School Counselors Matter: Understanding the Research to Support Advocacy

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Evidence Based School Counseling Conference

March 14, 2021

Introductions



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AGENDA

Introduction to pathway of research to advocacy

Current landscape of ratios in the US

Overview of ratio studies completed and in progress

Challenges to data collection

Opportunities - Research as a tool to support legislative professional advocacy

Implications for school counselors, state SCA's, and counselor educators





High Ratios Are Barriers to School Counselors Effectiveness and Sustainability

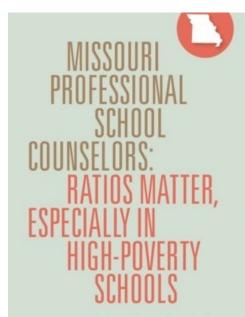
- 1. A study by Paisley and McMahon (2001) suggested that job overload, a precursor to job stress is positively related to high counselor-student caseloads.
- 2. Performing responsibilities despite largely unmanageable ratios (Glander, 2015).
- 3. The number of non-counseling activities that reduce their time spent on direct student services (e.g., Burkard, Gillen, Martinez, & Skytte, 2012; Goodman-Scott, 2015).
- 4. High SC ratios contribute to burn out. (Moyer, 2011; Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Kim & Lambie, 2018)
- 5. High SC Ratios also contribute to emotional disengagement and compassion fatigue (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Wachter, Clemens, & Lewis, 2008; Wilkerson, 2009).
- 6. Corwin, Venegas, Oliverez, and Colyar (2004) concluded that in predominately African American schools, there are higher student- to-counselor ratios and fewer resources about college planning and preparation.

A Social Justice Mandate

Access to highly qualified school counselors is a chief social justice concern in our field.

Our students who need the most support due to exposure to poverty, trauma, and a lack of educational opportunities are often in schools with the fewest school counselors.

Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley & Pierce, (2012)



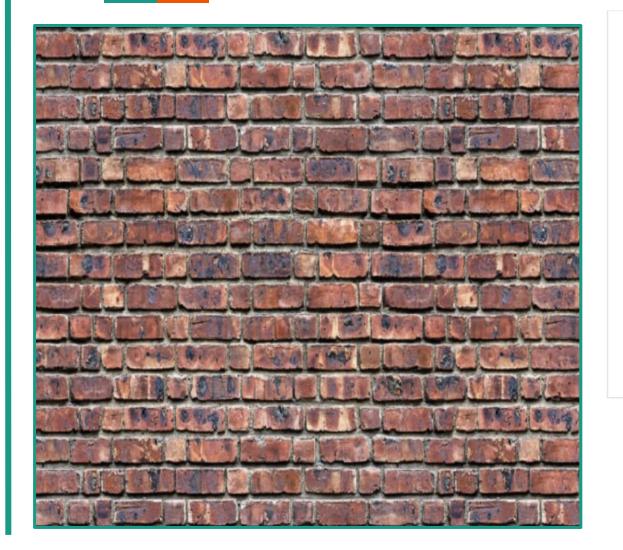
Results link lower student-to-schoolcounselor ratios to better graduation rates and lower disciplinary incidents across Missouri high schools. An interaction favorable for promoting student success in school was found between increasing percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch and smaller studentto-school-counselor ratios. In high-poverty schools, those schools that met the ASCA criteria of having at least one professional school counselor for every 250 students had better graduation and school attendance rates, and lower disciplinary incidents. n the 21st century, the United States and the state of Missouri continue to undergo changes industrially, occupationally, socially, and economically. These changes are creating challenges for students in Missouri. A rapidly changing workplace and labor force; violence in homes, schools, and communities; divorce; and teenage suicide, substance abuse, and sexual experimentation are just a few examples. These challenges are real, and they are having substantial impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of students in Missouri. One of the ways in which the state of Missouri is attempting to address these challenges is by developing and implementing effective comprehen-

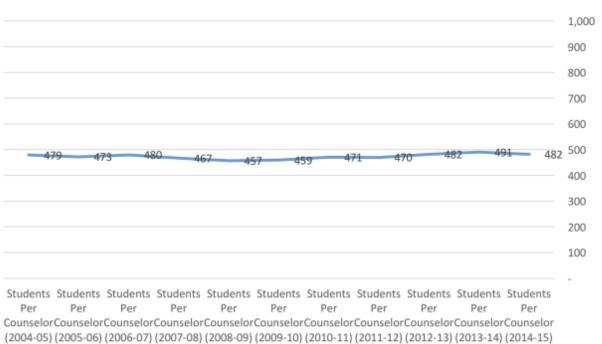
Richard T. Lapan, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Student Development in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amhorst. E-mail: tapan@douc.umass. edu Norman C. Gysbers, Ph.D., is Curator's Distinguished Professor in the Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology at the University of Massouri-Columbia. Brags Stanley is director of guidance and counseling for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Margaret E. Pierce, Ed.D., is an assistant professor of Education at Stonehil College.

This evaluation represented collaboration between the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE), the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Missouri School Counselor Association. The anthors also acknowledge the firm work and contributions of Karen Harrington of CSCORE in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and Megan Metz, a graduate

SC Ratios = Static Issue

National Student to Counselor Ratio





Percent Change Enrollment: +3% Percent Change in Counselors: +2% Percent Change in Student-to-Counselor Ratio: +1%

U.S. Student-to-Counselor Ratio, 2004-05 to 2014-15



Student-to-School-Counselor COUNSELOR Batic 2012 2016 Ratio 2013-2014

Total number

School

National Average

2013-14

1:491

2018-19

1:430

12% lower

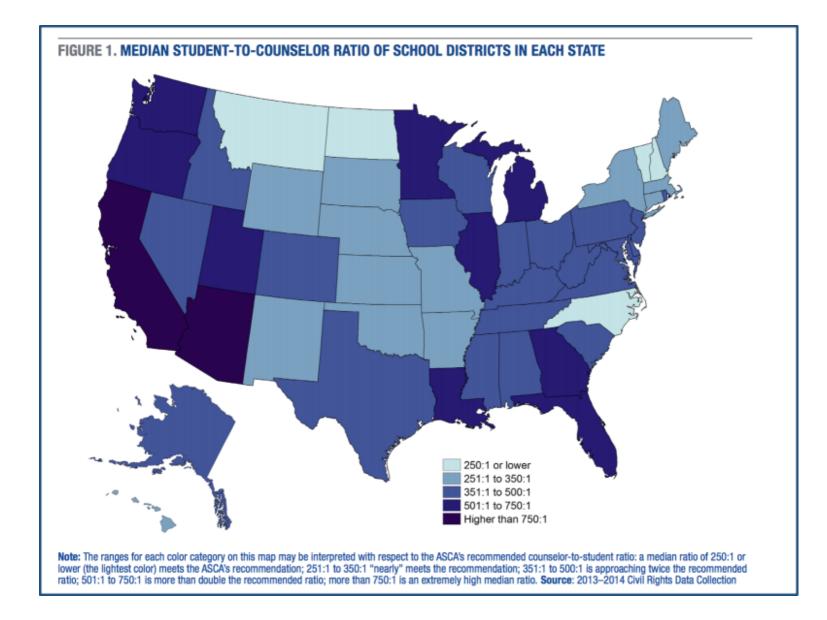
State			of students	counselo
United States	491		50,527,461	102,813.
Alabama	417		746,204	1,789.
Alaska	435		130,944	300.
Arizona		941	1,102,445	1,171.
Arkansas	384		489,979	1,274.
California		822	6,312,623	7676.
Colorado	395		876,999	2,222.
Connecticut	481		546,200	1,135.
Delaware	436		131,687	302.
District of Columbia	494		78,153	158.
Florida	491		2,720,744	5,542.
Georgia	490		1,723,909	3,520.
Hawaii	299		186,825	625.
Idaho		663	296,476	
Illinois		701		446.
		701	2,066,990	2,947.
Indiana	541		1,047,385	1,934.
lowa	423		502,964	1,189.
Kansas	476		496,440	1,043.
Kentucky	445		677,389	1,523.
Louisiana	442		711,491	1,610.
Maine	305		183,995	604.
Maryland	371		866,169	2,335.
Massachusetts	419		955,739	2,280.
Michigan		732	1,548,841	2,115.
Minnesota	And and a supervised statement of the supervised statement	743	850,973	1,145.
Mississippi	440		492,586	1,119.
Missouri	352		918,288	2,606.
Montana	321		144,129	449.
Nebraska	393		307,677	782.
Nevada	508	The American	451,831	890.
New Hampshire	235	School Counselor	186,310	793.
New Jersey	364	Association	1,370,295	3,766.
New Mexico	447	recommends a	339,244	758.
New York	62		2,732,770	4,380.
North Carolina	379	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1,530,857	4,039.
North Dakota	305		103,947	340.
Ohio	462		1,724,111	3,732.
Oklahoma	422		681,848	1,615.
Oregon	422 604		593,000	982.
Pennsylvania	412		1,755,236	4,262.
Rhode Island	412		142,008	350.
South Carolina	381		745,657	1954.
South Dakota	393		130,890	333.
Tennessee	341		993,556	2,913.
Texas	465		5,153,702	11,078.
Utah		683	625,461	915.
Vermont	213		88,690	416.
Virginia	381		1,273,825	3,343.
Washington	502		1,058,936	2,110.
West Virginia	378		280,958	743.
Wisconsin	459		874,414	1,904.
Wyoming	211		92,732	440.
Guam	384		33,414	87.
Northern Marianas	484		10,638	22.
Puerto Rico	582		423,934	728.
U.S. Virgin Islands	267		14,953	56.

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Student-to-School-Counselor)R Ratio 2018-2019

State			Total number of students	Sch counsel
National Avg.	430		50,705,568	117,8
Alabama	418		739,716	1,7
Alaska	417		130,963	3
Arizona		905	1,141,511	1,2
Arkansas	368		495,291	1,3
California	6	12	6,272,734	10,2
Colorado	324		911,536	2,8
Connecticut	457		526,634	1,1
Delaware	382		138,405	3
District of Columbia	474		93,741	1
Florida	459		2,846,444	6,2
Georgia	447		1,767,202	3.9
Hawaii	275		181,278	6
Idaho	549		310,522	5
Illinois		26	1,982,327	3,1
Indiana	521		1,055,706	2,0
lowa	391		514,833	1,3
Kansas	431		497,733	1,1
Kentucky	425		677,821	1,5
Louisiana	441		711,783	1,6
Maine	311		180,461	5
Maryland	362		896,827	2,4
Massachusetts	396		962,297	2,4
Michigan	550	691	1,504,194	2,1
Minnesota		654	889,304	1,3
Mississippi	430	034	471,298	1,0
Missouri	339		913,441	2.6
Montana	311		148,844	2,5
Nebraska	311			8
Neoraska	544		326,392	9
	219	The American	498,614	
New Hampshire		School Counselor	178,515	1
New Jersey	358	Association	1,400,069	3,9
New Mexico New York	473	recommends a	333,537	7
	288	ratio of 250-to-1.	2,700,833	9,3
North Carolina	354		1,552,497	4,3
North Dakota	295		113,845	3
Ohio	430		1,695,762	3,9
Oklahoma	421		698,891	1,6
Oregon	461		609,507	1,3
Pennsylvania	369		1,730,757	4,6
Rhode Island	420		143,436	3
South Carolina	351		780,882	2,2
South Dakota	376		138,975	3
Tennessee	314		1,007,624	3,2
Texas	423		5,433,471	12,8
Utah	591		677,031	1,1
Vermont	191		87,359	6
Virginia	345		1,289,367	3,7
Washington	465		1,123,736	2,4
West Virginia	366		267,976	1
Wisconsin	414		859,333	2,0
Wyoming	330		94,313	1
Bureau of Indian Education	153		43,706	
Guam	346		29,719	
Puerto Rico	554		307,282	5
U.S. Virgin Islands	191		10,718	
server and the server			101110	

DRIA SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION SURVEY; 2018-19 VLA. NOTE: RUN YOUR OWN DATASABLES BY DISTRICT AT HTTPS://NCELED.GOV/CCD/ELSI



Mandated School Counselors

K-12

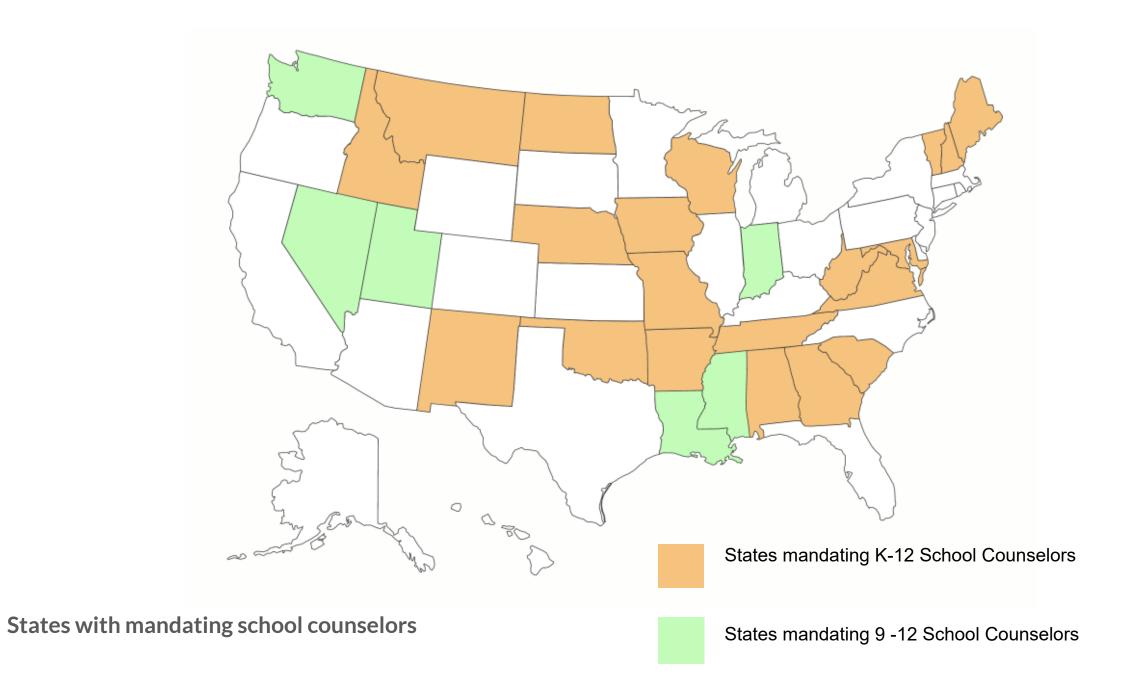
ASCA, 2020

- 1. Alabama
- 2. Arkansas
- 3. DC
- 4. Georgia
- 5. Idaho
- 6. Iowa
- 7. Maine
- 8. Maryland
- 9. Missouri
- 10. Montana
- 11. Nebraska
- 12. New Hampshire
- 13. New Mexico
- 14. North Dakota
- 15. Oklahoma
- 16. South Carolina
- 17. Tennessee
- 18. Vermont
- 19. Virginia
- 20. West Virginia
- 21. Wisconsin

Mandated School Counselors

9-12 Only

- 1. Indiana
- 2. Louisiana
- 3. Mississippi
- 4. Nevada
- 5. Utah
- 6. Washington



20 States

Or 40% of states nationwide do not have mandated school counselors

Mandated School Counselors*

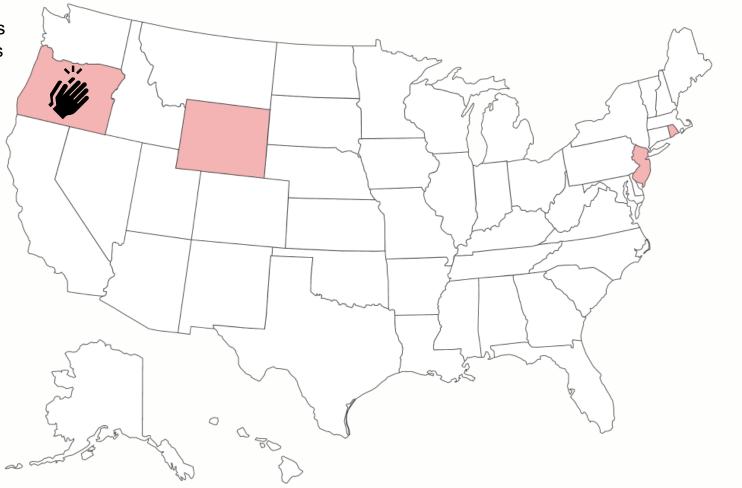
School counseling services are mandated

- New Jersey: SC programs are mandated, but no mandates that SC's be employed in schools
- Oregon: Each school district in



- Oregon is mandated to maintain a comprehensive guidance and counseling plan that serves students K -12. In addition, each school district is mandated to maintain a licensed staff.
- Rhode Island: School counseling programs are mandated in K-12, but school counselors themselves are not mandated in every school
- Wyoming: Although access to guidance services are mandated, school counselors themselves are not.

Only Oregon mandates both school counselors **and** school counseling programs

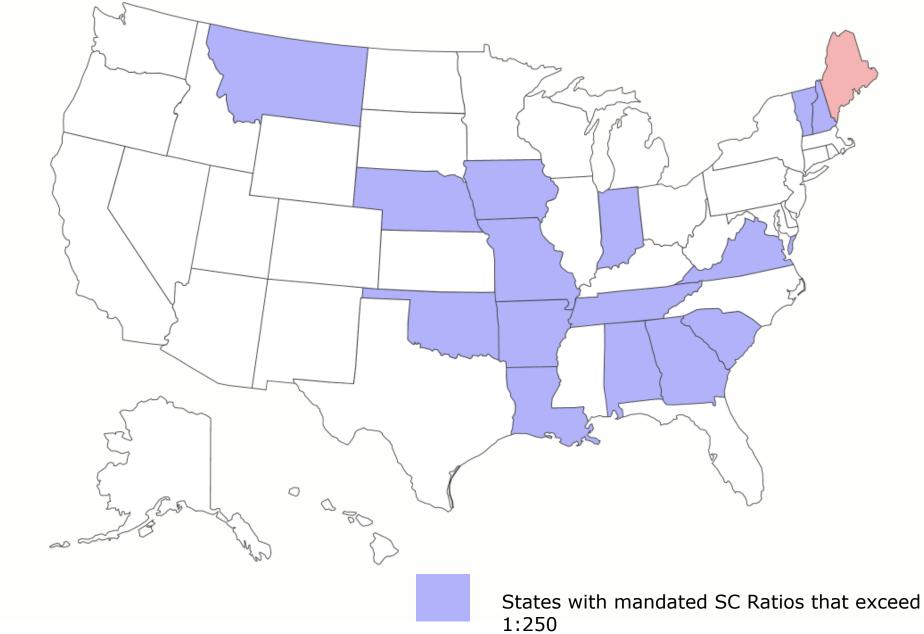


States Mandating Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

States with Mandated Ratios

1. Iowa	1:350	9. Indiana	Gr 1-6, 1:600; Gr 7-12, 1:300	
2. Montana	1:400	10. South Carolir	na Gr K-5, 1:800; Gr 6-12, 1:300	
3. Arkansas	1:450	11. Nebraska	Gr K-5, none; Gr 6-12, 1:450	
4. Georgia	1:450	12. Oklahoma	Gr K-5, none; Gr 6-12, 1:450	
T. Ocorgia	1.450	13. Tennessee	Gr K-6, 1:500; Gr 7-12, 1:350	
5. Louisiana	1:450	14. Maine	Gr K-8, 1:350; Gr 9-12, 1:250	
6. Alabama	1:500-1:750	15. New Hampsh	ire Gr K-5, 1:500; Gr 6-12, 1:300	
7. Missouri	1:500	16. Virginia	Elementary schools 1:500	
8. Vermont	Elementary 1:400	Middle schools 1:400		
	Secondary 1:300		High schools 1:350	

ASCA, 2020



States with mandates school counselor ratios

States with mandated SC Ratios at 1:250 in at least one grade level

70% of states do not have mandated SC to Student Ratios

Challenges of Data Collection

- Transparency and a state's requirement to collect data does not necessarily translate into accessibility for research purposes
- Tracking and reporting of SCs vary significantly state-by-state
 - Reporting at District level is uniform, but not at School level
 - Tracking of SCs varies and some report as individual, while some report as FTE
- Role ambiguity for SCs and related mental health providers creates complexity in tracking of number of SCs
 - SCs may not be distinguished as separate from "Student Support Personnel"
 - Reporting number of SCs does not necessarily represent services provided

SC Ratio Studies – ASCA Funded Research

Our research questions for our school level analysis:

1. Do students in schools from states with lower average student-to-school counselor ratios outperform students in schools from higher average ratio states in academic achievement? graduation rates? college-going rates? suspension/expulsion rates? absenteeism?

2. Do these relations in #1 differ according to district socio-economic status?

3. Do students in schools with elementary school counselors outperform students in other schools in academic achievement? graduation rates? college-going rates? suspension/expulsion rates? absenteeism?ot?

2017 – Indiana – New York – Connecticut

2019 – Scaled Up to Multiple States

Analysis

Publicly available data retrieved from NCES.gov and individual state department of education websites, in conjunction with written requests for data where not readily accessible on the dashboards.

For each state, a multivariate outcome, multilevel analysis was run on

- academic (i.e., state assessment passing rates in ELA, math, science, state-administered SAT/ACT),
- **behavioral** (i.e., suspensions, expulsions, absenteeism), and
- college-going outcomes (i.e., college entrance)

... controlling for grade level, race/ethnicity, income; and run against SCSR 1:250 and state median SCSR

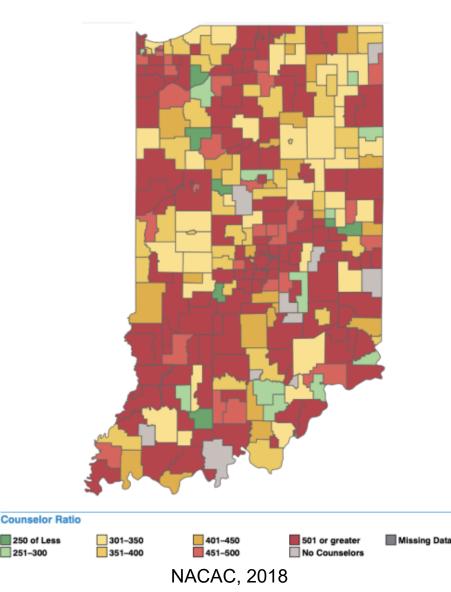
Indiana

Indiana Results

Schools with at least 1 counselor for every 250 students average

- § 0.3% higher **attendance** (e.g., every day in a school of 1000 students, 3 more students attend school than otherwise)
- § 18 points higher on their **SAT Mathematics** scores
- § 19 points higher on their SAT Verbal scores.
- § 16 points higher on their **SAT Writing** scores.

The impact of school counselor-to-student ratio exceeding 1:250 on **SAT Verbal** is larger in schools located within lower SES communities.



Connecticut Results (Quantitative)

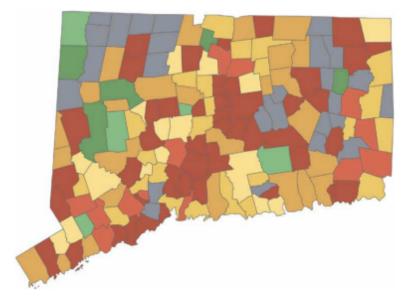
The median SCSR in a school was 1:517.

Upon initial review of the data analysis, no significant relationship between SCSRs of 1:250 or above the data's median (1:517) and student outcomes was found.

However, results did indicate a significant correlation between the **presence (versus absence)** of school counselors on behavioral outcomes.

In this analysis, the presence of a school counselor was significantly related with **lower expulsion rates**, **moderated suspension rates**, and **moderated chronic absenteeism rates**

Connecticut





NACAC, 2018

Connecticut Results (Qualitative)

Due to unexpected findings in the quantitative analyses on Connecticut data, expand to the qualitative portion of the study. Recognized that consideration should be given for factors not readily apparent through publicly available performance indicators (e.g., mental health needs, community resources) to better understand SCSRs and student outcomes.

To identify schools for participation in the qualitative portion of the Connecticut study, school-level data from 1493 schools was collected from NCES and the CSDE was analyzed to identify higher and lower performing schools at each grade level (K-8, 9-12), and location (urban, rural, suburban).

- Significantly higher counselor-to-student ratios exist in lower performing schools (e.g., high school = 1:285, middle school = 1:891)
- Significantly lower counselor-to-student ratios exist in higher performing schools

(e.g., high school = 1:182, middle school = 1:211).

- 7 Focus groups held; n = 34
- Each group was homogeneous in terms of high or low performing school identification
- Representative sample across level and setting

Preliminary Findings

High school counselors in high poverty urban and affluent suburban communities with lower SCSRs reported substantial concerns for effectively delivering their program if their ratios were raised to the ASCA recommended 1:250.

Middle school counselors across rural and suburban communities with SCSRs greater than 1:250 participating in the focus groups reported their ability to deliver comprehensive programming to all students (i.e., curriculum supporting academic, career, social-emotional development) was significantly compromised in order to provide responsive services for the rising mental health needs of their students.

Access to mental health counselors in rural communities was reportedly challenged due to travel distance and lack of public transportation. As a result, school counselors in these settings experience themselves as the main provider of mental health services for students in need. In affluent suburban settings, it was reportedly easier for families to access community counselors; however, students are accessing these resources less purportedly due to increased time spent in extracurricular activity involvement.

New York Results

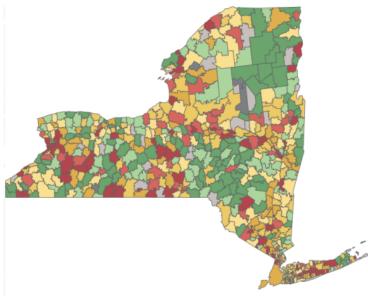
The median SCSR in a school was 1:284.

In 41% of these schools, the SCSR met or exceeded the 1:250 proportion recommended by the ASCA.

Significant findings related to SCSRs revealed: Schools with lower SCSRs have a ...

- Higher percentage of students who pass statewide assessments in English and Langua Arts (ELA).
- Higher percentage of students who passed statewide assessments in mathematics
- Lower percentage of students who pass statewide assessments in science.

New York



Counselor Rati	0			
250 of Less 251–300	301–350 351–400	401–450 451–500	501 or greater	Missing Data

NACAC, 2018

ASCA infographic

IMPACT OF SCHOOL-COUNSELOR-TO-STUDENT RATIOS ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Study shows impact of school counselor ratios on student outcomes.





A school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 has a significant effect on student attendance, SAT mathematics, SAT writing and SAT verbal scores.

- In Indiana, the average school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 resulted in:
- 0.3% higher attendance (i.e. every day in a school of 1,000 students, three more students attend class than otherwise).
- 18 points higher SAT mathematics scores.
- 19 points higher SAT verbal scores.
- 16 points higher SAT writing scores.

Students in districts with elementary school counselors have improved performance outcomes versus districts without.

Connecticut school districts report

- Schools with K-12 school counselors:
- 69.4% report graduation rates greater than 90 percent.
- Schools without elementary school counselors:
- 45.8% report graduation rates greater than 90 percent.
- Approximately 72% of school districts provide no comprehensive school counseling services to students in grades K-5.

Lower-performing schools/schools in lower-socioeconomic-status communities maintain higher caseloads than higher-performing schools.

In Connecticut:

- High-performing schools average school-counselor-to-student ratio: High school = 1:182 Middle school = 1:211
- Low-performing schools average school-counselor-to-student ratio: High school = 1:285 Middle school = 1:891

Read the full report: www.schoolcounselor.org/effectiveness

SOURCE: ASCA grant-funded research of school counselor ratios and student outcomes in three states (Indiana, Connecticut, and New York).

RESEARCHERS: Jennifer L. Parzych, Ph.D., Southern Connecticut State University; Peg Donohue, Ph.D., Central Connecticut State University; Amy Gaesser, Ph.D., The College at Brockport, SUNY; Ming Ming Chiu, Ph.D., The Education University of Hong Kong



Lowering ratios allows school counselors to effectively deliver a comprehensive school counseling program to better meet students' academic, career and social/emotional needs

2 Socioeconomic status and community resources have an impact on school counselors' ability to effectively deliver comprehensive school counseling programs.

3 School-counselorto-student ratios may be optimal at 1:250, but grade level and socioeconomic factors of a district require close consideration.



 Work with national org. to ensure soundness of research on all publications

Future research, continued advocacy:

ASCA grant-funded research continues...

- Expanded to multiple states, representative of 'ratio-ranking spectrum'... states with lowest ratios through those with the highest
- Consideration for strengthening state regulations
 - CACREP accredited training model?
 - All MS-School Counselor programs in CT = 60 credits, CACREP accredited
 - Someone from non-CACREP accredited program in another state can be certified in CT
 - Strengthen criteria for out of state competition for jobs...
 - Counselor educators in CT advocated for more equitable internship requirements, recognizing inaccessibility for many underrepresented groups was 1400 hours/10 months -> 1200 -> 900 -> 700/10 months!!

Well trained SCs

Quantity vs. quality

• Quality is important!



ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

(2019). ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies

MINDSETS School counselors believe:

- M 1. Every student can learn, and every student can succeed.
- M 2. Every student should have access to and opportunity for a high-quality education.
- M 3. Every student should graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities.
- M 4. Every student should have access to a school counseling program.
- M 5. Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving school counselors, students, families, teachers, administrators, other school staff and education stakeholders.
- M 6. School counselors are leaders in the school, district, state and nation.
- M 7. School counseling programs promote and enhance student academic, career and social/emotional outcomes.

BEHAVIORS School counselors demonstrate the following standards in the design, implementation and assessment of a school counseling program. Professional Foundation Direct and Indirect Student Services Planning and Assessment B-PF 1. Apply developmental, learning, B-PA 1. Create school counseling program B-SS 1. Design and implement instruction counseling and education theories aligned to ASCA Mindsets & beliefs, vision and mission Behaviors for Student Success in statements aligned with the school large-group, classroom, small-group and district and individual settings B-PF 2. Demonstrate understanding of B-SS 2. Provide appraisal and advisement B-PA 2. Identify gaps in achievement, attendance, discipline, opportunity educational systems, legal issues, in large-group, classroom, smallpolicies, research and trends in group and individual settings and resources education B-PF 3. Apply legal and ethical principles of B-SS 3. Provide short-term counseling in B-PA 3. Develop annual student outcome the school counseling profession small-group and individual settings goals based on student data B-PF 4. Apply school counseling B-SS 4. Make referrals to appropriate B-PA 4. Develop and implement action professional standards and school and community resources plans aligned with annual student outcome goals and student data competencies B-PF 5. Use ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors B-SS 5. Consult to support student B-PA 5. Assess and report program results for Student Success to inform achievement and success to the school community the implementation of a school counseling program B-PF 6. Demonstrate understanding of B-SS 6. Collaborate with families, teachers, B-PA 6. Use time appropriately according the impact of cultural, social and administrators, other school staff to national recommendations and environmental influences on and education stakeholders for student/school data student success and opportunities student achievement and success B-PF 7. Demonstrate leadership B-PA 7. Establish agreement with the through the development and principal and other administrators implementation of a school about the school counseling counseling program program B-PF 8. Demonstrate advocacy for a school B-PA 8. Establish and convene an advisory counseling program council for the school counseling program B-PA 9. Use appropriate school counselor B-PF 9. Create systemic change through the implementation of a school performance appraisal process counseling program

Opportunities - Legislative Professional Advocacy

• Why LPA? Social justice, equity, and access...

- The profession has a long-established history of embracing counselor advocacy to empower clients, students, and the profession (Dixon & Dew, 2012; Farrell & Minto, 2019)
- LPA in particular has the potential to increase awareness of important issues in the profession and mobilize counselors



Opportunities - LPA & Counselor Education

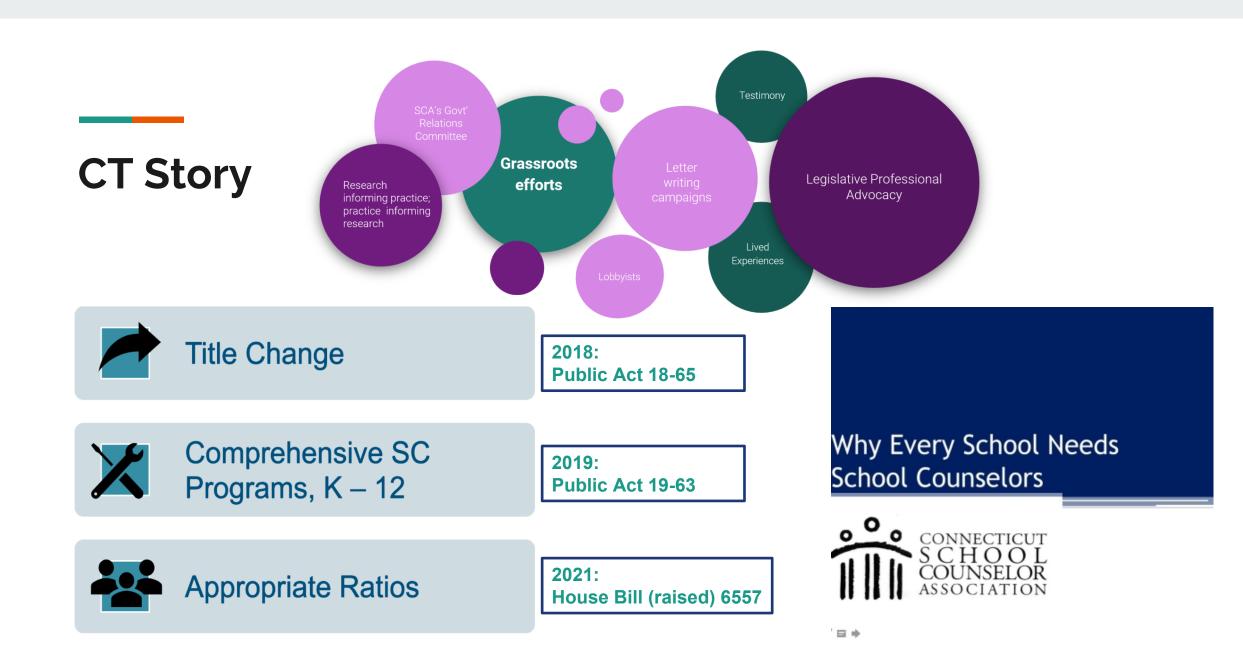
Weaving it into the curriculum

 Counselor educators are called to integrate professional advocacy throughout the curriculum (Brat, O'Hara, Mcghee, & Chang, 2016; Myers, Sweeney & White, 2002).

Moving skills to application

- Students with advocacy-related training are more likely to engage in LPA (Ramirez Stege, Brockberg, & Hoyt, 2017).
- Knowledge about the acquisition of LPA competencies and implementation of skills is limited

Pre-service counselors need help in understanding <u>concrete and</u> <u>specific methods</u> for understanding the LPA process



How could this inform YOUR advocacy efforts?

Thank you for joining us today!



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