselors	7.4	56	24	19	1	
California	7.7	61	19	18	2	
Florida	7.4	57	21	20	2	
Illinois	7.7	63	23	14	-	
New York	7.4	53	26	20	1	
Ohio	7.1	49	30	20	1	
Pennsylvania	7.0	47	28	23	2	
Texas	7.3	57	20	21	2	
Virginia	7.1	58	18	23	1	
<b>I have the training and knowledge to implement these interventions schoolwide</b>						[1267-1268]
All counselors	7.0	50	24	24	2	
California	7.0	47	29	22	2	
Florida	6.9	47	27	23	3	
Illinois	7.6	65	15	18	2	
New York	7.0	48	27	23	2	
Ohio	6.8	46	26	26	2	
Pennsylvania	6.6	45	23	31	1	
Texas	7.0	51	22	26	1	
Virginia	7.3	58	22	19	1	
<b>I know how to create solutions that remove barriers to these types of interventions</b>						[1273-1274]
All counselors	7.0	48	27	23	2	
California	7.2	52	23	21	4	
Florida	6.9	52	21	25	2	
Illinois	7.3	54	25	19	2	
New York	7.0	48	25	24	3	
Ohio	7.0	49	31	19	1	
Pennsylvania	6.9	41	35	23	1	
Texas	7.0	50	25	24	1	
Virginia	7.2	49	28	20	3	
<b>I know how to show accountability for these types of interventions</b>						[1277-1278]
All counselors	6.9	47	25	25	3	
California	7.3	53	22	20	5	
Florida	6.8	49	20	29	2	
Illinois	7.4	57	22	18	3	
New York	6.7	44	27	26	3	
Ohio	6.6	46	27	25	2	
Pennsylvania	6.6	40	28	29	3	
Texas	6.9	51	20	28	1	
Virginia	7.2	52	27	18	3	

(cont'd)		Completely True		Not True At All	Not Sure	
<i>Components of a college and career focused system:</i>	Mean	8-10	6-7	0-5		
<b>I know how to apply these interventions in ways that keep students' parents and families actively involved</b>						[1271-1272]
All counselors	7.0	47	28	24	1	
California	7.0	49	24	25	2	
Florida	7.0	47	27	24	2	
Illinois	7.5	56	29	14	1	
New York	7.1	49	28	22	1	
Ohio	6.8	42	35	21	2	
Pennsylvania	7.0	46	33	20	1	
Texas	6.9	46	25	27	2	
Virginia	7.2	50	31	17	2	
<b>The teachers in my school support these types of interventions</b>						[1275-1276]
All counselors	6.6	41	26	30	3	
California	6.9	48	22	26	4	
Florida	6.5	38	27	30	5	
Illinois	6.8	46	26	27	1	
New York	6.4	33	30	34	3	
Ohio	6.9	43	29	24	4	
Pennsylvania	6.3	35	26	35	4	
Texas	6.5	41	26	31	2	
Virginia	6.6	44	26	26	4	
<b>I intentionally collaborate with governmental, community and nonprofit organizations, and businesses to match their programs and services to support these types of interventions</b>						[1279-1280]
All counselors	5.6	31	23	44	2	
California	5.7	36	20	41	3	
Florida	5.2	30	15	52	3	
Illinois	5.9	37	18	44	1	
New York	5.7	33	22	44	1	
Ohio	5.3	24	26	48	2	
Pennsylvania	5.3	29	22	46	3	
Texas	5.6	30	22	46	2	
Virginia	5.2	27	24	47	2	

**Barriers to using a college and career readiness framework:** Still thinking about the eight components of a college and career readiness framework and the example activities listed in the previous questions as one overall approach to counseling students, there may be several barriers that stand in the way of you using this approach successfully and effectively. Please indicate which one or two barriers pose the greatest challenge for you in trying to take this approach to counseling. If you believe that you or your school already is doing this effectively, please check that box. (ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES.)

**[Click here to see the eight components and example activities.](#)**

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE BY ALL COUNSELORS*

	All Counselors	CA	FL	IL	NY	OH	PA	TX	VA
I do not have enough time to do this more	51	50	54	42	46	59	49	58	57
I do not have sufficient resources to support more of these activities	32	36	24	26	35	31	28	29	21
I am already doing this effectively	30	27	28	41	34	28	29	30	31
This is not an important priority for the administration of my school	18	20	23	24	15	14	20	15	15
I am not trained to do this effectively	13	14	13	10	10	14	14	15	13
This is not an important priority for me personally	2	4	3	2	3	2	3	1	3

**Common Core:** As you may know, groups of teachers and other educators have been working across the country to develop a set of common core state standards defining what students should learn at each grade in core subjects. Please indicate the degree to which each statement is true using a zero-to-10 scale on which a zero means the statement is not true at all and a 10 means the statement is completely true.

(cont'd)		Completely True 8-10	6-7	Not True At All 0-5	Not Sure	
Components of a college and career focused system:	Mean					
<b>I am knowledgeable about the common core state standards and how they will affect students and school counseling</b>						[1311-1312]
All counselors	5.7	37	20	42	1	
California	5.3	31	21	46	2	
Florida	6.0	41	19	38	2	
Illinois	5.7	32	26	41	1	
New York	5.6	34	21	45	-	
Ohio	6.3	42	23	34	1	
Pennsylvania	5.4	32	21	45	2	
Texas	6.1	44	15	39	2	
Virginia	5.8	40	21	37	2	
<b>I have received training about the Common Core State Standards</b>						[1313-1314]
All counselors	4.6	30	14	55	1	
California	3.7	23	11	64	2	
Florida	4.7	32	10	56	2	
Illinois	4.8	30	13	56	1	
New York	4.7	27	19	54	-	
Ohio	5.1	29	18	52	1	
Pennsylvania	4.5	27	16	55	2	
Texas	5.0	32	15	52	1	
Virginia	4.2	28	12	59	1	
<b>I would like to receive further training on the Common Core State Standards</b>						[1315-1316]
All counselors	7.2	59	14	25	2	
California	7.3	60	15	23	2	
Florida	7.4	62	13	21	4	
Illinois	7.1	56	15	26	3	
New York	7.2	60	12	26	2	
Ohio	7.0	59	13	27	1	
Pennsylvania	7.0	55	16	26	3	
Texas	7.1	58	13	27	2	
Virginia	7.0	55	16	27	2	

**Accountability:** Is the system of accountability in your school focused more on data related to student outcomes such as graduation rates, more focused on counseling activities such as time spent on different tasks or does it focus on both about equally? If your school does not have a system of accountability, please select that.

	All Counselors	CA	FL	IL	NY	OH	PA	TX	VA
Focused more on student outcomes	53	53	59	48	60	48	45	64	58
Focused more on counseling activities	5	5	4	3	5	2	9	5	5
Focuses on both about equally	23	21	28	26	16	22	19	20	24
My school does not have a system of accountability	19	21	9	23	19	28	27	11	13

## Appendix G: Profile of America's School Counselors

The Second Annual School Counselor's Survey reveals a school counselor population that is unchanged from the 2011 survey. America's school counselors are primarily female and highly educated, but represent the wide range of schools, backgrounds and challenges that characterize the American education system.

### Gender

Women continue to dominate the school counselor population, with three women for every man in the profession. The overall proportion (78 percent) of women holds in middle schools (79 percent), high schools (77 percent), public schools (78 percent) and private schools (76 percent). Counselors are slightly more likely to be female in Title 1 schools (82 percent), but this proportion regresses to 74 percent at schools that do not have a Title 1 Schoolwide Program.

### Age

Counselors represent a wide, fairly evenly distributed range of ages from 25 to 65 (see Table below). This age range is similar to last year's and does not change much between middle school and high school counselors. Private counselors, however, tend to be older than their public school counterparts, with 52 percent of private school counselors being over the age of 50, while only 43 percent of public school counselors are in the same age range.

### Race and Ethnicity

School counselors come from a diverse set of racial and ethnic backgrounds (see Table 11). Ten percent identify themselves as black or African American, along with 13 percent who identify as Hispanic or Latino. Among those who are Hispanic or Latino, 5 percent are Mexican, 1 percent are Puerto Rican and 7 percent are from other Hispanic origins.

**Table 10: Counselor Age by Grade Level and School Type**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public %	Private %
18-24	-	-	-	-	-
25-29	6	5	6	6	8
30-34	10	11	10	11	7
35-39	13	15	13	13	11
40-44	14	13	14	14	10
45-49	13	12	13	13	12
50-54	13	12	13	13	12
55-59	15	14	15	15	16
60-64	12	12	12	11	18
65-69	3	4	3	3	5
70-74	1	1	1	1	1
75 and over	0	1	-	-	-
Proportion of all counselors	100	27	73	89	10

**Table 11: Counselor Race**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public %	Private %
White (including Portuguese, Brazilian, Persian, and Middle Eastern)	77	73	78	76	83
Hispanic or Latino	13	13	13	13	13
Yes, Mexican	5	4	5	5	5
Yes, Puerto Rican	1	1	2	1	1
Yes, other	7	8	6	7	7
No, not Hispanic or Latino	79	76	80	79	81
I do not wish to respond	8	11	7	8	6
Black or African American (including African and Afro-Caribbean)	10	11	10	10	3
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	2	2	2	3
Asian or Asian American (including Indian subcontinent)	2	2	2	2	5
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	1	1	1	1
I do not wish to respond	11	14	10	11	9

Private school counselors are more likely to be white (83 percent), while African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to work in schools serving those populations, where each ethnicity makes up one-quarter of the counselor population. Hispanic and African American counselors also are more likely to work at Title 1 schools and urban high schools and in cities.

## Education and Degrees Earned

America's counselors are well educated, with most focusing their education on counselor specific degrees — probably because most counseling positions require a master's degree.

While only one in four has a bachelor's degree in education, well over three-quarters (83 percent) have a Master of Education degree or a Master of Arts degree that specializes in school counseling. Notably, very few counselors have any education beyond the master's level, with only 1 percent reporting a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in counselor education.

High school counselors actually are less likely to have a bachelor's degree in education than are middle school counselors (24 percent high school compared with 26 percent middle school). The same pattern occurs in public and private schools, as private school counselors are less likely to have a

**Table 12: Degrees Earned by Grade Level and School Type**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %
BA (teaching/education)	25	26	24	25	23
BA/BS (major OTHER than education)	42	35	44	41	52
Master of Education with specialty in school counseling	56	56	56	58	37
Master of Arts with specialty in school counseling	27	30	26	28	18
Master's in social work (MSW)	2	3	1	2	2
Master's in educational psychology	3	3	2	3	1
Ed.S. with specialty in school counseling	4	4	4	4	2
Ed.S. with specialty in pupil services administration	1	1	1	1	1
Ph.D./Ed.D. in counselor education	1	2	1	1	1
Ph.D./Ed.D. in education leadership	1	2	1	1	1
Ph.D. in counseling psychology	-	1	-	-	-
Other	27	24	27	25	39

**Table 13: Educational Attainment by Grade Level and School Type**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %
Have graduate degree training with specialty in school counseling	85	88	84	89	55
Do not have graduate degree training with specialty in school counseling	15	12	16	11	45

bachelor's degree in education (23 percent private compared with 25 percent public).

Only 15 percent of America's counselors have not received any type of graduate training that relates to student

counseling, including 16 percent of high school counselors and 12 percent of middle school counselors. While barely one in 10 public school counselors lacks a counseling degree from a graduate program (11 percent), nearly half of private school counselors lack the same education (45 percent).

**Table 14: Additional Training Among Counselors Who Did Not Attend Graduate Program for School Counseling**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %
On the job	49	28	54	34	83
Workshops, conferences, in-service	43	26	47	30	73
Specialized certificate programs, including online certificates	12	9	13	13	8
Graduate course(s) not part of my degree program	32	37	31	37	20
Other	39	47	37	49	18
No training	2	-	2	-	5

Of those who did not receive training for student counseling from a graduate program, half received training for their career on the job. Among private school counselors, this proportion jumps to 83 percent, with another 73 percent receiving training from workshops, conferences or in-service. Counselors over the age of 50 are more likely to have received training while taking other graduate programs (37 percent over 50 compared with 28 percent under 50), but counselors under the age of 50 are more likely to have received a specialized certificate, such as an online degree (9 percent over 50 compared with 15 percent under 50).

## Certification

In addition to educational training, most counselors achieve additional certification at some point in their career. Nearly all counselors (89 percent) have received certification from their state's department of education, including 93 percent of public school counselors (only 49 percent of private school counselors have received state certification) and 96 percent of counselors with a graduate degree in school counseling. In addition, 59 percent of counselors have graduated from a CACREP program, including 40 percent of private school counselors.

**Table 15: Certification**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %	Grad Degree in School Counseling %	Grad Degree Other %	BA/BS Only %
Certified by state's Department of Education	89	93	87	93	49	96	59	42
National Certified School Counselor	7	10	6	8	3	8	6	2
NBPTS certification	4	7	3	5	3	5	3	1
National Certified Counselor	12	13	11	12	6	12	8	6
CACREP graduate	59	65	57	61	40	65	29	23

## Prior Work Experience

Half of current counselors have prior work experience as teachers, including middle school (53 percent), high school (51 percent), public school (52 percent), and private school (54 percent) counselors. An additional 29 percent of counselors have no prior work experience, with only private school counselors distinctly less likely to not have any prior work experience (19 percent). Private school counselors are instead much more likely to have been an administrator (36 percent private compared with 12 percent overall) or worked in the private sector (35 percent private compared with 18 percent overall).

Younger counselors are less likely to have prior experience as teachers, as only one in three counselors under the age of 40 has worked as a teacher before becoming a counselor. On the opposite side, 73 percent of counselors ages 60 or older were teachers at one point. Schools that are at least 75 percent minority or at least 75 percent free or reduced-price lunches are slightly more likely to have counselors who used to be teachers (57 percent for each) than the national average.

**Table 16: Prior Work Experience**

	All Counselors %	Middle School %	High School %	Public School %	Private School %	Grad Degree in School Counseling %	Grad Degree Other %	BA/BS Only %
Teacher	52	53	51	52	54	53	41	50
Administrator	12	8	13	9	36	9	19	30
Private sector for at least 3 years	18	16	19	17	35	17	22	26
Nonprofit sector for at least 3 years	13	14	13	12	22	12	23	24
Government sector for at least 3 years	8	9	7	8	7	8	11	7
No prior work experience	29	28	29	30	19	29	31	23

## Appendix H: Survey Methodology

On behalf of the College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA), Hart Research conducted 2,890 online interviews among 806 middle school and 2,084 high school counselors from May 1 to June 18, 2012. The three-to-one ratio of high school to middle school counselors was predetermined (although the actual completion rate ended up being 2.58 to one) to include the voices of middle school counselors but was not fully in proportion to the actual number of middle school counselors. In addition, Hart Research interviewed 439 high school and middle school administrators (including principals, vice principals and assistant principals).

Counselors were invited to participate in the online survey via email and by postcard, and many received both forms of invitation. Counselors' and administrators' contact information was obtained through the list provider MDR, a Dun & Bradstreet company. Records were divided by the available contact information—counselors who had emails were contacted via email and records that had only postal mail contact information were contacted by postcard; all administrators were contacted only by email. While it was possible for a counselor to have a postal address with no email address, every email address had a corresponding physical address. Many counselors, particularly those in the smaller states, received both forms of contact.

### Survey Development

The survey was developed over a period of several months through collaboration among researchers and managers

from the College Board, NOSCA, Civic Enterprises, and Hart Research. Six focus groups also were conducted among school counselors and school administrators in March 2012 to explore potential survey topics and to give some counselors and administrators an opportunity to express their views in their own words: two groups were convened in Charlotte, N.C., two in Dallas, Texas, and two in Chicago, Ill.

More than a dozen drafts of the survey passed between the organizations on the way to the final survey, which attempted to cover a wide variety of topics without imposing an excessive time burden on the counselors who volunteered to complete the survey. Counselors were not compensated or offered any incentive for the time it took from their other work.

### Survey Invitations

Counselor invitations were made on a state-by-state basis with a sample of 1,600 counselors as the original target for the national sample. Each state's target number of responses was designed to be representative of the size of the state's school counselor population, as determined by the counselors' universe. In addition to the national survey of 1,600 counselors, the eight largest states were targeted with an oversample of 200 additional counselors per state. In Virginia, Ohio, Illinois and Florida, the number of completed surveys fell short of this goal.

Wherever possible, the mail and email records were selected at random, but this survey should not be viewed as randomly sampled because all available counselor records were sent

**Table 17: Additional Training Among Counselors Who Did Not Attend Graduate Program for School Counseling**

State	Weight/Completes	State	Weight/Completes	State	Weight/Completes	State	Weight/Completes
AK	1.22 / 6	ID	1.08 / 14	MT	1.24 / 5	RI	1.24 / 10
AL	1.23 / 31	IL	0.55 / 98	NC	0.74 / 84	SC	1.22 / 45
AR	1.23 / 21	IN	1.26 / 44	ND	1.11 / 9	SD	1.30 / 9
AZ	1.14 / 39	KS	1.03 / 26	NE	1.26 / 20	TN	1.26 / 43
CA	1.13 / 246	KY	0.92 / 32	NH	1.30 / 18	TX	0.78 / 228
CO	1.05 / 44	LA	1.27 / 28	NJ	1.26 / 69	UT	0.88 / 23
CT	1.15 / 46	MA	1.26 / 69	NM	1.13 / 17	VA	0.59 / 82
DC	1.15 / 1	MD	1.10 / 57	NV	1.27 / 14	VT	1.15 / 8
DE	1.24 / 5	ME	0.89 / 16	NY	0.81 / 192	WA	0.77 / 55
FL	0.64 / 119	MI	0.78 / 70	OH	0.49 / 85	WI	0.96 / 45
GA	1.25 / 81	MN	0.85 / 39	OK	1.26 / 19	WV	1.15 / 14
HI	1.15 / 15	MO	1.22 / 55	OR	1.17 / 28	WY	0.74 / 6
IA	1.23 / 27	MS	1.24 / 15	PA	0.47 / 103	Total Weighted	2475

invitations in a large number of states. In the smaller states, only a fraction of the total population was sent a postal invitation. However, in several of the oversample states the postal invitations exhausted the available number of counselors. Further, all available counselors were sent email invitations, exhausting the national sample of email contacts.

The first email wave and postcard wave was sent out on May 1, 2012. Those who received a postcard also received a follow-up postcard, while those receiving emails could have received up to five additional emails, with two of those waves including an expanded population encompassing the entire available universe. The final wave was sent only to schools still in session on June 13, 2012.

In total, approximately 68,918 counselors received at least one postal or email invitation to take the survey, with a 4.19 percent completed interview response rate. In addition to the 2,890 completed interviews, 127 interviews were stopped due to the respondent's failing a screening question, and 2,896 interviews were stopped by respondents.

Administrators also were selected at random from the national sample, with the number of invitations per state proportional to the state size. The first email wave was sent to 40,663 counselors on May 17, 2012, with only one additional wave afterward that was inclusive of the original sample selection. The survey closed with 439 completed interviews, giving a total response rate of 1.08 percent. In addition, 41 interviews were stopped by a screening question and 503 interviews were terminated by the respondent or timed out before the survey was completed.

## Survey Scales

Many questions in this survey ask for ratings on a zero-to-10 scale. Whenever we present these results we report the proportion giving a rating of "8" or higher because this indicates full or nearly full agreement, and a rating of "6" or "7," while indicating general agreement, also could indicate a barrier in the form of an incomplete endorsement. There are two exceptions to this rule: one is cases in which the counselor is rating others' commitment — either the administrator's or school district's. We set the bar lower for counselors' perceptions of administrators' support to assess simply whether counselors see administrators as "on their side" (indicated by a "6" or higher). The second exception is acceptance of various accountability measures where a "6" indicates that the measure is acceptable.





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