Building a System for Postsecondary Success: The Pivotal Role of School Counselors

August 20, 2019
What Is the CCRS Center?

Who?
State education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs)

What?
Build SEA and LEA capacity to implement college- and career-readiness policies

How?
Provide technical assistance, including targeted and intensive support

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Presenters

- **Helen Duffy**, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research
- **Molly Strear**, Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling, San Francisco State University
- **Cynthia Floyd**, Consultant for School Counseling, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- **Eva Pugh**, School Counselor Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education
- **Courtney Cabrera**, Educator Effectiveness Supervisor, Colorado Department of Education
- **Loretta Whitson**, Executive Director, California Association of School Counselors (CASC)
Poll Question

What is your role?

- SEA staff
- District level administrator
- School-level administrator
- School counselor
- Other
Setting the Context

Helen Duffy, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research
Molly Strear, Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling, San Francisco State University
Introduction

This webinar will…

▪ Describe the integral role school counselors can play in large-scale postsecondary and career-readiness initiatives;
▪ Summarize school counselor evaluation requirements in all 50 states and the District of Columbia;
▪ Provide examples of state-level school counselor evaluation practices and policies; and
▪ Offer recommendations for state and local education agencies to develop policies that support school counseling best practice.
Why Focus on Evaluation Practices of School Counselors?

- Growing calls for personalized learning
- Expanding practices that build student awareness of and preparation for a wide range of postsecondary options
- Increasing attention on social-emotional learning

- Evaluation policies and practices help shape, define, and reflect professional expectations.
School Counselors

- Address students’ academic, postsecondary, career, social-emotional, and school safety goals;
- Offer expertise, leadership, and advocacy required to help realize states’ individualized learning goals; and
- Provide services at individual, small-group, and systemic levels through a multitiered system of support.
Postsecondary & Career Readiness

- Students who engage in individual student planning with school counselors are more likely to plan for college and have higher rates of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion and college attendance—critical gateways to postsecondary access, especially for disadvantaged populations of students (Dunlop Velez, 2016; Radford, Ifill, & Lew, 2016).
School Counselor Evaluation

- Despite the field’s assertion that annual performance evaluation is key to professional identity and accountability (ASCA, 2015), if annual evaluations are required at all, school counselors are often assessed using
  - teacher evaluation tools;
  - school leader evaluation tools; or
  - generic processes for pupil services.
School Counselor Evaluation

- Potential to help school administrators understand the roles and responsibilities of school counselors by defining the unique ways school counselors contribute to students’ postsecondary readiness.

- Well-defined expectations and outcomes for school counselors may leverage school counselors’ role to better support effective implementation of personalized learning plans.
Conducted a scan of publicly available resources and information on SEA and school counselor association websites.

Using Google, we entered the search terms “school counselor evaluation,” “school counselor resources,” “school counselor program,” and “school counselor guidance” for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The search term “evaluation” was used within any publicly available school counselor specific documents, such as school counselor program guides, models, and/or frameworks if applicable to that state.
School Counselor Evaluation Practices and Guidance by State

Levels of School Counselor Evaluation Guidance

- **Requires school counselors to be evaluated on performance using its SEA-developed or -recognized process or tool for school counselor-specific evaluation.**
- **Provides school counselor-specific evaluation guidance and/or tools; however, LEAs are not required to follow state guidance.**
- **Provides evaluation guidance and/or tools that are not specific to school counselors, such as teacher or “specialized school personnel” evaluation guidance and/or resources.**
- **Provides no state-specific tools or guidance but does provide links to ASCA resources.**
- **No publicly available information on school counselor evaluations using the search guidelines.**

* Four of these seven states allow LEAs to develop an alternative evaluation method, though this method must be approved by the SEA. Also, Iowa and Minnesota require the evaluation of school counselors using standards not specific to school counselors should the LEA not develop its own school counselor-specific evaluation tool, and Vermont only requires school counselors applying for licensure to be evaluated using its School Counselor Summative Performance Report; for these reasons, these three states were excluded from this category.
Exemplar School Counselor Evaluation Practices

- Colorado
- North Carolina
- Indiana
Exemplar School Counselor Evaluation Practices

- **Colorado**
  - Mandated annual evaluation of school counselors using a state-approved process/tool
  - School Counselor Corps Grant Program
  - Mandated Individual Career and Academic Planning process
Exemplar School Counselor Evaluation Practices

- **North Carolina**
  - Mandated annual evaluation of school counselors using the state-developed evaluation tool
  - Mandated that school counselors spend at least 80% of their time providing direct services to students and prohibited school counselors from coordinating standardized testing
  - Self-paced training modules for school counselors and administrators for effective integration of evaluation materials
  - Formation of a State School Counselor Leadership Team focused on school counselor and administrator skills in supporting student career and college readiness
Exemplar School Counselor Evaluation Practices

Indiana

- Mandated annual evaluation of school counselors using a state-approved process/tool
- $49 million in grant funding provided by the Lilly Endowment Inc. to support a comprehensive school counseling initiative in Indiana
- A record number (82) of Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designations within Indiana in 2017–18
- Formation of a Counselor Evaluation Leadership Team, which developed the state evaluation tool to intentionally promote partnerships between school counselors and administrators
- Relevant state-level research conducted on school counseling practices and outcomes conducted by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation
Questions

Please submit any question you may have in the “Questions” box.
Educator Talent
And
Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Courtney Cabrera, Educator Effectiveness Supervisor
Eva Pugh, School Counselor Coordinator
• A system to evaluate the effectiveness of licensed personnel and continually improve the quality of education and student outcomes.

• Provide meaningful feedback for professional growth and continuous improvement.

• Provide a basis for making decisions in the areas of hiring, compensation, promotion, assignment, professional development, earning and retaining non-probationary status, dismissal, and nonrenewal of contract.
Colorado’s Evaluation Legislation Overview

• Requires statewide minimum standards for what it means to be an effective Special Services Provider

• Requires annual evaluation of all Special Services Providers

• Requires that all Special Services Providers be evaluated at least 50% on the outcomes of the students they support
  • At least 50% of the evaluation shall be based on at least two measures of student outcomes, which measures shall be aligned with the role and duties and the individual SSP being evaluated.
  • Data used in evaluating SSPs shall be collected from the sites, or a representative sample of the sites, at which the SSP provides services.
Colorado Department of Education
Framework for System to Evaluate Special Services Providers

Definition of Special Services Provider Effectiveness

Quality Standards

I. Professional Expertise
II. Learning Environment
III. High-Quality Delivery
IV. Professionalism

50% Professional Practice Standards
- Observations of Professional Practice
- Expert Input
- Other Measures Aligned With CDE Guidance

Weighting: How Much Does Each Standard Count Toward Overall Performance?

Match of Measures of Student Outcomes to Assigned Duties

State Scoring Framework: How Do Measures of Quality Standards Result in a Determination of Individual Performance?

Effectiveness Ratings
- Ineffective
- Partially Effective
- Effective
- Highly Effective

Appeals Process*
Applies when professionals are not at-will employees

50% Measures
The following revision process was used to update all nine Special Services Providers State Model Evaluation System Rubrics.

- A Steering Committee was assembled during the fall of 2018 to create a common set of Standards and Elements aligned to the educator.
- Once a common set of Standards and Elements were created, Workgroups realigned or created professional practices under those Standards and Elements.
- The 2018–19 school year was a period of feedback statewide, including 11 focus groups, which were conducted around the state and virtually as well as an online feedback form.
- State Board of Education voted to approve the Standards and Elements in April 2019.
- Statewide implementation of the revised SSP rubrics will take place in the 2019–20 school year.
So What Changed?

• A goal of revising the State Model Evaluation System SSP rubrics was to align the standards and elements to the revised teacher rubric while maintaining each rubric’s conceptual integrity.

• The Workgroups, also determined to reduce redundancies of similar practices, focused on the high-leverage practices identified in quantitative and qualitative data from the initial SSP rubric pilot and incorporated feedback from educators.

• In addition, the groups centered on clarifying language, focusing on ensuring the measurability of professional practices when possible.
So What Changed?

• The *revised* SSP rubrics have undergone significant reductions in Standards, Elements, and Professional Practices. The chart below highlights the reductions at all levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Former SSP Rubrics</th>
<th>Revised SSP Rubrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Standards</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Elements</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Professional Practices</strong></td>
<td>135–177*</td>
<td>99–146*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Each of the nine SSP groups have a unique set of professional practices. These numbers reflect the variation between rubrics.*
The School Counselor Corps Grant Program is a State-funded, competitive grant.

• The grant cycle is 4 years.

• Year 1 is a development year, designed to collect and analyze district/school and community data.
  • This information is evaluated to determine actual need and design and develop an implementation plan to create and sustain systemic change.

• Years 2–4 of the SCCGP are for implementation.
  • SMART Goals and action plans established in the development year are implemented in the following 3 years.
  • Annual reporting is required as part of the conditions of SCCGP.
Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Goals

• Decrease student/counselor ratio.
• Increase graduation rate.
• Decrease dropout rate.
• Decrease remediation rate.
• Increase postsecondary matriculation rate.
• Increase student connections w/ supportive adults.
• Increase comprehensive School Counseling Programs lead by Licensed School Counselors.
• Implement ASCA Model.  

Source: 22-91, C.R.S.
Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program Outcomes

• More than 300 licensed school counselors have served Colorado students, schools, districts, and BOCES through the grant.

• Since the Class of 2015, SCCGP-funded schools and previously funded schools have achieved Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates higher than the state average. The SCCGP Class of 2018’s SCCGP FAFSA complete rate was three percentage points higher than the state’s rate.

• The average School Counselor Corps Grant Program funded school student-to-counselor ratio is below the ASCA best practice recommendation of 250-to-1.

• 427 schools in 101 of 178 districts have participated, representing all regions throughout Colorado.
ICAP Process

• A **foundational tool** that gives students ownership of a **process** that helps them:
  o explore their unique talents and aspirations;
  o participate in career and postsecondary options; and
  o create pathways to financial success after high school.

• [https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/icap](https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/icap)
ICAP Elements

- Quality Indicators
  - Self-Awareness
  - Career Awareness
  - Postsecondary and Workforce Aspirations and Options
  - Environmental Expectations
  - Academic Planning

Infused with:
- Essential Skills
- Financial Literacy
School Counseling in North Carolina

Cynthia Floyd
Consultant for School Counseling
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Some of the history that got us to where we are…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>State School Counselor Job Description revised to align with the ASCA National Model and Approved by the NC State Board of Education</td>
<td>NCDPI-convened advisory team involved for each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Job Description reformatted into Professional Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Revised School Counselor Evaluation Rubric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/2014</td>
<td>G.S. 115C-316.1 Duties of School Counselors (also aligned with the ASCA National Model and State Professional Standards)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All done in collaboration with the NC School Counselor Association
School Counseling in North Carolina

- Regional trainings on the NC Professional School Counselor Standards and ASCA National Model for the first several years
- Online, self-paced training available within the State Home Base digital platform
  - Administrator Guide to Effective School Counseling and Evaluation
  - NC Professional School Counselor Standards and Evaluation
School Counseling in North Carolina

| 2013/2014 | G.S. 115C-316.1 Duties of School Counselors (also aligned with the ASCA National Model and State Professional Standards) |

- Preceded by adoption of the job description and professional standards and legislated studies on their implementation and the roles of school counselors
- December 2012 – Sandy Hook Elementary shooting
- NC 2013 School Safety Act included G.S. 115C-316.1
  - Aligned with State Standards and ASCA National Model
  - Requires 80% of time in direct services
  - Prohibits school counselors from serving as testing coordinators
School Counseling in North Carolina

Participated in November 2014 White House Convening on Strengthening School Counseling and College Access

NC Conclusions

- School counselors need more pervasive preparation in being effective in college and career advising.
- School administrators need stronger knowledge of how to most effectively utilize school counselors to promote student success.
- Both need to be better equipped to create school cultures that support high expectations in career and college readiness for every student.
School Counseling in North Carolina

• Formed multidisciplinary NC School Counseling Strategic Leadership Team focused on school counselor, administrator, and career development coordinator skills in supporting student career and college readiness

• Representatives from across the state –
  • Higher Ed. Counselor Education
  • Higher Ed. Administrator Education
  • NC Community College System
  • College access programs
  • Business Community
  • NC School Counselor Association
  • NC Department of Public Instruction
NC School Counseling Strategic Leadership Team

- Developed goals, objectives, and strategies for preservice and inservice

- Researched and created a *Preparing Educators to Support Career and College Readiness* recommendations report presented to the State Board of Education

- Influenced State Board of Education policy revisions related to administrator preparation and school counselor provisional licensing

- Secured support for SREB Go Alliance Academy course implementation
School Counseling in North Carolina

Some challenges on which we are still working:

- Most school administrator preparation programs do not currently include instruction on the effective roles and utilization of school counselors.
- There is insufficient funding for the numbers of school counselors needed and support for school counselors.
- School counselors are not required in NC schools.
- Local control
Key Take-Aways

- Collaboration between the state department of education, the state association of school counseling, and other key stakeholders is vital.
- Educate others on what comprehensive school counseling is and the positive difference it makes.
- Be proactive in addressing the question “What’s in it for me?”
- Jump on related bandwagons that are being supported.
- Be patient.
School Counseling in North Carolina

Related Resources –

  - (select Policy Manual; professional standards are under EVAL)

- NCDPI School Counseling Google Site
  - (includes information on Professional Standards and related legislation)
Questions

Please submit any question you may have in the “Questions” box.
School Counselors, State Policy, and Postsecondary Readiness

Loretta Whitson
Executive Director
California Association of School Counselors
Initial Reaction to Brief

1. Marginalization of school counselors – Why and the relationship with the evaluation process

2. Importance of creating an effective evaluation system
   - Reflection is an active process aimed at understanding and leading to a subsequent improvement in the way something is approached or done.
   - The continuous learning associated with performance evaluation builds the highest professional competence.
Factors to Consider When Advocating for State Policy

Foundation for Legislation and Policy Changes
- Are needs determined and necessary enough?
- How much will it cost and which state budget will pay for it?
- Is there opposition/support from educational leaders?

Tiers of Oversight
- Recommendations for practice
- State oversight with reporting requirements
Using Data From the Brief: Lessons Learned

Essential governmental structures that influence using data to influence legislation (local control versus state control)

Multiple approaches to perception change: best practice document, Op Ed, professional development
Questions

Please submit any question you may have in the “Questions” box.
References


References
