

# **Reimagining School Counseling in the Long Beach Unified School District**

**Submitted by  
The TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee**

**Kennedy Dixon, Lead Author  
Terence Booth, Contributor  
David Echevarria, Contributor  
Rima Hosn, Contributor  
Darlene Li Wang, Contributor  
Shondi McGee, Contributor**

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## **POSITION STATEMENT**

### **The Role and Function of School Counselors**

School Counselors play a critical role in assisting students in reaching their academic, personal/social and career goals. For school counselors to be effective in supporting students in meeting these essential goals, school counselors' duties and responsibilities and high student to counselor ratios must be addressed. High student to counselor ratios undermines and hinder counselors' ability to meet the existing and growing needs of students, families, and staff. Additionally, assigning counselors administrative functions and duties equally undermines and hampers counselors' ability to develop a trusting transparent relationship with students, which is essential to provide the level of support students need to thrive emotionally, academically, and socially.

### **Rationale**

Over the past few decades, local and state officials, community members, and policy makers have called on schools and school districts to address the wide range of societal priorities and student needs, such as academic achievement, social/emotional support, and barriers that are impeding students from reaching their maximum potential. The COVID crisis has amplified the urgency for school and school districts to increase the level of student support services, as research is predicting that students will be impacted by this once in a generation pandemic for years to come.

Although, there has been an investment in hiring 12 social workers for the 2022-2023 school year, this does not alter the need for comprehensive change in school counseling in the Long Beach Unified School District. Social workers are responsible for working with selected students and advocating for their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing, as well as providing support to families. A small part of their work overlaps with the support that school counselors provide. However, unlike school social workers, school counselors are professional educators, who work with all students at their school, and provide academic, personal/social and career development.

## **Summary**

School counselors are far too frequently assigned duties and responsibilities that do not take advantage of their specialized training. Skill-sets that would provide an array of support to students are overlooked or underutilized, which interferes with counselors' ability to provide direct support/intervention to students, to improve student's academic achievement, to facilitate home-school collaborations, to improve school-wide policies, and to coordinate needed services with community-based partners. In addition, the current student to counselor ratios at most LBUSD schools are 2 to 5 times the recommendations from the California Association of School Counselors (CASC) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), which is 250:1.

Over the past year, the TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee has been studying current and past literature and research on school counseling reform. The research is clear that schools where counselors have appropriate duties and responsibilities and sufficient student to counselor ratios, students have higher academic achievement and adequate social emotional support.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal, State, and local governmental agencies are consistently reporting that the recent pandemic will have an impact on students for years. According to Education Week March 31, 2021 article, [\*The Pandemic Will Affect Students' Mental Health for Years to come. How Schools Can Help\*](#), “The pandemic, combined with a massive experiment in remote schooling, a racial justice movement stemming from police killings of Black Americans, and economic and political instability will have long-term effects on schoolchildren’s mental health. For the foreseeable future, educators will have to grapple with a host of additional challenges that will complicate students’ abilities to learn, such as increased anxiety, substance abuse, and hyperactivity—all symptoms of the trauma many students have lived through this past year.”

Due to the impact that the COVID crisis has had on our children, schools, and communities throughout the country, considerable attention has been focused on the role and function of school counselors. Although, the pandemic has put the public eye on school counselors, concerns regarding school counselors aren’t new. The [\*California Department of Education 2017 Research Report on School Counseling Effectiveness\*](#) stated, “California has made important strides in class size reduction, higher academic standards, greater accountability, and improved teacher preparation. The important missing link in these initiatives to improve student learning is the need for more school counselors and other student support services, such as school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses.

Traditionally, California students' access to counselors varies by grade level, and 29 percent of California school districts have no counseling programs at all. When counseling programs exist, counselors are often asked to add administrative duties such as testing, supervising, and class scheduling. The ratio of students per counselor in this state averages 945 to 1, compared to the national average of 477 to 1, ranking California last in the nation.

School counselors provide counseling programs in three domains: academic, career, and social/emotional. Their services and programs help students resolve emotional, social, or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction. Effective counseling programs are important to the school climate and a crucial element in improving student achievement.”

The attention and concerns regarding the role and function of school counselors has been a national discussion, beyond the State of California.

It should also be noted that the attention surrounding school counselors is not regional and has drawn interest from the highest levels of our government. On June 30, 2014, the United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, sent educators across the country a Key Policy Letter, title [\*Administrators Lead & Manage My School\*](#).

In his letter, Secretary Duncan, stated “If the nation is to meet President Obama’s goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020, it is imperative that all students have consistent access to school counselors who possess the training and skills to help students reach their highest aspirations. School counselors are pivotal in helping students manage their academic programs as well as the inevitable life events that may threaten students’ ability to succeed in school. Yet, as the Civil Rights Data Collection recently found, one in five American high schools operates without any school counselors on staff (<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2014/03/five-new-facts-from-the-civil-rights-data-collection/>).

This is an untenable situation for millions of students who need the support of site-based school counselors, whose job it is to ensure their students’ success.

Schools that do employ counselors may not use them to full advantage. Despite the critical role school counselors play in supporting students’ college and career readiness, they often are asked to perform many “non-counseling” duties that can distract from their core work and ultimately leave students without the individualized attention they need to complete their academic course work, successfully navigate the college admissions and financial aid processes, and/or prepare for productive careers. Increasing the number of students who graduate from high school ready for college and careers requires that all students benefit from a holistic support system that ensures consistent access to effective school counselors.”

Secretary Duncan’s appeal to school leaders was for them to support and increase the number of school counselors so that they can become more effective in assisting a greater number of students – especially low-income students, minority students, students with disabilities, and English learners – successfully access postsecondary education or career opportunities, and specifically mentioned concerns regarding school counselors' role in providing support to students.

More recently, on February 19, 2022, [AB 2508 \(Quirk-Silva\)](#) was introduced to the California Assembly Committee, which is chaired by Long Beach Assemblyman and former school teacher, Patrick O'Donnell.

AB 2508 urges the governing board of a local educational agency (LEA) to provide a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils and redefines the definition of educational counseling and services provided to pupils to reflect current practices.

Need for the bill: The author of AB 2508 stated, “Teaching methods, curriculum modifications, as well as standards of education have changed and evolved over the 30 years I have been teaching in California. Insights gained from the past combined with new knowledge, enables the state to continue to develop and implement comprehensive educational programs for our students. Research points to the effectiveness of school counselors in supporting students in many ways. Without updating the California Education Code, these positive outcomes fall short if school counselors are not utilized in schools or in ways commensurate with their training and areas of expertise.”

Background of SB 2508: In 2009, the California Association of School Counselors (CASC) issued a set of standards for the school counseling profession. These standards were intended to address a number of problems resulting from unclear expectations of school counselors, including counseling time being diverted to administrative tasks, poor quality evaluations due to absence of an evaluative specific to school counseling, and poorly structured and incoherent counseling programs. The report noted that, “without clear standards of practice for school counseling, student support programs and services often become a jumble of disconnected services and random acts of guidance.”

The provisions of AB 2508 are intended to mirror this set of standards, with updates related to reflect the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control and Accountability Plan, and other recent policy trends, such as restorative justice practices and positive behavior interventions.

Argument in support of AB 2508: According to the California Federation of Teachers “AB 2508 updates the definition of ‘school counselor’ to reflect the current role of school counselors and is the first step to ensuring counselors understand their role in assisting students seeking career pathways. This legislation provides updates to the legislation to highlight career pathways, cite federal programs and opportunities for job training, and names industry certification opportunities.

It further ensures that counselors understand their role to assist in addressing any mental health issues that may be addressed to create an environment where students are receptive to understanding their career options.”

Assembly Floor Vote in Favor - 61-0, 5/5/22

Opposition: None received - (VERIFIED 6/23/22)

AB 2508 Update: On August 18, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law AB 2508. AB 2508 amends several sections of California Education Code 49600, to accurately reflect the role and duties of school counselors and modifies the antiquated language and terms that are over fifty-years old.

### **THE STATE OF SCHOOL COUNSELING IN LBUSD**

Over the past year, the TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee has been studying current and past literature and research on school counseling reform, consulting with statewide organizations, collecting survey data from LBUSD counselors, and examining current LBUSD data. Reimagining School Counseling in the Long Beach Unified School District Report is an outcome of our work.

The primary purpose of this committee report is to bring attention to the immediate barriers that are currently preventing school counselors from providing students with the academic, personal/social and career support they will need to be successful in the coming years, especially considering the post-Covid analysis mentioned earlier. The main barriers are that school counselors consistently being assigned managerial functions and duties and have student to counselor ratios that are not practical for counselors to meet the increasing needs of students.

Although, the American School Counselor Association recommends a student to counselor [ratio](#) of 250 to 1, the TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee reviewed Long Beach Unified School District [data](#) and found that during the 2021-2022 school year, many schools in the Long Beach Unified School District student had student to counselor ratios that were 2 to 5 times the recommended ratios. Furthermore, a school counselor survey conducted by the committee also found that the vast amount of counselors’ time and duties assigned are spent on administrative functions, and not activities and functions that are recommended by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) or the California Association of School Counselors (CASC).

For over 30 years, research has shown that students in schools where counselors provide a Comprehensive School Counseling Program show great gains in their academic development, personal/social development, and career development. It is the recommendation of the TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee that the Long Beach Unified School District follows the guidelines of AB 2508 and implement a district wide Comprehensive School Counseling Program Initiative.

TALB and the LBUSD will negotiate the school counselors' evaluation process during the 2022-2023 school year. This will provide an excellent opportunity to review the current school counselors' evaluation process, school counselors' duties and responsibilities, student to counselor ratios, and align counselors' duties and ratios with the Standards for the School Counseling Profession.

### **School Counselors' Evaluation and Performance Background:**

Between October 2018 and August 2019, Deputy Superintendent Ruth Ashley and Instructional Director Robin Samana organized a Counselor Evaluation Development Committee. The committee included the following participants:

Russ Anderson, High School counselor

Ruth Perez Ashley, Deputy Superintendent

Byron Bush, Middle School Counselor

Ausra Hassan, Elementary Counselor

Tiffany Ho-Ching, Middle School Counselor

Sonia Jimenez, Elementary Counselor

Michelle Koga, Middle School Counselor

Kate Komatz, Head Counselor

Stephanie Kubicek, Counselor at the Family Resource Center

Carol Ortega, Head Counselor

Sandra Pleasance, Middle School Counselor

Luz Romero, High School Counselor

Robin Samana, Instructional Director

Michael Temple, Middle School Counselor

The Counselor Evaluation Development Committee (CEDC) met approximately five (5) times during the 2018-2019 school year to develop an Evaluation System and Counselors Handbook for all Counselors.

The School Counselor Evaluation Handbook was developed and rolled out to school administrators at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. Also, the Counselor Performance Evaluation was updated to reflect the work of the CEDC. The CEDC utilized the California Association of School Counselors (CASC) [California Standards for the School Counseling Profession](#) as the guide for the Counselor Performance Evaluation document, the Evaluation Rubric, and the Counselor Evaluation Handbook. The work of the CEDC aligned the LBUSD school counselor evaluation with the CASC and ASCA standards.

The California Standards for the School Counseling Profession is clear in their recommendations for [appropriate activities and inappropriate activities](#) for school counselors. According to the California Standards for the School Counseling Profession: The aim of the California Standards for the School Counseling Profession is three-fold: 1) to provide a common language regarding school counselor responsibilities; 2) to provide a framework of accountability and professional development for practice in school counseling; and 3) to increase public understanding of the work of professional school counselors on behalf of California students. In addition, The Standards provide a tool that:

- \* encourages reflection about counseling practices
- \* facilitates establishing professional goals to improve counseling practices
- \* helps counselor supervisors guide, monitor and assess the progress of school counselors' practice in relationship to professionally accepted expectancies.

A review of the CEDC meeting agendas, meeting notes, committee documents, and conversations with counselors who were on the CEDC committee, revealed that there was little to no discussion on the school counselors' duties and responsibilities and student to counselor ratios recommended by CASC and ASCA. Therefore, the School Counselor Performance Evaluation, Evaluation Rubrics for Counselors, and the School Counselor Evaluation Handbook were designed utilizing the [California Standards for the School Counseling Profession](#), without taking in consideration the recommended duties and ratios. The CEDC focused solely on the school counselors' evaluation process.

Furthermore, during the 2021-2022 school year, the elementary, K-8/middle school, and high school counselors' meetings were primarily focused on administrative functions and non-counseling duties.

Although some of the meetings included topics such as mental health services, SEL, etc., there was no mention of the CASC or ASCA Standards, or professional development on aligning our duties with the standards.

The TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee would like to thank the CEDC for their hard work on aligning the school counseling evaluation with the CASC and ASCA standards. However, in order for counselors to effectively adhere to CASC and ASCA standards, care must be taken to ensure that school counselors' duties and responsibilities, recommended ratios, and time appropriation are examined as well, to ensure that students are receiving the best academic program possible.

## **The School Counselor's Role**

### **ASCA School Counselor and School Counseling Programs Position Statement**

School counselors focus their skills, time and energy on direct and indirect services to students. To achieve maximum program effectiveness, ASCA recommends a student-to-school-counselor ratio of 250:1. Although ratios vary across states, school districts and even grade levels, the growing body of research as summarized by Carey and Martin (2015) supports that implementation of school counseling programs positively affects outcome data (e.g., student achievement and discipline referrals) at all grade levels.

ASCA also recommends that school counselors spend [80 percent](#) or more of their time in direct and indirect services to students. These direct and indirect activities should come from the ASCA National Model rather than inappropriate duties assigned to school counselors as listed in the ASCA National Model Executive Summary (2019b). The [20](#) percent or less of the school counselor's time should be focused on program planning and school support including:

- Reviewing school data
- Developing annual student outcome goals
- Creating classroom, group and closing the gap action plans
- Reporting results of action plans to the school community

- Discussing the priorities of the school counseling program in the annual administrative conference

Duties that fall outside of the school counselor framework as described in the ASCA National Model should be limited and performed by other school staff to support a school's smooth operation and allow school counselors to continue to focus on students' academic, career and social/emotional needs.

Fair-share responsibilities should not preclude implementing and managing a school counseling program.

ACSA's report [\*Embrace the Past, Welcome the Future: A Brief History of School Counseling\*](#), states "As the second decade of the 21st century began, an ongoing issue for school counseling was accountability. Although this has been part of professional discussion since the 1920s, and much work was done over the ensuing years, there is a renewed sense of urgency today concerning accountability. The literature makes it clear that evaluation is here to stay and needs to be designed and carried out to not only demonstrate effectiveness but also to improve the work of school counselors.

What will the next 100 years be like? No one knows for sure, but if the next 100 years are like the first 100 years, school counseling will continue to evolve. The forces that shaped school counseling so far will continue to do so, and discussion about purposes and organization will continue. So, while no one knows what the future holds, current literature suggests that at least for the near future, students and their parents in school districts across the country will continue to benefit from having fully implemented school counseling programs. Embrace the past, welcome the future."

School counselors embrace the idea of using the school counseling standards to evaluate and provide accountability. However, the current duties assigned to counselors in the Long Beach Unified School District do not align with the school counseling standards that were used to develop the performance evaluation document, evaluation rubric, and counselor evaluation handbook.

The TALB School Counselors Organizing Committee is unanimous in support of developing a district-wide Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP). This will align counseling duties and responsibilities and students to counselors' ratios with the CASC California Standards for the School Counseling Profession, which were used to create the performance evaluation document, evaluation rubric, or the counselor evaluation handbook.

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A Comprehensive School Counseling Program is a solid blueprint for ensuring that students are well prepared to meet the academic, social/emotional and career challenges presented to them. The program supports students in meeting academic standards and is integral to providing a safe and secure environment for learning, reduces dangerous and counterproductive risk-taking behaviors, and enhances student resiliency.

In a Comprehensive School Counseling Program, school counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes. The ASCA National Model Executive states, [“The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs”](#) outlines the components of a school counseling program that is integral to the school’s academic mission and is created to have a significant positive impact on student achievement, attendance and discipline.”

The ASCA National Model guides school counselors in the development of school counseling programs that:

- are based on data-informed decision making
- are delivered to all students systematically
- include a developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on the mindsets and behaviors all students need for postsecondary readiness and success
- close achievement and opportunity gaps
- result in improved student achievement, attendance and discipline

The framework of the ASCA National Model consists of four components: define, manage, deliver, and assess.

### **Define**

Three sets of school counseling standards define the school counseling profession. These standards help new and experienced school counselors develop, implement, and assess their school counseling program to improve student outcomes.

## **Manage**

To be delivered effectively, the school counseling program must be efficiently and effectively managed. The ASCA National Model provides school counselors with the following program focus and planning tools to guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results.

### **Program Focus:**

Beliefs

Vision Statement

Mission Statement

Program Planning

School Data Summary

Annual Student Outcome goals

Action Plans

Classroom and Group

Closing the Opportunity GAP

Lessons Plans

Annual Administrative Conference

Use of Time

Calendars

Annual

Weekly

### **Advisory Council**

The purpose of the advisory council is to provide feedback on program goals, make recommendations, and advocate for the school counseling program.

## Deliver

School counselors deliver developmentally appropriate activities and services directly to students or indirectly for students as a result of the school counselor's interaction with others.

These activities and services help students develop the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success and improve their achievement, attendance and discipline.

### Direct Student Services

- Instruction
- Appraisal and Advisement
- Counseling

### Indirect Services

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Referrals

Assess - To achieve the best results for students, school counselors regularly assess their program to:

- determine its effectiveness
- inform improvements to their school counseling program and delivery
- show how students are different as a result of the school counseling program

School counselors also self-assess their own mindsets and behaviors to inform their professional development and annually participate in a school counselor performance appraisal. The ASCA National Model provides the following tools to guide assessment and appraisal:

- Program Assessment
- School Counseling Program Assessment
- Annual Results Reports
- School Counselor Assessment and Appraisal
- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment
- School Counselor Performance Appraisal Template

## School Counseling Curriculum

School counselors plan, implement, and evaluate developmental school counseling curriculum that address the needs and priorities of their school.

Their work is further differentiated by attention to age-specific developmental stages of student growth, and by the needs, tasks, and student interests related to those stages.

### **SCHOOL COUNSELING MATTER**

Through a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes success and achievement for all students, school counselors can help set students on a path to postsecondary success. The foundation of students' success begins in elementary, crystalizes in middle school and culminate in high school, as students begin to enter the world of work, technical training, or postsecondary education. As a vital member of the school's support team, school counselors provide essential academic and social-emotional support to assist students in reaching their goals.

In particular, students of color and students from low-income families benefit from having more access to school counselors. For example, Black students are more likely than their White peers to identify their school counselor as the person who had the most influence on their thinking about postsecondary education.

Too often, not enough counselors or counseling support are available to students of color and students from low-income families. Students of color and students from low-income families have been overlooked and underserved for far too long. If anything, they deserve more access to school counselors than their peers — not the same, and certainly not less. And yet, according to data compiled by the Organizing Committee, some schools with the most students of color, students from low-income, and English Language Learners in the Long Beach Unified School District, have ratios 2 to 5 times the recommended students to counselor ratios. Additionally, some schools have counselors only 1, 2 and 3 days per week, making their ratios equivalent to being five times the recommended students to counselor ratio.

## **A synopsis of ACSA's report on the essential roles of elementary, middle and high school counselor:**

### **Why Elementary School Counselors?**

The elementary school years set the foundation for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners.

Elementary school counselors have an impact on these years by implementing a school counseling program and collaborating with school staff, parents and the community to create a safe and respectful learning environment.

By providing education, prevention, early identification and intervention, elementary school counselors help their students achieve academic success, develop an understanding of career opportunities and develop social/ emotional skills in response to issues they face.

### **The Essential Role of Elementary School Counselors**

The work of elementary school counselors aligns with the school's mission to support all students' academic achievement as they prepare for the ever- changing world of the 21st century. This alignment is accomplished through the design, development, and implementation of a school counseling program. The tools guiding this work are the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success, which address students' academic, career and social/emotional development, and the ASCA National Model, with its data-informed, results- based focus. Research demonstrating the effectiveness of school counseling programs continues to grow, and there is evidence of the positive impact these programs have on academic and social/ emotional development. In order to provide elementary students with the prevention, early identification and intervention support they need, student to counselor ratios must be addressed.

### **Elementary School Student to Counselor Ratios**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>School Site Level</b>	<b>Counselors FTE</b>	<b>Enrollment (as of 3/25/22)</b>	<b>Student to Counselor ratios based on FTE</b>
<b>Addams Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>805</b>
<b>Alvarado Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>605</b>
<b>Barton Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>433</b>
<b>Birney Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>496</b>

<b>Bixby Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>1297</b>
<b>Bryant Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>777</b>
<b>Burbank Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>586</b>
<b>Burcham Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>1770</b>
<b>Carver Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>2475</b>
<b>Chavez Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>315</b>
<b>Cleveland Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>1140</b>
<b>Dooley Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>523</b>
<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>Emerson Parkside Academy</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>820</b>
<b>Fremont Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>2245</b>
<b>Gant Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>1510</b>
<b>Garfield Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>575</b>
<b>Grant Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>
<b>Harte Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>798</b>
<b>Henry Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>1046</b>
<b>Holmes Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>Kettering Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>752</b>
<b>King Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>652</b>
<b>Lafayette Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>885</b>
<b>Lincoln Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>841</b>
<b>Longfellow Elementary School</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>899</b>
<b>Los Cerritos Elementary School</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>763</b>
<b>Lowell Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>1342</b>
<b>Macarthur Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>725</b>
<b>Madison Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>593</b>
<b>Mann Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Naples Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>1450</b>
<b>Nieto Herrera Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>768</b>
<b>Oropeza Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>395</b>
<b>Prisk Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>1203</b>
<b>Riley Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>858</b>
<b>Roosevelt Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>905</b>
<b>Signal Hill Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>669</b>
<b>Smith Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>723</b>
<b>Stevenson Elementary School</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>Twain Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>753</b>
<b>Webster Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>Whittier Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>631</b>
<b>Willard Elementary</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>569</b>

## **Why Middle School Counselors?**

Middle school students are characterized by rapid physical growth, curiosity about their world and an emerging self-identity. Middle school counselors have an impact on these years by implementing a school counseling program and collaborating with school staff, parents and the community to create a safe, respectful learning environment whereby young adolescents can maximize personal and academic achievement.

Middle school counselors enhance the learning process and promote academic, career and social/emotional development. School counseling programs are essential for students to achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set informed career goals and realize full academic potential to become productive, contributing members of the world community.

## **The Essential Role of Middle School Counselors**

Middle School Students' Developmental Needs:

Middle school is an exciting yet challenging time for students, their parents, and teachers. During this passage from childhood to adolescence, middle school students are characterized by a need to explore a variety of interests, connecting their learning in the classroom to its practical application in life and work; high levels of activity coupled with frequent fatigue due to rapid growth; a search for their own unique identity as they begin turning more frequently to peers rather than parents for ideas and affirmation; extreme sensitivity to the comments from others; and heavy reliance on friends to provide comfort, understanding and approval.

## **Significant Findings:**

In the recent [Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines](#) (CSTAG) training, CSTAG was defined as “an approach to violence prevention that emphasizes early attention to problems such as bullying, teasing, and other forms of student conflict before they escalate into violent behavior.” Dr. Cornell stated that special attention must be placed on the middle school age students, and mentioned various effective preventative programs, such as bully prevention, conflict resolution, life skills training, motivation interviewing, problems solving/social competencies, and many more.

This supports the LBUSD suicide prevention training’s findings that “according to the National Center for Health Statistics, in 2020 youth suicide accounted for more deaths in the United States than all natural causes combined among 10-14 year-old and 15-25 year old and is currently the second and third leading cause of death for you respectively.

There is plenty research to conclude that middle school students are the most at-risk and need the most support. However, our middle school ratios are some of the highest in the State of California. The following are the K-8 and middle school student to counselor ratios:

#### **K-8 School Students to Counselors Ratios**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>School Site Level</b>	<b>Counselors FTE</b>	<b>Enrollment (as of 3/25/22)</b>	<b>Student to Counselor ratios based on FTE</b>
<b>Robinson</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>749</b>
<b>Powell</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>849</b>
<b>Muir</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>963</b>
<b>Gompers</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>580</b>
<b>Tincher</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>729</b>
<b>Cubberley</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>938</b>
<b>Newcomb</b>	<b>K-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>784</b>

### Middle School Student to Counselor Ratios

<b>School Name</b>	<b>School Site Level</b>	<b>FTE Counselors</b>	<b>Enrollment (as of 3/25/22)</b>	<b>1.0 FTE Counselor to Student Ratio per Calculation</b>
<b>Hoover Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>567</b>
<b>Lindbergh Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>435</b>
<b>Hughes Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1318</b>	<b>659</b>
<b>Lindsey Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>713</b>
<b>Jefferson Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>990</b>
<b>Stephens Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>806</b>
<b>Bancroft Middle</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>893</b>
<b>Nelson Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>838</b>
<b>Franklin Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>1078</b>
<b>Marshall Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>617</b>
<b>Hamilton Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>838</b>
<b>Washington Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>975</b>
<b>Stanford Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1190</b>	<b>793</b>
<b>Rogers Middle School</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>777</b>
<b>Helen Keller Middle</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>431</b>

## **Why High School Counselors?**

High school years are full of growth, promise, excitement, frustration, disappointment and hope. It is the time when students begin to discover what the future holds for them. High school counselors have an impact on these years by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program and collaborating with school staff, parents and the community to create a safe and respectful learning environment. High school counselors enhance the learning process and promote academic, career, and social/emotional development. High school counseling programs are essential for students to achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set informed career goals and realize their full academic potential to become productive, contributing members of the world community.

## **The Essential Role of High School Counselors**

### **High School Student's Developmental Needs:**

High school is the final transition into adulthood, postsecondary education and the world of work as students begin separating from parents and exploring and defining their independence. Students are deciding who they are, what they do well and what they will do when they graduate. During these adolescent years, students are evaluating their strengths, skills, and abilities.

The biggest influence is their peer group. They are searching for a place to belong and rely on peer acceptance and feedback. They face increased pressures regarding risk behaviors involving sex, alcohol and drugs while exploring the boundaries of more acceptable behavior and mature, meaningful relationships. They need advisement in using technology to further their academic and career goals and also need assistance in managing and responding to the challenges of using technology safely and appropriately for personal expression.

High school students need advisement in making concrete and compounded decisions. They must navigate academic, peer and parental pressures as they face high-stakes testing, the challenges of college admissions, the scholarship and financial aid application process and entrance into a competitive job market.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES MATTER**

One of the primary challenges counselors face is defined as role ambiguity. According to the authors of *Assessing the Counseling and Non-Counseling Roles of School Counselors*, Role ambiguity has been prevalent in the school counseling literature for over 45 years (Astramovich et al., 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 1994; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Hart & Prince, 1970; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Lieberman, 2004; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). There are two prominent reasons for role ambiguity and role-related concerns. First, misunderstandings about appropriate school counseling duties exist. For example, school counselors may be assigned to non-counseling duties based on established practices, traditions, or customary roles from the past such as test coordination, scheduling, school discipline, and administrative tasks (Anderson, 2002; Baker, 2001; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Gysbers, 2001).

Second, administrators often direct school counselors to inappropriate assignments such as class schedules or registration tasks to support the efficiency of the school (Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994) or to accomplish large tasks expeditiously (Anderson & Reiter, 1995; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Consequently, school counselor self-efficacy is negatively affected by performing non-counseling duties (Jellison, 2013).

The challenge with role confusion and role ambiguity has been a continuing issue for school counselors in the LBUSD for the past 20 years. Instead of being a “professional counselor” as mentioned in the CASC and ASCA reports, the school counselors’ role and function in the LBUSD has been transformed into what some people call “Jack of all trades, master of none.” It implies that school counselors are typically good at almost everything, but an expert, or master, in none. Because school counselors are often given multiple jobs – mainly non-counseling duties – their role is often too broad and becomes less effective in supporting the needs of students.

While the “Jack of all trades, master of none” may be the sentiment of some, empirical research, the California State Legislature, state and national school counseling organizations recommend that school counselors should be in-fact, professional school counselors, and not de facto administrators and management substitutes. Developing a district-wide Comprehensive School Counseling Program will clarify the appropriate role and function of school counselors.

**Below is a list of appropriate and inappropriate school counseling activities based on the ASCA National Model for School Counseling Program.**

<b>Appropriate Activities for School Counselors</b>	<b>Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advisement and appraisal for academic planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building the master schedule</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing short-term individual and small- group counseling services to students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpreting student records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintaining student records</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• computing grade-point averages</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supervising classrooms or common areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping clerical records</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assisting with duties in the principal's office</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advocating for students at individual education plan meetings and 504 meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards, as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serving as a data entry clerk</li> </ul>

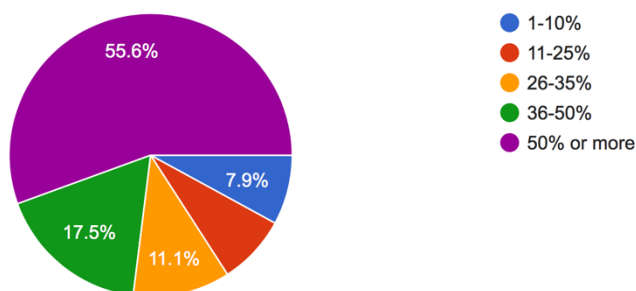
The Organizing Committee utilized the appropriate and inappropriate activities document and created a survey. The survey was sent to Long Beach Unified School District school counselors and more than 50 percent of the Long Beach Unified School District counselors completed the survey.

**The results of the survey revealed the following significant finding:**

- 84% of school counselors spend more than 25% of their time on non-counseling duties.
- 55.6 % of school counselors spend more than 50% of their time on non-counseling duties.

What percent of your time is devoted to non-counselor duties (i.e. scheduling, supervision, test coordination, non-intervention discipline)?

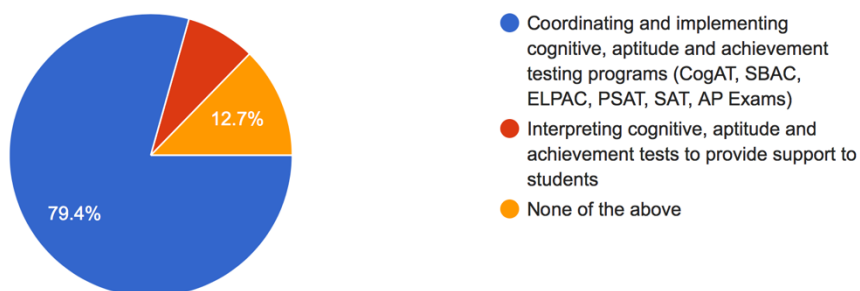
63 responses



- 79.4 % of school counselors spend their time on non-counseling administrative testing administration, instead of utilizing data to provide support services for students.

I spend most of my time:

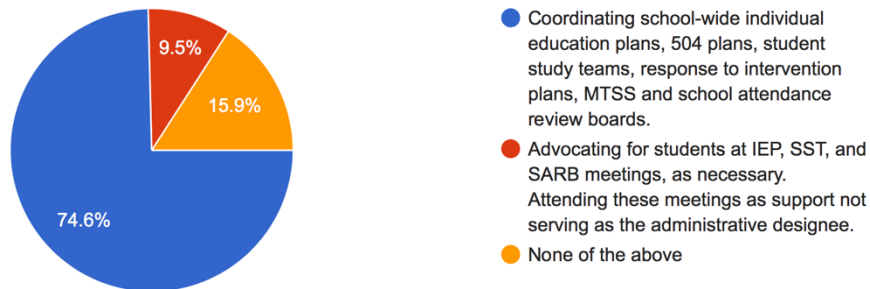
63 responses



- 74.6 % of school counselors spend their time coordinating administrative academic functions, instead of providing advocacy services and support for students at the meetings.

I spend most of my time:

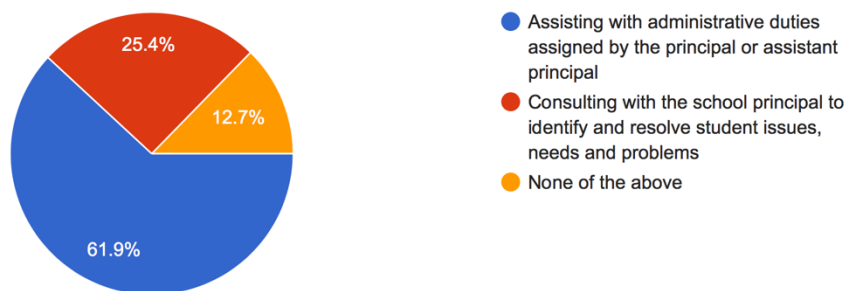
63 responses



- 61.9% of school counselors spend their time assisting with administrative duties instead of consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problem solve.

I spend most of my time:

63 responses



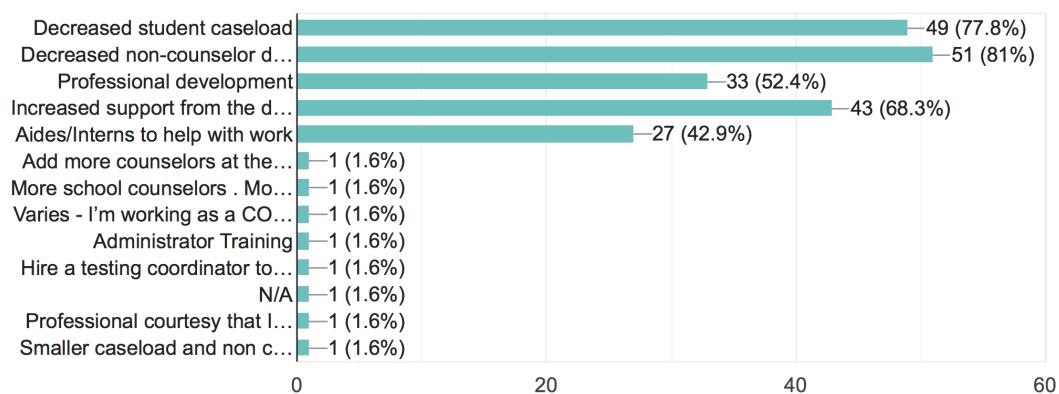
### Additional survey questions:

#### What would you need to do your job more effectively?

- **77.8% - Decreased student caseload**
- **81% - Decreased non-counselor duties**
- **52.4% - Professional development**
- **68.3% - Increased support from the district or county**
- **42.9% - Aides/interns to help with work**

What would you need to do your job more effectively? (Check all that apply)

63 responses



#### What are some of the most common non-counselor duties or tasks you have been assigned?

63.5% - Scheduling

82.5% - Supervision

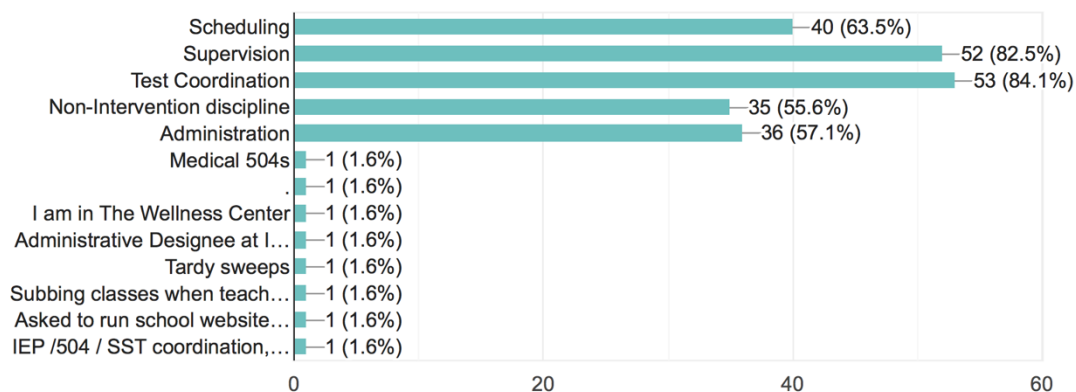
84.1% - Test Coordination

55.6% - Non-Intervention Discipline

57.1% - Administration Duties

What are some of the most common non-counselor duties or tasks you have been assigned?

63 responses



### What barriers do you encounter when serving students?

85.7% - Insufficient time to meet with students

68.3% - Insufficient time to build rapport with students

34.9% - Lack of support from administration

73% - Being assigned non-counseling duties

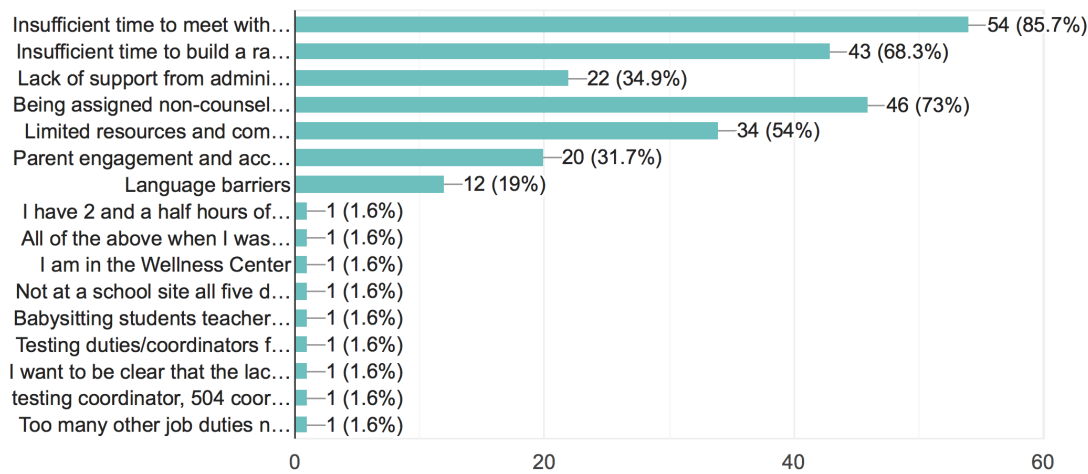
54% - Limited resources and commitment

31.7% - Parent engagement and access

19% - Language barriers

What barriers do you encounter when serving students? (Check all that apply)

63 responses



## Discipline

Of the many inappropriate duties delegated to school counselors, being assigned non-intervention discipline is the most detrimental. Elementary, K-8, and middle school counselors are often tasked with non-intervention discipline, which impedes the development of a positive relationship between counselors and students, as well as the relationship between counselors' parents/guardians.

The American School Counselor Association's [Position Statement on School Counselor and Discipline](#) states "School counselors have specialized training and skills in promoting appropriate student behavior and preventing disruptive student behavior. School counselors maintain nonthreatening relationships with students to best promote student achievement and development and serve as a resource for school personnel in developing individual and schoolwide discipline procedures. School counselors should be, by policy, designated as neutral and resourceful consultants, mediators and student advocates. It is not the school counselor's role to serve as an enforcement agent for the school but rather be a significant contributor to the development of the prevention and intervention programs through which problem behaviors are managed and positive behaviors are nurtured."

## WHY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM?

Elementary, middle, and high school counselors define and focus the school counseling program based on the school's academic, attendance, and discipline data. Identifying student needs through this data and consulting with administrators directs the program development. School counselors balance their program by addressing students' academic, career and social/emotional development in addition to balancing the delivery methods, recognizing that students learn in multiple ways.

The end result of this work is reflected in improvement in academic, attendance and discipline outcomes related to academic development, college and career readiness, and social/ emotional development.

Direct student services, including:

instruction – teaching the school counseling curriculum to students focused through the lens of selected student standards from the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success.

appraisal and advisement – assessing student abilities, interests and achievement to help them make decisions about their future.

counseling – providing professional assistance and support to a student or small group of students during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change or other situations impeding student success. School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term counseling in schools. However, school counselors are prepared to recognize and respond to student mental health needs and assist students and families seeking resources.

Indirect student services, including:

consultation – share strategies supporting student achievement with parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations

collaboration – work with other educators, parents and the community to support student achievement

referrals – support for students and families to school or community resources for additional assistance and information

## **What are the benefits of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP)?**

CSCP positively impact students, parents, boards and departments of education, teachers, site-administrators, school counselors, counselor educators/universities, post-secondary institutions, student services personnel, business and industry, and the community. The benefits to each of these groups include the following:

### **Benefits for Students**

- Prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century through academic, career, and personal/social development
- Relates educational program to future success
- Facilitates career exploration and development
- Develops decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Assists in acquiring knowledge of self and others
- Enhances personal development
- Assists in developing effective interpersonal relationship skills
- Broadens knowledge of our changing world
- Provides advocacy for students
- Encourages facilitative, cooperative peer interactions
- Fosters resiliency factors for students
- Assures equitable access to educational opportunities

### **Benefits for Parents**

- Prepares their children for the challenges of the 21st century through academic, career, and personal/social development
- Provides support for parents in advocating for their child's academic, career, and personal/social development
- Develops a system for their child's long-range planning and learning

- Increases opportunities for parent/school interaction
- Enables parents to access school and community resources

### **Benefits for The Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education, Executive Staff, and Site Administrators**

- Provides rationale for implementing a comprehensive school counseling program in the school system
- Provides assurance that a quality counseling program is available to all students
- Demonstrates the necessity of appropriate levels of funding for implementation
- Supports appropriate credentialing and staffing
- Provides a basis for determining funding allocations for school counseling programs
- Furnishes program information to the community
- Gives ongoing information about student competencies and Standards for Excellence attained through school counseling program efforts

### **Benefits for Teachers**

- Provides an interdisciplinary team effort to address students' personal/social needs and educational goals
- Provides skill development for teachers in classroom management, teaching effectiveness and affective education
- Provides consultation to assist teachers in their guidance role

### **Benefits for Administrators**

- Integrates school counseling with the academic mission of the school
- Provides a program structure with specific content
- Assists administration to use school counselors effectively to enhance learning and development for all students
- Provides a means of evaluating school counseling programs

### **Benefits for School Counselors**

- Provides a clearly defined role and function
- Eliminates non-counseling functions
- Provides direct and indirect service to all students
- Provides a tool for program management and accountability
- Enhances the role of the school counselor as a student advocate
- Ensures involvement in the academic mission of the school

### **Benefits for Counselor Educators/Universities**

- Enhances collaboration between counselor education programs and public schools
- Provides exemplary supervision sites for school counseling internships
- Increases opportunities for collaborative research on school counseling program effectiveness

### **Benefits for Post-secondary Institutions**

- Enhances articulation and transition of students to post-secondary institutions
- Prepares students for advanced educational opportunities
- Motivates students to seek a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college

### **Benefits for the Community and Business Industry**

- Creates community awareness and visibility of the student support systems required for student success
- Enhances economic development through quality preparation of students for the world of work
- Provides an increased opportunity for collaboration and participation of community members to within the program

- Provides the future workforce with decision-making skills, pre-employment skills, and career development skills
- Educates the community and business members to the needs of the school

### **Benefits for Student Services Personnel**

- Differentiate the various roles of school psychologists, social workers, mental health professionals, and other professional student services personnel, and clearly define the role of the school counselor, and highlight the areas of overlapping responsibilities
- Fosters a positive team approach, which enhances cooperative working relationships

## **RESEARCH MATTER**

The Long Beach Unified School District takes great pride in being a data-driven school district. There is an abundance of research that shows that a Comprehensive School Counseling Program is effective in improving student's academic achievement, personal/social awareness, and career development.

Two of the most compelling meta-analysis on school counseling were conducted by the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation – University of Massachusetts, Amherst (SCORE) and the School Counseling and Student Outcomes: Summary of Six Statewide studies, Carey, J. & Dimmitt, C. (2012). The following are both of these reports, along with a comprehensive list of research from the State of California Department of Education.

### **META-ANALYSIS REPORT #1**

Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation -University of Massachusetts, Amherst- Research Support for School Counseling (CSCORE):

Masters-level, credentialed school counselors work with students in academic development, social and emotional skill development, and college/career development. Their work supports student success through education in these domains, improvement of skills, reduction of stress, and improvement in mental health functioning.

## Overall Effectiveness of School Counseling

A meta-analysis of school counseling outcome research (117 studies, 153 school counseling interventions, and 16,296 students) found an overall effect size of .30. Students who participated in the interventions improved almost a third of a standard deviation more than their peers who did not receive the interventions.

In other words, school counseling interventions have a larger effect size than aspirin for preventing heart attacks (ES of .06) and an equivalent effect size to sertraline (“Zoloft”) compared to placebo, for treating major depressive disorder (ES of .31).

Whiston & Quinby (2009). Review of school counseling outcome research. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(3), 267-272. Schatzberg & Nemeroff (2009). *Textbook of Psychopharmacology*. Arlington, VA: The American Psychiatric Publisher.

A study of 22,601 students, after controlling for socioeconomic status and enrollment size, found that those attending middle schools with more fully implemented comprehensive programs reported feeling safer attending their schools, believed that their education was more relevant and important to their futures, were more satisfied with the quality of education available to them in their schools, had fewer problems related to the physical and interpersonal milieu in their schools, and earned higher grades.

Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski (2001). Helping seventh graders be safe and successful: A statewide study of the impact of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 79, 320-330.

After controlling for enrollment size and socioeconomic status, a state-wide study of Missouri high schools found that students in schools with more fully implemented school counseling programs were more likely to report that they had earned higher grades, their education was better preparing them for the future, their school made more career and college information available to them, and their school had a more positive climate (greater feelings of belonging and safety at school, classes less likely to be interrupted, peers behaving better).

Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 292-302.

## College and Career Readiness

Several studies have found that school counselors are very effective in assisting students with career development and college counseling.

Blackhurst, Auger, & Wahl (2003). Children's perceptions of vocational preparation requirements. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(2), 58-67. Art & Science Group, Inc. (2000). Student Poll 4:2, 1-10. Available at [www.artsci.com](http://www.artsci.com). Peterson, Long, & Billups (1999). The effect of three career interventions on educational choices of eighth grade students. *Professional School Counseling*, 3:1, 34-42. Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff (1998). Career-intervention outcome: A replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane (1988). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 45, 150-165. Mau, Hitchcock, & Calvert (1998). High school students' career plans: The influence of others' expectations. *Professional School Counseling*, 2:2, 161-166. Lapan, Gysbers, Hughey, & Arni (2003). Preparing rural adolescents for post-high school transitions. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81(3), 329-342.

Students who participate in career development curriculum show significantly more understanding of career possibilities, more future orientation, and greater self-efficacy and increased school engagement.

Dimmitt (2007). The Real Game evaluation results. Washington, DC: America's Career Resource Network. Available at [http://californiacareers.info/downloads/FinalReport\\_RG\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://californiacareers.info/downloads/FinalReport_RG_Evaluation.pdf); Lapan, Gysbers, Hughey, & Arni (1993). Evaluating a guidance and language arts unit for high school juniors. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 71, 444-451.

Career interventions done by school counselors with middle school students have a direct impact on students' abilities to understand their educational choices and the relationship between academic choices and careers.

Peterson, Long, & Billups (1999). The effect of three career interventions on the educational choices of eighth grade students. *Professional School Counseling*, 3(1), 34-42.

Middle school students demonstrate improved knowledge and performance in math and science courses after participating in a math and science career awareness intervention.

Fouad. (1995). Career linking: An intervention to promote math and science career awareness. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73, 527-534.

Career interventions that do not use school counselors (e.g., computerized career guidance programs) have been found to be significantly less effective than groups, workshops and classes run by counselors.

Whiston, Brecheisen, & Stephens (2003). Does treatment modality affect career counseling effectiveness? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62, 390-410.

## **Academic Achievement**

Elementary school students do better on both national tests of academic knowledge and on state tests of academic achievement when there is a comprehensive developmental school counseling program in their school (sample of 5,618 students).

Sink & Stroh (2003). Raising achievement test scores of early elementary school students through comprehensive school counseling programs. *Professional School Counseling*, 6(5), 350-364.

High school students in schools with comprehensive school counseling programs are more academically successful, as measured by GPA.

Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 292-302.

Elementary and middle school students who participate in school counseling curriculum and group interventions that focus on cognitive, social and self-management skills (Student Success Skills) have consistently shown significantly stronger math and reading scores on state tests.

Brigman & Campbell (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling*, 7, 91-98; Webb, Brigman, & Campbell (2005). Linking school counselors and student success:

A replication of the Student Success Skills approach targeting the academic and social competencies of students. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 407-413.

School counseling study skills interventions have been shown to improve middle school students' grades and to improve 4th graders' academic achievement as measured by CTBS.

St. Clair (1989). Middle school counseling research: A resource for school counselors. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 23, 219-226; Whiston & Sexton (1998). A review of school counseling outcome research: Implications for practice. *Journal of Counseling and Development* 76, 412-426.

Group counseling interventions for students at risk of failing have been found to effectively support improvement in student achievement.

Hoag & Burlingame (1997). Evaluating the effectiveness of child and adolescent group treatment: A meta- analytic review. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 26(3), 234-246.

Classroom and counseling interventions about stress reduction techniques can reduce test anxiety and improve student self-concept, sense of locus of control, appropriate coping strategies, and test scores.

Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, & Coy (2002). An intervention for helping elementary students reduce test anxiety. *Professional School Counseling* 6(2), 162-164; Eder & Whiston (2006). Does psychotherapy help some students? An overview of psychotherapy outcome research. *Professional School Counseling*, 9(5), 337-343.

Group counseling by school counselors has positive effects on academic achievement with underachieving elementary and middle school students.

Campbell & Brigman (2005). Closing the achievement gap: A structured approach to group counseling. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 30, 67-82.; Wilson (1986). Effects of a classroom guidance unit on sixth graders' examination performance. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, 25(2), 70-79.

## **Dropout Prevention**

A dropout prevention program for middle school students that combined academic tutoring and group counseling resulted in improvements in students' academic achievement, behavior, and self-esteem.

Edmondson & White (1998). A tutorial and counseling program: Helping students at-risk of dropping out of school. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(4), 43-51.

The School Dropout Assistance Program (1991-1996) found that counseling services were one of the key elements of effective dropout prevention initiatives.

Kaufman, Klein, & Frase (1999). Dropout Rates in the United States, 1997. Statistical Analysis Report. U.S. Department of Education.

## **Promoting Positive Behaviors**

A widely used school counseling comprehensive curriculum about positive social skills (Second Step) has been found to diminish physically aggressive behavior and to increase neutral/ prosocial behavior.

Grossman et al. (1997). Effectiveness of a violence prevention curriculum among children in elementary school. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 227(20), 1605-1611.

School Counseling decreases classroom disturbances by supporting teachers in the classroom and enabling teachers to provide quality instruction. Students in schools that provide counseling services indicated that their classes were less likely to be interrupted by other students and that their peers behaved better in school.

Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 292-302.

School counseling classroom curriculum designed to educate HS students about goal-setting, problem-solving, career exploration, and school resources has been found to significantly improve student behavior, attitude and knowledge in these areas.

Schlossberg, Morris, & Lieberman (2001). The effects of a counselor-led guidance intervention on students' behaviors and attitudes. *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 156-164.

School-based programs designed to decrease aggressive behavior show considerable success in impacting behaviors, related feelings of safety, and disciplinary events.

Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon (2003). The effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behavior: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 136-149.

A comprehensive drop-out prevention program involving counseling and tutoring significantly helped at-risk students in improving school achievement, self-esteem, and classroom behavior.

Edmondson & White (1998). A tutorial and counseling program: Helping students at-risk of dropping out of school. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(4), 43-51.

Group counseling has been found to be effective for social skills training at the elementary level and for relaxation training at the high school level.

Borders & Drury (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policymakers and practitioners. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 70, 487-498; Whiston & Sexton (1998). A review of school counseling outcome research: Implications for practice. *Journal of Counseling and Development* 76, 412-426.

### **Improving Mental Health Functioning**

School-based psychotherapy has consistent significant beneficial effects on student well-being.

Prout & Demartino (1986). A meta-analysis of school-based studies of psychotherapy. *Journal of School Psychology*, 24, 285-292. Prout & Prout (1998). A meta-analysis of school-based studies of counseling and psychotherapy: An update. *Journal of School Psychology*, 36, 121-136.

A meta-analysis of school counseling responsive services, which includes individual counseling, group counseling, referral, consultation, and peer assistance programs, found an overall effect size of .35, or more than one third of a standard deviation of improvement compared to control groups.

Whiston & Quinby (2009). Review of school counseling outcome research. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(3), 267-272.

### **Emerging Best Practices in School Counseling**

As our culture and educational institutions change, school counseling practices are emerging to better meet the needs of today's students. School counselors are accomplishing this by, among other activities, the following:

- Preparing and delivering classroom guidance lessons which impact all students in a preventative and proactive manner

- Studying data to determine which students are not being adequately serviced

- Using data to improve program delivery and implementation

- Ensuring that all students are college-ready, whether or not they choose to enter a post-secondary education immediately after high school

Providing the necessary college and career education so that all students can make informed choices

Creating job readiness programs that include job shadowing, internships, and career education curriculum.

## **META ANALYSIS REPORT #2**

What's Effective According to the Research

Comprehensive Counseling Models

The two research studies summarized below provide a snapshot of the most current research around the effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling models.

Study 1.

Carey and Dimmitt (2012) completed a meta-analysis of six statewide research studies on the effectiveness of comprehensive counseling models using a variety of designs, instrumentation, and measures.<sup>5</sup> The research studies from Utah, Nebraska, Missouri, Connecticut, Wisconsin and Rhode Island shed light on important questions related to effective practice in the field of school counseling. They provide valuable evidence of the relationship between positive student educational outcomes and school counseling program organization, student-to-school- counselor ratios, counselor time use, and specific school counseling activities.

Table 1 summarizes the implications of these six statewide studies for practice at the counselor, school, district, state, and national policy levels. This table also includes implications for school counselor education.

For school counselor practice on a day-to-day level, these studies have unambiguous findings about how counselors should spend their energy and time to, 1) make sure that a coordinated program is in place, and to 2) provide important direct services to students and their families through career education, college and career counseling services, academic supports, parent communication, and the use of data to plan and improve services.

At the school and district level, these studies found that it matters which services school counselors are providing for students, and also how many counselors are providing those services.

All six studies showed clear and consistent evidence that a coordinated, comprehensive guidance program such as the ASCA National Model is correlated with several crucial positive student outcomes. These studies also consistently found significant correlations between student-to-school-counselor ratios and student outcomes.

Overall, the research provides a clear imperative for all students to receive state-of-the-art, 21st-century college and career counseling services from qualified, professional school counselors.

## Study 2.

A study conducted by Wilkerson, Pérusse and Hughes in 2013, compared the school-wide Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) results in Indiana schools earning the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation (n = 75) with a sample of control schools stratified by level and locale (n = 226).<sup>6</sup> Indiana K-12 schools earning the RAMP designation in 2007, 2008, and 2009 comprise the experimental group.

The findings indicate that school-wide proficiency rates in English/Language Arts and Mathematics are significantly higher in RAMP designated elementary schools compared to elementary school controls. Four-year longitudinal results indicate a significant positive difference between RAMP-designated elementary schools and comparison schools in Mathematics proficiency.

Though the findings are limited, they provide significant evidence of the impact of comprehensive, data-driven, accountable school counseling programs at the elementary level and suggest further research is needed at the middle and secondary levels.

## **STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REPORT**

On September 11, 2017, the State of California Department of Education, released the following research report:

Research on School Counseling Effectiveness Provides a collection of sources that address the effectiveness of school counseling and other student support services, including their contribution to the personal and academic success of students.

Quantitative analyses of research (meta-analyses) also substantiate the beneficial effects of school counseling programs.

Baker, S.B., Swisher, J.D., Nadenichek, P.E. & Popowicz, C.L. (1984). Measured effects of primary prevention strategies. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 62, 459-464.

Prout, H.T. & Demartino, R.A. (1986). A meta-analysis of school-based studies of psychotherapy. *Journal of School Psychology*, 24, 285-292.

Sprinthall, N.A. (1981). A new model for research in the science of guidance and counseling. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 59, 487-493.

Reviews of literature and research on school counseling that the services of school counselors have a positive effect on children. Borders, L.D., & Drury, S.M. (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policymakers and practitioners. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 70, 487-498.

Gerler, E.R. (1985). Elementary school counseling research and the classroom learning environment. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 20, 39-48.

St. Clair, K.L. (1989). Middle school counseling research: A resource for school counselors. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 23, 219-226.

Whitson, S.C., & Sexton, T.L. (1998). A review of school counseling outcome research: implications for practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 76, 412-426.

Two studies find that elementary guidance activities have a positive influence on elementary students' academic achievement.

Hadley, H.R. (1988). Improving reading scores through a self-esteem prevention program. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 22, 248-252.

Lee, R.S. (1993). Effects of classroom guidance on student achievement. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 27, 163-171.

School counseling programs have significant influence on discipline problems. Baker and Gerler reported that students who participated in a school counseling program had significantly less inappropriate behaviors and more positive attitudes toward school than those students who did not participate in the program. Another study reported that group counseling provided by school counselors significantly decreased participants' aggressive and hostile behaviors.

Baker, S. B., & Gerler, E. R. (2001). Counseling in schools. In D. C. Locke, J. E. Myers, and E. L. Herr (Eds.), *The Handbook of Counseling*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Omizo, M.M., Hershberger, J.M., & Omizo, S.A. (1988). Teaching children to cope with anger. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 22, 241-245.

Research indicates that school counselors are effective in teaching social skills.

Verduyn, C.M., Lord, W., & Forrest, G.C. (1990). Social skills training in schools: An evaluation study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 13, 3-16.

School counselors are very effective in assisting middle school children in the area of career development.

Whiston, S. C., Sexton, T. L., & Lasoff, D. L. (1998). Career-intervention outcome: A replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane (1988). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 45, 150-165.

Children who are experiencing family problems report being helped by school counselors.

Omizo, M.M. & Omizo, S.A. (1988). The effects of participation in group counseling sessions on self-esteem and locus of control among adolescents from divorced families. *The School Counselor*, 36, 54-60.

Rose, C.C. & Rose, S.D. (1992). Family change groups for the early age child. *Special Services in the Schools*, 6, 113-127.

School counseling programs designed to teach students peer mediation skills are highly effective. In fact, studies show that students trained in peer mediation use these skills in other settings (e.g., at home).

Diver-Stamnes, A.C. (1991). Assessing the effectiveness of an inner-city high school peer counseling program. *Urban Education*, 26, 269-284.

Robinson, S.E., Morrow, S., Kigin, T. & Lindeman, M. (1991). Peer counselors in a high school setting: Evaluation of training and impact on students. *The School Counselor*, 39, 35-40.

Health and mental health care services can play an important role in violence prevention at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), including preventing problem behaviors from developing; identifying and serving specific, at-risk

populations; and reducing the deleterious effects of violence on victims and witnesses.

Youth and Violence. Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence, December 2000.

School counselors were effective in reducing victimization by assisting victimized children, reducing bullying behaviors, and modifying the school climate and structure.

Hanish, L.D. & Guerra, N.G. (2000). Children who get victimized at school: What is known? What can be done? *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 113-119.

Counselors are effective in assisting high school students with college choices.

Student Poll. (2000). *Art & Science Group, Inc.*, 4:2, 1-10.

A study shows that school counselor effectiveness was influenced by school climate. In schools with effective counseling programs, principals generally provided enthusiastic support for the programs and encouragement to the counselors. Another common element was a clear understanding between counselors and administrators as to the goals of the school counseling programs. These conditions were generally not present in ineffective programs.

Sutton, J.M. & Fall, M. (1995). The relationship of school climate factors to counselor self-efficacy. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73, 331-336.

Research shows that school counseling interventions have a substantial impact on students' educational and personal development. Individual and small-group counseling, classroom guidance, and consultation activities seem to contribute directly to students' success in the classroom and beyond.

School counselors should spend the majority of their time performing these interventions. Coordination activities should be confined to those that improve the program's efficiency and accountability.

Borders, L.D. & Drury, S.M. (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policymakers and practitioners. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70, 487-498.

Studies show effective counseling programs are based on human development theories. Program content, goals, and interventions should reflect this theoretical foundation. A developmental program is proactive and preventive, helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, self-awareness, and attitudes necessary for successful mastery of normal developmental tasks. Developmentally based programs increase the visibility of the counseling program and ensure that more students are served (Myrick; Shaw & Goodyear). There is also substantial empirical evidence that these programs promote student development and academic success.

Myrick, R.D. (1987). *Developmental guidance and counseling: A practical approach*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

Shaw, M.C. & Goodyear, R.K. (1984). Prologue to primary prevention in schools. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 62, 446-447.

Borders, L.D. & Drury, S.M. (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policymakers and practitioners. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70, 487-498.

A study of Missouri high schools shows that schools with more fully implemented model guidance programs had students who were more likely to report that (a) they had earned higher grades, (b) their education was better preparing them for the future, (c) their school made more career and college information available to them, and (d) their school had a more positive climate (greater feelings of belonging and safety at school, classes less likely to be interrupted, peers behaving better). After removing the variables of school enrollment size, socioeconomic status, and percentage of minority students in attendance, positive program effects were identifiable. Results highlight the important roles school counselors play in promoting the central educational goals of their schools and support a comprehensive guidance program focus for university counseling faculty who train school counselors.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 292-302.

School counselors have proven effective in preventing students from committing suicide. The most effective prevention programs start with younger students and portray suicide as a mental health problem, not a dramatic way of ending a life.

It is essential that counselors involve the parents of troubled students in the counseling process.

Jones, R. (2001). Suicide Watch: What can you do to stop children from killing themselves? *American School Board Journal*, May 16-21.

In studies on the effects of a small group counseling approach for failing elementary school students, 83 percent of participating students showed improvement in grades.

Boutwell, D.A., & Myrick, R.D. (1992). The go for it club. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 27, 65- 72.

A study on the effects of counseling on classroom performance found that the underachieving students who received counseling improved significantly on the Self-Rating Scale of Classroom Behavior and in mathematics and language arts grades.

Gerler, E. R., Kinney, J., & Anderson, R. F. (1985). The effects of counseling on classroom performance. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, 23, 155-165.

The School Dropout Assistance Program (1991-1996) funded a number of projects to test and evaluate the effect of promising strategies for dropout prevention and re-entry. The results found that counseling services were one of the key elements of promising dropout prevention initiatives.

Kaufman, P., Klein, S., & Frase, M. (1999). Dropout Rates in the United States, 1997. Statistical Analysis Report. U.S. Department of Education.

Studies on high school attrition indicate that preventive counseling, occurring before students are in crisis, reduces the risk of these students dropping out later.

Bearden, L.J., Spencer, W.A., & Moracco, J.C. (1989). A study of high school dropouts. *The School Counselor*, 27, 113-120.

Morey, R.E., Miller, C.D., Fulton, R., & Rosen, L.A. (1993). High school peer counseling: The relationship between student satisfaction and peer counselors' style of helping, *The School Counselor*, 40, 293-300. Praport, H. (1993). Reducing high school attrition: Group counseling can help. *School Counselor*, 40(4), 309-311.

Wirth-Bond, S., Coyne, A., & Adams, M. (1991). A school counseling program that reduces dropout rates. *The School Counselor*, 39, 131-137.

Counseling decreases classroom disturbances. Counseling services support teachers in the classroom and enable teachers to provide quality instruction designed to assist students in achieving high standards. Students in schools that provide counseling services indicated that their classes were less likely to be interrupted by other students and that their peers behaved better in school.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 292-302.

Students who have access to counseling programs reported being more positive and having greater feelings of belonging and safety in their schools.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 292-302.

One study found that high school counselors influenced their students' future plans by encouraging them to have high expectations. A high proportion of 10th and 12th grade students who were surveyed perceived that their counselor expected them to attend college, regardless of their racial background. High school students' own educational expectations for themselves increased over time.

Mau, W.C., Hitchcock, R., & Calvert, C. (1998). High school students' career plans: The influence of others' expectations. *Professional School Counseling*, 2:2, 161-166.

Students trained by counselors to be peer facilitators are effective in helping sixth grade problem-behavior students adjust to middle school.

In one study, counselors worked with eighth grade peer facilitators once a week for six weeks, focusing on how to (a) establish a helping relationship, (b) use high facilitative responses, (c) lead a small group discussion, and (d) use a four-step problem-solving model. The facilitators demonstrated that they could help students who are having problems adjusting to school, especially in terms of their school attendance, school grades, and attitude towards school. Discipline referrals were also reduced.

Tobias, A.K. & Myrick, R.D. (1999). A peer facilitator-led intervention with middle school problem-behavior students. *Professional School Counseling*, 3:1, 27-33.

Myrick, R.D. & Sorensen, D.L. (1992). *Helping skills for middle school students*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

Counselor-led career interventions influenced the educational choices of eighth grade students as they prepared for high school.

Peterson, G.W., Long, K.L., & Billups, A. (1999). The effect of three career interventions on educational choices of eighth grade students. *Professional School Counseling*, 3:1, 34-42.

Counselor-led, developmental guidance units presented in ninth grade classrooms have the potential to improve students' expressed behavior and general school attitudes, while addressing their developmental needs. The effectiveness of this intervention was consistent across the different levels of student achievement and attitudes about school. A proactive approach to program development, such as inviting input from teachers, students, counselors, and administrators through periodic needs assessments, may maximize existing resources and services offered to non-college and college-bound students. The literature suggests that such guidance programming, based on the developmental, preventive guidance model, may help to overcome the fragmented, impersonal, and confusing manner in which services are often delivered to high school students and teachers.

Schlossberg, S.M., Morris, J.D., & Lieberman, M.G. (2001). The effects of a counselor- led guidance intervention on students' behaviors and attitudes. *Professional School Counseling*, 4:3, 156-164. Bearden, L.J., Spencer, W.A., & Moracco, L.C. (1989). A study of high school dropouts. *The School Counselor*, 37, 113-120.

Morey, R.E., Miller, C.D., Rosen, L.A., & Fulton, R. (1993). High school peer counseling: The relationship between student satisfaction and peer counselors' style of helping. *The School Counselor*, 40, 293-300. Praport, H. (1993). Reducing high school attrition: Group counseling can help. *The School Counselor*, 40, 309-311.

Wirth-Bond, S., Coyne, A., & Adams, M. (1991). A school counseling program that reduces dropout rate. *The School Counselor*, 39, 131-137.

Implementing comprehensive school counseling programs is consistently associated with important indicators of student safety and success. A study found that school counselors who were more fully engaged in providing students with a unique network of emotional and instructional support services were more likely to exert a positive impact than counselors who did not implement such activities. After researchers controlled for differences between schools due to socioeconomic status and enrollment size, students attending middle schools with more fully implemented comprehensive programs reported (a) feeling safer attending their schools, (b) having better relationships with their teachers, (c) believing that their education was more relevant and important to their futures, (d) being more satisfied with the quality of education available to them in their schools, (e) having fewer problems related to the physical and interpersonal milieu in their schools, and (f) earning higher grades.

Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., & Petroski, G.F. (2001). Helping seventh graders be safe and successful: A statewide study of the impact of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 79, 320-330.

A study done in Gwinnett County, Georgia shows that school counselors impact students' academic performance and can increase the on-task, productive behavior of students and reduce disruptive behaviors. The Behavior Rating Checklist indicated statistically significant decreases in disruptive behaviors and significant increases in productive, on-task behaviors for both the third grade and the fifth-grade students tested. Language arts progress was statistically significant for both grade levels as well.

Mullis, F. & Otwell, P. (1997). Counselor accountability: A study of counselor effects on academic achievement and student behaviors. *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal*, 1:4, 4-12.

Watts, V. & Thomas, B. (1997). Proving that counseling programs do count: The counseling accountability. *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal*, 1:4

### **Conclusion:**

Sometimes the best blueprint for a path toward the future can be designed by utilizing blueprints from the past. During the 90s, the Long Beach Unified School District was challenged by critical issues and crises such as overrepresentation of Black males in Special Education, achievement gap between White students and students of color, high drop-out rate, youth incarceration, unprecedented gang violence, and severe violence on school campuses.

There were three distinct themes that were consistently used district-wide and in the community to address how these challenges would be met:

**It Takes a Village to Raise A Child:** This African Proverb was used to mobilize and challenge the community to build the community assets needed to meet the major challenges that were confronting our parents, students, schools, and community. It was a call to cultivate a community building initiative.

**Crisis equals Opportunity:** In 1959, John F. Kennedy stated, “The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word for ‘crisis.’ One brush stroke stands for danger: the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger—but recognize the opportunity.” As there were many challenges – and crises - facing the entire Long Beach community during this period in our district’s history, we were reminded to both understand the crises of the moment, but to also find the opportunities moving forward.

**Carpe diem:** The Latin phrase was used to usher in an urgency for all stakeholders to take the energy and support derived both “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child” and “Crisis equals Opportunity” to “seize the day!”

The district responded with bold initiatives such as:

- Becoming the first district in the country to mandate uniforms
- Elementary School Reforms: Ready or not
- Middle School Reform: Caught in the Middle
- High School Reform: Second to None
- 9th grade academy
- Gang Alternative & Prevention Program (G.A.P.P.) with the Los Angeles County Probation Department
- Village 2000 Project

Schools responded by implementing cutting edge evidence-based approaches, such as:

- Adopting cutting-edge school reform models, such as Dr. James Comer’s Comer School Development Programs
- Adopting the national renowned Henry Levin’s Accelerated School Model
- HIPPY Program (Home Instructional for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters)
- S.A.L.T. Program
- Rites of Passage Programs
- Second Step Program (Committee for Children)

All the reforms and structures that were implemented during this crucial period in Long Beach Schools, were instituted with counselors playing a pivotal role in providing direct and indirect counseling and guidance services to students, and support services to, parents, and teachers. School counselors responded to these challenges by implementing effective research-based programs such as Second Step and Think First, Young Black Scholars, to name a few, and coordinated support programs such as the Village 2000 Mentor Program, the Personal Pal Mentoring Program to name a few.

The Long Beach Unified School District prides itself on being bold, and cutting-edge, data-driven, and has received local, state, national and international acclaim. Like many school districts in California, the district has made great progress in focusing on higher academic standards, greater accountability, and improved teacher preparation and support. However, the missing link in the overall improvements and reforms for the past 20 years, has been school counseling reform. The aforementioned academic initiatives and reforms have resulted in school counselors being overburden with additional administrative functions - to assist with the implementation of the initiatives - that they no longer have the time to carry out their school counseling duties. The district is urged to take the bold initiative and explore the process of developing a district-wide Comprehensive School Counseling Program.

In order to develop a Comprehensive School Counseling Program, duties that are assigned to counselors and student to counselor ratios must be aligned with the Standards for the School Counseling Profession.

Currently, our students, families, and schools are experiencing some immense challenges. As our past has taught us that sometimes the best blueprint for a path toward the future can be designed by utilizing blueprints from the past.

**It Takes A Village:** As all the stakeholders work together to provide our student with the appropriate SEL necessary for them to achieve their academic and career aspirations, school counselors take great pride in being the first responders in supporting our students and families.

**Crisis Equals Opportunity:** The COVID crisis has decimated communities throughout the country. Schools are struggling with implementing supports to meet the needs of the students, families, and teachers.

However, there are opportunities that we can take from the experiences we've had in dealing with the multitude of challenges that resulted from COVID. One opportunity is for the Long Beach Unified School District to examine the practice of counselors being utilized to perform administrative functions, instead of being professional school counselors, and utilizing data to provide evidence-based programs and supports to students and families.

**Carpe diem:** Now is the time to include school counseling as a priority in addressing the needs of our students, by making the bold move and approving the Organizing Committee's recommendation that the Long Beach Unified School District implements a Comprehensive School Counseling Program. The research presented in this report is clear that there are great benefits to implementing this approach.

Again, our report has demonstrated the substantial research to support the implementation of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program. Furthermore, there is no research to suggest that assigning counselors to non-counseling and administrative duties improves students' academic, personal/social and career development, school climate, or resiliency development.

You will not find a more dedicated group of employees in the Long Beach Unified School District than school counselors. This was demonstrated during the world-wide COVID pandemic. School counselors immediately stepped up and mobilized. We delivered materials, books, Chromebooks, supplies, school work, and hotspots, to our families.

In addition, we resourced local food banks and delivered food clothing, and made community referrals to our most vulnerable families. Many extended themselves to families after work hours, on the weekends, and during the summer.

School counselors are pleased with the additional 12 social workers who were hired for the 2022-2023 school year. The work they will provide students and families in the Wellness Centers is a much needed resource. However, this does not diminish the enormous challenges school counselors are going to face as we are tasked with providing support for all students. Although, there are minor overlap in the duties of social workers and counselors as it relates to social/emotional support, counselors are primarily educators and have school wide responsibilities regarding academic and career development.

School counselors are asking to finally be recognized and appreciated as professional counselors, and not continue to be the “Jack of all trades, master of none.” The data supports it, the research is definitive, and our students need it!

We know that this won’t be easy and will take a lot of hard work. However, comprehensive change and reform are usually difficult and painstaking, but are often necessary. This is one of those rare times, but our district has always been able to meet the challenges of the time. We also know that it won’t be free and will include some budgetary considerations. However, empirical data suggests that our kids have been severely damaged by this once in a generation pandemic, at-risk indicators of our students and families are at an all-time high, and research shows that a Comprehensive School Counseling Program is effective in assisting students in their Academic, Personal/Social and Career Development, and increase their resilience.

With this indisputable compilation of research, the question at hand is not “how can we afford to do this? The most obvious question is how can we afford to not do this?”