AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Megyn L. Shea for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on March 14, 2013.

Title: School Board Member and School Counselor Perceptions of School Board Knowledge, Priorities, and Policy.

Abstract approved: ________________________________

Gene A. Eakin

The role and function of school counselors remains a consistent source of concern in the school counseling profession. Aligning school counseling activities with comprehensive school counseling practice is a way to standardize the profession. Creating a school board policy for counseling is a strategy to gain support for and institutionalize school counseling practices. The purpose of this dissertation study was to produce two manuscripts related to the role and function of school counselors and school board policies for counseling. The researcher investigated school board members’ (N = 169) and school counselors’ (N = 341) perceptions of school board knowledge of comprehensive school counseling program activities, school board prioritization of those activities, and school board adoption of policies and actions related to school counseling. The school board perception survey and school counselor perception survey were modified versions of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale. This research suggested that school counselors were more likely to rate school board members’
knowledge of and level of priority for school counseling activities lower than school board members rated themselves. This research also suggested that there was a direct relationship between school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority they assign to school counseling activities.
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School Board Member and School Counselor Perceptions of School Board Knowledge, Priorities, and Policy

by
Megyn L. Shea

A DISSERTATION

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Oregon State University

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APPROVED:

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Major Professor, Representing Counseling

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Dean of the College of Education

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

________________________________________
Megyn L. Shea, Author
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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Dr. Jeffrey White provided assistance in the survey design and statistical analysis.
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Chapter 1: General Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate scholarly work by using the manuscript document dissertation format as outlined by the Oregon State University Graduate School. Chapter 1 provides explanations that thematically tie the two journal-formatted manuscripts presented in chapters 2 and 3. These chapters build toward research conclusions pertinent to the field of school counseling. Specifically, the chapters focus on the institutionalization of school counseling through adoption of school board policies aligned with comprehensive school counseling best practices.

Accordingly, chapter 2 is a literature review titled “School Board Policy and School Counselors: A Review of the Literature.” This literature review provides information about the inconsistent role and function of school counselors throughout history and the use of school board policy as a strategy to align the role and function of school counselors with school counseling best practices. Chapter 3 is titled “Perceptions of School Board Knowledge and Prioritization of School Counseling Activities.” It contains a discussion of the survey method research design used in this study. A modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) was used to assess the knowledge and priorities that school board members assigned to comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP) activities. Another modified version of the SCARS was used to assess school counselors’ perceptions of school board knowledge and priorities of CSCP activities. An exploratory question at the end of the survey was added to assess examples of school board policies and procedures regarding school counseling. Chapter 3
provides insight into Washington school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for activities that support CSCP. It also details Washington school counselors’ perceptions of school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP-related activities.

The manuscripts contained in this study thematically describe the use of school board policy to increase support for school counseling practices that align with CSCP. The research is relevant to practicing school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling researchers. It also relevant to those who have a stake in enabling school counselors to better align their practice with CSCP activities. These stakeholders include counseling supervisors, school counseling directors, administrators, and especially school board members.

**Importance to the Profession of Counseling**

School counselors operating within a CSCP framework focus on the academic, career, and personal/social developmental needs of students. CSCP activities include counseling interventions to address issues such as dropout rates, homework completion, classroom behavior, or career planning. Addressing and enhancing school counseling practices that focus on students’ needs is an ongoing concern for school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling professional organizations.

Since the adoption of guidance and counseling practices in U.S. schools over 100 years ago, writers have advised school counselors to move away from a role that is unclear to a role that focuses on leadership, accountability, and systemic guidance and counseling services (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Aubrey, 1982; Bemak, 2000; Brewer, 1924;
Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; House & Hayes, 2002; Johnson, 2000; Myers, 1923; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; 2005; Sink, 2002a; Sink & MacDonald, 1998; Wrenn, 1962). A systemic, developmentally appropriate model for school counseling emerged over 40 years ago as a way to improve services to students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). However, the concept of a systemic counseling program has continued to evolve. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005), which lays out a strategy for developing a CSCP, is now widely seen as a best practice for school counselors.

The ASCA National Model encourages school counselors to spend a majority of their time on consultation, coordination, counseling, and curriculum-related activities (ASCA, 2005; Scarborough, 2005). Professional counseling organizations support comprehensive school counseling, which is also a theme of professional school counseling standards such as the ASCA ethical standards for school counselors (ASCA, 2010), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards (CACREP, 2009), and the ASCA school counselor competencies (ASCA, 2008).

In addition, a growing body of evidence supports the effectiveness of CSCPs. Studies indicate that school counseling programs may contribute to higher assessment scores, improved student achievement, increased feelings of student safety, and better relationships between students and teachers (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Lapan,
Professional organizations, school counseling leaders, and counselor educators regularly encourage school counselors to advocate for changes in their role and function that better reflect CSCP concepts (ASCA, 2012a). Because school principals have a significant influence on school counselors’ duties, the relationship between counselors and principals receives a great deal of attention in the literature (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005).

Dollarhide, Smith, and Lemberger (2007) encourage school counselors to form strong working relationships with principals and show the impact of CSCP activities on student achievement. Demonstrating how school counselors positively affect student success is a powerful strategy for garnering political support (Dimmit, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

Several instruments have been developed to assist school counselors in evaluating the impact of their individual interventions and other CSCP issues. For example, instruments that measure the perceptions of school counselors and CSCP key stakeholders have been used to identify issues such as school counselor or principal CSCP training needs (Burnham, Dahir, Stone, & Hooper, 2008; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). The SCARS is another example of a useful instrument that measures school counselors’ actual and preferred job-related activities (Scarborough, 2005). Most of the items in the SCARS are school counseling job tasks that are commonly identified as CSCP activities. The SCARS has also been modified for
use in studies to measure issues such as principals’ and parents’ perceptions of school counseling activities (Buchanan, 2011; Wider, 2010).

Strategies that support school counselor engagement in CSCP activities have demonstrated promise in increasing the quality and quantity of services directly provided to students. However, research has also demonstrated that school counselors continue to indicate that schools often use their time in less productive ways. School policy—specifically school board policy—is a necessary component of the development of a CSCP (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

ASCA (2005) recognized the importance of addressing and updating school counseling policy when attempting to change the school system. State legislation, mandates, and state-adopted school counseling models can be used to advocate for school board policies that reflect CSCP concepts. All 50 states have some type of school counseling legislation and/or mandate that could promote school board support at the state or local level (ASCA, 2012b). Additionally, 44 states claim to have a state school counseling model (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009). These models, which are usually endorsed by state school counselor associations and/or departments of education, provide further support for the need for school boards to update or adopt CSCP policy.

States such as Washington have provided insight into the effects of updating school board policy regarding school counseling. The Washington School Counselor Association recently collaborated with the Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) to update the state’s guidance and counseling model school board
policy. The new school board policy was written to align with the ASCA National Model and a Washington legislative mandate describing the role of the school counselor.

**Rationale**

Despite growing evidence in support of CSCPs, the role and function of school counselors remains a significant concern (Bringman, Mueller, & Lee 2010; Chandler, Burnham, & Dahir, 2008). School counselors continue to spend inordinate amounts of time on noncounseling duties such as clerical and administrative work. Because of the overemphasis on noncounseling duties, researchers must explore strategies to support best practices for school counselors.

Adjusting school board policy is a way to help institutionalize CSCPs (ASCA, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). However, there has been little research devoted to school board policy regarding school counseling. Although school counseling policy is important to the school counseling field, it has been neglected in the literature (N. C. Gysbers, personal communication, July, 25, 2012). Gysbers, Lapan, and Jones (2000) addressed school board policy regarding school counseling and found that only 1 out of 24 state school board associations had a school counseling policy aligned with comprehensive school counseling.

To change the role and function of school counselors, practicing school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling researchers need a better understanding of school board policy regarding school counseling. With increased data about school board members’ knowledge and priorities, school counselors might gain
insight into how to garner support from the school board and thus change school counseling policy.

**Research Questions**

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between school board members’ level of knowledge about comprehensive school counseling activities and the priority they assign to these activities?

Research Question 2: What is school board members’ self-perceived level of knowledge about CSCP activities?

Research Question 3: What is the level of priority that school board members assign to different activities commonly prescribed by CSCPs?

Research Question 4: Given that the Washington State School Director’s Association in 2008 suggested that school boards adopt a policy related to CSCPs, what school board policies and procedures do school board members indicate have been adopted?

Research Question 5: Do school counselors’ ratings of school board members’ level of knowledge of CSCP activities differ from school board members’ self-perceived level of knowledge of CSCP activities?

Research Question 6: Do school counselors’ ratings of school board members’ level of priority for CSCP activities differ from school board members’ self-perceived level of priority for CSCP activities?
Research Question 7: Given that the Washington State School Director’s Association in 2008 suggested that school boards adopt a policy related to CSCPs, what school board policies and procedures do school counselors indicate have been adopted?

The answers to the research questions fill a major gap in the literature addressing school board members’ and school counselor perceptions’ of CSCP activities and school board policy regarding school counseling. The research questions proposed in this study were explored using a quantitative survey design. The SCARS was modified for this study with permission from the author (Scarborough, 2005). The modified SCARS was used to assess school counselors’ perceptions of school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP activities, as well as school board members’ self-perceived knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP activities.

Glossary of Terms

Comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP): A systemic, developmental program that addresses the academic, personal/social, and career needs of students. CSCPs are designed to serve all students through individual, group, and classroom counseling. Counseling activities that support CSCPs include individual and group counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum delivery (Scarborough, 2005).

School board policy: A policy adopted by a school board that indicates how the board establishes and communicates its priorities, expectations, and programs. Some policies are adopted due to legislative mandates; others support a district’s mission and goals. Many school board policies relate to staff practices (Washington State School Directors’ Association, 2011)
Organization

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 presents a thematic review of the literature. The themes discussed include (a) the ongoing problem of the inconsistent role and function of school counselors, (b) current views on best practices for school counseling, and (c) adjusting school board policy as a strategy for aligning school counseling best practices. Chapter 3 describes a research study focused on school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of school board actions and policies. Chapter 4 offers general conclusions and links chapters 2 and 3.
School Board Policy and School Counselors: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

This article presents a review of the literature on strategies for improving the alignment between the role and function of school counselors and comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP) activities. The review provides a brief overview of the history of school counseling and ongoing concerns about assigning noncounseling duties to school counselors. Next the article presents effective school counseling practices and strategies for changing school counselors’ duties. Then the review highlights adjusting school board policy as an important step in the development of a CSCP. Finally, this article provides an example of a state that has recently updated its school board policy on school counseling.
Chapter 2: School Board Policy and School Counselors: A Review of the Literature

Guidance and counseling have been a part of the American educational system for more than 100 years. Despite the promise that guidance and counseling in schools has shown, counseling has been plagued with systemic problems and unclear roles and functions (Aubrey, 1982; Brewer, 1924; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Gysbers, Lapan, & Jones, 2000; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Myers, 1923; Wrenn, 1962). The lack of clarity around the role and function of school counselors ultimately translates to less effective counseling interventions and strategies. School counselors who operate in ambiguous environments are likely to spend more of their time on noncounseling duties and less time on direct services to students.

Many consider comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCPs) to be an effective strategy for improving services to students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Sink, 2005; Stone & Dahir, 2006). These programs are intended to address the career, academic, and personal/social needs of K–12 students. The American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA’s) National Model is a framework for developing, delivering, managing, and evaluating a CSCP (ASCA, 2005). The National Model, along with other efforts, has helped to clarify the role and function of school counselors.

The widespread problem of counselors spending too much time on administrative and clerical duties persists. The disconnect between best practice and actual practice serves as an indicator that more research is necessary to identify strategies that institutionalize effective school counseling practices. One such strategy is adjusting policy, specifically school board policy, which can help garner support for CSCPs.
School board policy regarding school counseling has received little attention in the literature. The aim of this article is to support the continued need to focus on the role and function of school counselors and the use of school board policy to institutionalize best practices for school counseling. First, I discuss the key developments in school counseling that have affected the role and function of school counselors. Second, I review strategies for changing the role and function of school counselors. Lastly, I provide an example of a state that is working to change school board policy regarding school counseling.

**Important Events in School Counseling History**

The concept of systemic guidance programs is not new. Frank Parsons in 1909 published *Choosing a Vocation*. This publication is now widely accepted as the initiation of the school guidance movement, and Parsons is frequently referred to as the father of guidance. Parsons (1909) advocated for the provision of counseling and guidance to young people in “the choice of a vocation, the adequate preparation for it, and the attainment of efficiency and success” (p. 4). Moreover, Parsons laid out steps for school vocational counselors to use when guiding students through the vocational decision-making process and the transition from school to work.

Following Parsons’ foundational work, the first vocational guidance research and publications appeared. As a result, counselors were placed in Boston schools (Brewer, 1924). Organizations such as the Vocation Bureau and the Vocation Bureau of Boston were formed. These organizations sought to keep students from dropping out of school by providing vocational guidance (Sola, 1976). For example, the Vocation Bureau
collaborated with employers to improve their selection of workers and to provide
guidance on working with youths (Vocation Bureau of Boston, 1915). As a result,
schools developed systemic plans for providing vocational guidance in elementary,
middle, and high school by embedding vocational guidance into the classroom
curriculum (Brewer, 1924).

As the movement toward vocational guidance strengthened, authors began raising
corns about the inconsistency of service (Brewer, 1924; Myers, 1923). Referring to
vocational guidance in schools, Brewer (1924) noted, “There seems to be no direction
given to high school work, each school working out its own plan” (p. 35). Further,
researchers observed that some principals negatively affected the delivery of vocational
guidance due to their lack of enthusiasm and the assignment of too many administrative
duties to counselors, which left little time for actual counseling (Brewer, 1924; Myers,
1923).

As researchers and schools continued to focus on helping students with vocational
selection and placement, the guidance and counseling field expanded during the 1930s to
include educational and personal/social services (Stone & Dahir, 2006). An important
change in the mid-20th century occurred when Carl Rogers published several influential
books on school counseling. According to Aubrey (1982), Rogers’s influence opened the
door for many advocates of counseling, ranging from psychiatrists to psychoanalysts, to
offer tools and strategies for school counselors. However, some felt this inundation of
therapeutic strategies further confused the role of school counselors and promoted
techniques that were questionable for use in a school setting (Aubrey, 1982; Wittmer &
Clark, 2007). Because of this transition, mental health and one-on-one student counseling became the central components of school guidance (Sink, 2005; Stone & Dahir, 2006; Wittmer & Clark, 2007).

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 marked another significant development in school counseling. This legislation, along with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964, brought an increased focus on guidance and counseling. The NDEA provided for training to help school counselors identify gifted young people and steer them toward math and science occupations (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Stone & Dahir, 2006; Wittmer & Clark, 2007). However, this training may have led school counselors to focus only on college-bound students and to neglect those who were not planning to attend college (Wittmer & Clark, 2007).

The concept of counseling and guidance as a developmental program emerged in the 1960s and continued to evolve through the 1990s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, 2001; Stone & Dahir, 2006). Guidance focused on the developmental needs of each student, and guidance programs used a systems thinking approach (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). As a systematic program, guidance and counseling minimized administrative, clerical, and crisis-centered modes of operation (Sink & MacDonald, 1998). Instead, guidance and counseling programs focused on planned prevention activities and student skill development in the areas of personal/social, educational, and career development (ASCA, 1990).

Comprehensive programs persisted and were strengthened by the Education Trust (EdTrust), a nonprofit organization devoted to increasing achievement for all K–12
students, especially low-income and ethnic minority populations. The EdTrust developed a 5-year initiative to better align the curriculum taught to school counselors with the skills necessary to help K–12 students succeed (Martin, 2002). The Transforming School Counseling Initiative was implemented at the EdTrust which emphasized the need for school counselors to connect their work to student achievement and educational reform (Martin, 2002).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required educational professionals to focus their attention on closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, with special attention for disadvantaged and ethnic minority students. Groups such as the ASCA and the EdTrust realized that school counselors had been almost completely left out of the educational reforms. These organizations sought to reinvolve school counselors by focusing attention on the counselors’ role in closing the achievement gap (ASCA, 2005; Education Trust, 2009). ASCA collaborated with EdTrust to develop the ASCA National Model in order to incorporate the EdTrust’s mission to “transform school counselors into powerful agents of change in schools to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement for low-income students and students of color” (The Education Trust, 2009, para. 1).

The ASCA National Model helped standardize the practices of school counselors (ASCA, 2005), providing a framework for developing, delivering, managing, and evaluating a school counseling program. In addition, the ASCA National Model provides school counselors with strategies for becoming an integral part of the educational system. For example, as part of the model, school counselors align their mission and counseling
activities with the overall goals and mission of the school and district (ASCA, 2005). In theory, this alignment could help school counseling stakeholders, such as administrators, parents, staff, and community members, to understand how school counselors contribute to student achievement.

**Current State of School Counselor Duties**

The ASCA National Model was, in part, a reaction to continued concern about the inconsistent role and function of school counselors (ASCA, 2005). As early as 1924, Brewer expressed concern that vocational guidance in schools was “well done or indifferently done, apparently, according to the interest and enthusiasm of the individual principal or counselor” (p. 35). Writers have cited role definition as one of the most significant challenges for professional school counselors (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). According to Anderson (2002), if schools do not clearly define roles and set boundaries for school counselors, no stakeholders will be satisfied because school counselors will lack effectiveness.

Job duties are at the core of the debate surrounding the role of school counselors. Clerical tasks such as working out scheduling problems, master scheduling, test coordination, and administration are common and consume the majority of a school counselor’s time (Johnson, Rochkind, & Ott, 2010). Other common time-consuming administrative tasks include lunch duty, hall monitoring, and substitute teaching (Johnson, Rochkind, & Ott, 2010). The ASCA National Model addressed how and for what purpose school counselors use their time (ASCA, 2005), indicating that the majority of school counselors’ time should be spent providing direct services to students in the
form of individual counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance activities (ASCA, 2005).

**The Problem with Noncounseling Duties**

Assigning noncounseling duties to counselors is a problem for schools because noncounseling duties reduce the time counselors can spend on direct services to students. Further, noncounseling duties hinder a school counselor’s ability to effectively contribute to the goals and mission of schools, districts, and states. For example, college and career readiness is a common goal for schools. School counselors are trained to use career guidance and counseling to help students obtain the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to make career and postsecondary decisions (ASCA, 2008). Many school counselors have the training to reach all students through career classroom guidance lessons, small groups, and individual planning sessions.

However, Johnson, Rochkind, Ott, and DuPont (2010) indicated that many young adults felt their school counselor did a poor to fair job of helping them prepare for or make decisions about postsecondary options. According to Johnson et al.’s survey of young adults pursuing a postsecondary education, approximately 60% gave a poor to fair rating of their high school counselor’s helpfulness in making decisions about career and college options. Further, the reality of high caseloads makes it impossible to spend the proper amount of time on college counseling (Johnson et al., 2010). “As education focuses its attention on bringing today’s high schools into the 21st century, the guidance counseling system is a prime candidate for innovation and reform” (Johnson et al., 2010, p. 74).
Chandler, Burnham, and Dahir (2008) found that Alabama school counselors reported high levels of involvement in noncounseling duties such as test coordination, student scheduling, and master scheduling. Brown, Galassi, and Akos (2004) found that over 80% of school counselors in South Carolina reported that they were the test coordinator at their school or that another school counselor in the building performed the duty. Involvement in noncounseling duties is connected with school counselors’ perceived ability to deliver effective counseling services (Brown et al., 2004). In Virginia, elementary school counselors reported significant barriers to performing their job in their preferred way (DeMato & Curcio, 2004). Confusion about school counselors’ responsibilities contributes to the perception that school counselors are schedulers, testing coordinators, and quasi-administrators (Chandler et al., 2008).

**Effective School Counseling Practices**

School counseling interventions help students improve achievement related to grades, standardized assessment scores, attendance, college readiness, and school behavior (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Lapan & Harrington, 2008). School counseling programs also positively affect educational outcomes such as standardized test scores, math proficiency, reading proficiency, attendance, decisions related to education and career planning, parental satisfaction, grades, graduation rates, and school climate (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Carey & Harrington, 2010; Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun 1997; Lapan & Harrington, 2008; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008; Sink & Stroh 2003). In
addition, students who have access to counseling programs report being more positive and having greater feelings of safety at school (Lapan et al., 1997).

Comprehensive counseling programs focus on intentional prevention and intervention activities for students. Intentional activities are achieved through careful planning, proper execution, and the evaluation of interventions. According to Sink (2009), school counselors should regularly evaluate their interventions and program practices in order to improve educational outcomes for students and the profession. In addition, thoughtful selection of evidence-based interventions will help prevent wasted effort, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness (Dimmit, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). In an age of data-based decision making, school counselors with fully functioning programs assess the needs of students through existing and new data.

It has become common practice for school counselor training programs to include ways for school counselors to look for and affect systemic change. Master’s-level programs and specialized school counselor workshops around the country teach how school counselors can contribute to closing the achievement gap. School counselors are encouraged to be leaders and advocates of professional standards and to promote systemic change through data driven CSCPs (ASCA, 2012a; Dahir & Stone, 2009). These practices solidly align with foundational documents such as the ASCA ethical codes (ASCA, 2010), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards (CACREP, 2009), and the ASCA school counselor competencies (ASCA, 2008), as well as with many state certification standards.
Dahir and Stone (2009) examined school counselor action research plans and found school counselors report developing and leading programs that contributed to systemic change and improved success for students. These findings indicate that school counselors can be valuable contributors to educational reform initiatives (Dahir & Stone, 2009). Most importantly, school counselors trained in the development of a CSCP understand how to have a positive effect on the lives of individual students and on the school as a whole. This practice helps ensure that all students receive the benefit of school counseling interventions and services.

**Changing School Counseling Duties**

A key component of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012a) is school counselor accountability. School counselors are ethically obligated to evaluate the effectiveness of their CSCP on student achievement (ASCA, 2010). Although the school counseling literature recognizes this shift in thinking as important, the role and function of school counselors remains extremely problematic and may prevent school counselors from focusing on student outcomes.

The primary barrier to implementing the recommended roles and responsibilities of PSCs [professional school counselors] is often simply the inertia of the school system itself and its external influences upon the counselor. Institutional systems are notorious for resisting change (maintaining homeostasis), and schools are no exception. (Lambie & Williamson, 2004, p. 127)

The value of educating key stakeholders—in particular administrators—about the role and function of school counselors has received much attention in the effort to change the U.S. educational system (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). As early as 1923, Myers noted concerns about principals assigning administrative duties to school counselors, leaving
“little time for the real work of the counselor” (p. 140). Principals’ significant influence on school counselors’ duties continues to be a prominent theme in the school counseling literature (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dolarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005).

Researchers encourage counselors to advocate for changes in their role and function (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Discussing school counselor skills with administrators may improve understanding of how CSCPs can contribute to student achievement (Amatea & Clark, 2005). Increasing principals’ understanding of CSCPs could translate into a more appropriate use of school counselors’ time.

Although some researchers have encouraged counselors to teach administrators about CSCP, others have emphasized the importance of school counselors using outcome data to influence their role and function (Dimmitt et al., 2007; Sink, 2009). When principals experience the influence that school counselors have on students, parents, administrators, and the school, they express more support for CSCPs (Dolarhide et al., 2007). When school counselors show they are affecting student achievement, they can use the results to gain political support for improving counselor-to-student ratios and decreasing noncounseling tasks, thereby providing better services to students (Dimmit et al., 2007).

Evaluating individual school counselor interventions and school counseling programs as a whole can provide evidence that school counselors positively affect student development (Dimmit, et al., 2007). In turn, program evaluation can highlight
inconsistencies that need to be addressed. Gysbers (1995) noted that discrepancies between the written and actual programs quickly came to light when conducting a program evaluation. Assessing a program includes collecting data about the nature, structure, implementation of the CSCP, and the personnel involved in the program’s implementation (Gysbers, 1995).

Several instruments have been developed to collect data on the perceptions of school counselors related to CSCPs. For example, school counselors’ concerns about CSCP development, implementation, and outcomes can be assessed using the Perceptions of Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Inventory (PCGCI) (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Results from the PCGCI can be used to advocate for training and collaboration opportunities to improve understanding of CSCPs. The School Counseling Program Component Scale (SCPCS) is another tool that can help facilitate change when developing a program (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). The SCPCS was designed to measure school counselors’ beliefs about the importance of ASCA National Model components (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). The Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey (ASCNPDS) assesses the developmental needs of school counselors and can provide information about school counselors’ readiness for change (Burnham et al., 2008).

A final example of a school counseling measurement tool is the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005). The SCARS appears to be a valid and reliable tool for measuring actual and preferred school counseling–related tasks (Scarborough, 2005). The SCARS comprises 50 items that fall under five categories.
Four of the categories—counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum—reflect duties outlined in the ASCA National Model. The fifth category—other—reflects clerical and other common noncounseling duties performed by school counselors (Scarborough, 2005). The items were developed using a review of the literature and feedback from school counseling experts and practitioners (Scarborough, 2005). The instrument requires participants to rate their actual and preferred engagement in each activity using a five-point verbal frequency scale (Scarborough, 2005).

Researchers have used the SCARS to assess the perceptions of school counselors and CSCP stakeholders. Wider (2010) modified the SCARS to examine parent preferences for school counselor activities. Results indicated that parents preferred that school counselors focus on activities that facilitate academic achievement and promote responsible student behavior instead of on activities that address personal, relationship, or family issues (Wider, 2010). Parents also preferred that school counselors engage in classroom guidance and coordination of a CSCP (Wider, 2010).

Buchanan (2011) modified the SCARS to measure principals’ perceptions. The purpose of Buchanan’s study was to compare school counselors’ and principals’ perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors engaged in ASCA-endorsed tasks. Counselors and principals mostly agreed that school counselors spent a majority of their time engaged in ASCA-related tasks (Buchanan, 2011). However, there was significant disagreement about activities such as counseling students in crises and small group counseling (Buchanan, 2011).
Instruments designed to measure aspects of CSCP can be used to advocate for changes in the role and function of counselors. Sink (2009) explained that school counselor educators and researchers “need to be far more intentional about creating measurement tools for CSCP counselors to administer to relevant constituents” (p. 72). A school counseling constituent may be anyone who has a stake in the school counseling program. Examples of these stakeholders include students, parents, administrators, and policy makers.

**Understanding School Boards**

Relationships between school counselors and principals have received attention among researchers. However, principals should not be regarded as the only critical decision makers affecting the role and function of school counselors. Policy makers such as school boards have the potential to be quite influential. School counselors need to be familiar with their school board’s policies and procedures for school counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

School boards, also called school directors, are policy makers for each school district. They develop and adopt school district policies that govern “all facets of school operations, including employment of staff, administration of student services, educational programs, instructional materials, school facilities and equipment, finance and support services” (Washington State School Directors’ Association [WSSDA], n.d.-a, p. 13).

Because of the No Child Left Behind Act, school board members, like most stakeholders connected to education, have a required mandate to improve student success. School board members are accountable for issues such as closing the
achievement gap, improving overall test scores, and increasing on-time graduation rates. National and state school board association documents have stated that the primary focus of school boards is raising student achievement (Gemberling, Smith, & Villani (2000); National School Boards Association [NSBA], 2012; WSSDA, 2008b, n.d.-b).

Gemberling, Smith, and Villani (2000) developed a written framework, *Key Work of School Boards*, for school boards to use to enhance their effectiveness in improving student achievement and engaging the community. The *Key Work* document consists of eight components: (a) vision, (b) standards, (c) assessment, (d) accountability, (e) resource alignment, (f) climate, (g) collaboration, and (h) continuous improvement. Like the ASCA National Model, the *Key Work* document was designed as a roadmap to help school boards focus on systemic efforts to raise student achievement (Gemberling, Smith, & Villani (2000); WSSDA, n.d.-b).

Several researchers have highlighted the connection between school board behaviors and student achievement (Delagardelle, 2008; LaMonte, Delagardelle, & Vander Zyl, 2007; Land, 2002, Rice et al., 2001; Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy, 2002; Waters & Marzano, 2006). In response to research, NSBA’s Center for Public Education published a paper identifying characteristics of school board members in high-achieving school districts (Dervarics & O’Brian, 2011). An important characteristic identified in the NSBA’s paper was that effective school boards spend more time focusing on policy that addresses student achievement (Dervarics & O’Brian, 2011; Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997).
Time spent on policy that addresses student achievement may impact effective school board functioning, but other issues may actually be seen as more important or urgent. Hess and Meeks (2011) described a collaborative effort between the NSBA, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, the Iowa School Boards Foundation, and the Wallace Foundation who studied current perceptions of school board members across the United States. Hess and Meeks sent surveys to 3,805 board members and 518 superintendents; 900 board members and 120 superintendents responded. At least one board member responded from 80.1% of districts (Hess & Meeks, 2011).

Results indicate that when asked about the most important goals of education, board members most often ranked vague items such as “help students fulfill their potential” and “prepare students for a satisfying and productive life” as more important than preparing students for college and career readiness (Hess & Meeks, 2011, p. 22). In addition, 14.1% of board members ranked college preparedness last in importance (Hess & Meeks, 2011). When asked to rank the most urgent issues in their district, an overwhelming 89.9% cited budget issues as extremely or very urgent (Hess & Meeks, 2011). Improving learning for all students followed with 79.1%, and closing the achievement gaps among disadvantaged groups ranked third with 69.8% believing it was extremely or very urgent (Hess & Meeks, 2011). The fewest number of respondents said that discipline or school safety and improving nonacademic learning (e.g., the arts, service learning, and civic engagement) were most urgent (Hess & Meeks, 2011).

These responses have several implications for school counselors. First, it is important to know and understand the priorities of school boards so that school
counselors can align selected interventions and presentations to school board priorities. For example, if school board members are focused on improving student academic performance then school counselors might consider facilitating classroom guidance lessons and small groups that enhance students’ ability to succeed. At the same time, the results from Hess and Meeks’s (2011) study present a conundrum for school counselors regarding whether school counselors should tailor their work to accommodate school boards or to educate school board members about best practices. Understanding issues that board members perceive as urgent could help school counselors plan, deliver, evaluate, and present their findings.

Communicating and collaborating with stakeholders is an essential function of professional school counselors who wish to develop and maintain a CSCP. School boards are key stakeholders that many counselors overlook when developing or updating a counseling program. School boards are urged to view student achievement as a top priority (National School Boards Association [NSBA], 2000, 2012; WSSDA, 2008b, n.d.-b). Therefore, school counseling policies that support the role of school counselors in supporting student achievement may be of interest to boards.

**School Counseling School Board Policy**

Policy adoption can be used as a strategy to institutionalize comprehensive guidance and counseling. Gaining political support through the use of policy is an important step when implementing a CSCP (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Gysbers et al., 2000). According to ASCA (2005), “Systemic change occurs when policies and procedures are examined and changed in light of new data” (p. 25). Presenting evidence
of successful school counseling interventions can help elicit the support of policy makers
such as school board members. Across the nation, such research evidence continues to be
gathered in support of comprehensive school counseling as a way to improve student
achievement (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Lapan et al., 2001; Lapan et al., 1997; Lapan
& Harrington, 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003).

State policy and legislation can also play a large role in gaining school board
support for CSCPs. Board policy is often adopted in response to state or federal laws
(WSSDA, 2011). According to ASCA (2012b), all states have some type of school
counseling mandate and/or legislation. At minimum, most states have mandates regarding
school counseling certification. In addition, several states mandate K–12 school
counselors and ratios. A number of states, such as Washington, have passed legislation
that defines the role of the school counselor (Washington House Committee on

State-adopted CSCPs can also substantiate the need for school board support of a
district-level program. A total of 44 states have indicated that they have written school
counseling models (Martin, Carey, & DeCosters, 2009). However, the status of
implementation varies widely. Martin et al. (2009) investigated the features of each
model and deemed only 17 states to have established models; 24 were determined to be
progressing, and 10 were in a beginning stage. The criteria for judging the state models
included alignment with the ASCA National Model, school counseling curriculum
standards, a school counselor leader at the state department of education, a connection to
career and technical education, and other related elements. Martin et al. concluded that
CSCPs would probably be unsuccessful if they were not accompanied by legislation and policy.

Gysbers et al. (2000) examined the school board policies regarding guidance and counseling of many state school board associations. State school board associations develop policies to serve as examples for local school boards. School boards can choose to adopt, modify, or reject the sample policies. Gysbers et al. used these sample state policies as an indicator of local school board policies to determine if school board policies were keeping up with shifts in school counseling best practices. Twenty-three out of the 24 state school board association policies examined did not describe a comprehensive counseling and guidance program and therefore were deemed inadequate. Gysbers et al. also noted that existing policies were actually damaging to school counseling because they worked to marginalize guidance and counseling.

**School Counseling Policy in Washington**

A closer look at states that have updated their school counseling policy, such as Washington, could provide helpful information to practitioners and state school counseling leaders who seek to change the educational system. First, the updated sample policies can serve as models to update district and state school counseling policies. Second, the updated policies can bring awareness to the need for and process of updating school board policy.

Leaders from the Washington School Counselor Association (WSCA) worked with the WSSDA to update the recommended state school board policy for school counseling in 2008. Before the update, the recommended policy primarily addressed the
role of school counselors in crises, specifically suicide ideation. The updated policy stated that school counselors would create a CSCP and that the school board would provide the support and necessary resources for counselors (WSSDA, 2008a). The guidance and counseling model procedure (2140P) was also revised. Whereas the policy reflects what the school board expects of school counselors, the procedures outline how the school counselor should fulfill those expectations. The updated version reflects student academic, career, and personal/social competencies that could be supported by a CSCP. The procedures include the foundation, delivery, management, and accountability systems found in the ASCA National Model (2005).

School board members in Washington school districts received notification about the policy revision (WSSDA, 2008b). School counselors were notified of the model policy and procedures through newsletters, e-mail, conference presentations, and the WSCA website (Shea, 2011; Washington School Counselor Association, n.d.). Based on my experience of reviewing numerous Washington State school board policies regarding school counseling and talking extensively to school counselors, I found that some districts have chosen to adopt the revised guidance and counseling policy; however many have not adopted the policy. In many cases, districts that did not adopt the revised policy had an outdated policy—or no policy—regarding school counseling. This signals that school counselors in the district may be operating from an antiquated model of service delivery or may not be fully supported by district policy makers to perform CSCP activities.
Discussion

Inconsistency in the role and function of counselors and overemphasis on noncounseling duties have been consistently significant problems in the school counseling profession (Aubrey, 1982; Brewer, 1924; Gysbers et al., 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Myers, 1923; Wrenn, 1962). Researchers must pay more attention to strategies to change the counseling system and assist school counselors in improving their service to students. School board policy adoption is a tactic to gain support for best practices, such as implementing CSCPs, and to advocate for CSCPs that serve all students.

Studies that provide insight into school counseling policy adoption and implementation warrant further exploration. Although researchers have examined sample state school board policy regarding school counseling (Gysbers et al., 2000), there is a lack of research on individual school districts that have adopted school board policy. Further, studies that explore the perceptions of school board members regarding school counseling policy would provide useful insight into the profession of school counseling.
References


Perceptions of School Board Knowledge and Prioritization of School Counseling Activities

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Abstract

This article explores school board perceptions, actions, and policies related to Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP) activities. Modified versions of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005) were used to assess school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of school board knowledge and prioritization of school counseling activities. The results indicate that there is a relationship between school board knowledge and the priority board members assign to CSCP activities. The findings also suggest that there is a difference between school board and school counselor perceptions of school board knowledge and priorities. Suggestions for gaining school board support for the use of school board policy are discussed.
Chapter 3: Perceptions of School Board Knowledge and Prioritization of School Counseling Activities

Guidance and counseling has been a part of the U.S. educational system for more than 100 years (Brewer, 1924; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, 2001; Parsons, 1909). Since the adoption of counseling in schools, the field of school counseling has been criticized for its lack of role clarity, which has resulted in the misuse of counselors’ time and expertise (Aubrey, 1982; Bemak 2000; Brewer, 1924; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; House & Hayes, 2002; Johnson, 2000; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Myers, 1923; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink, 2002). Brewer noted his concern in 1924 about the absence of supervision of guidance in schools, which resulted in schools creating inconsistent and ineffective plans.

Great strides have been made to address inconsistent school counseling practices throughout the history of the profession. Comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCPs) in particular have emerged as the primary approach to providing planned, developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention activities, resulting in less time spent on administrative and clerical duties (ASCA, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). Developing, delivering, managing, and evaluating CSCPs became a cornerstone of the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA’s) National Model (ASCA, 2005). The National Model sought to help counselors move from a responsive service model to one that provided career, academic, and personal/social guidance and counseling to all students (ASCA, 2012a).
The ASCA ethical standards for school counselors, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards, and the ASCA school counselor competencies all encourage the implementation of CSCPs (ASCA, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2012a; CACREP, 2009). There is growing evidence to support the positive impact of CSCPs on student achievement. Researchers have found that in schools where CSCPs are more fully implemented, students have higher standardized test scores (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003). Researchers have also found that when students have access to CSCPs, they report a greater sense of safety, are more satisfied with the education they are receiving, and earn higher grades (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Lapan & Harrington, 2008).

CSCPs should be central to school counselors’ role and function. Instead, school counselors continue to spend too much time on noncounseling duties such as scheduling, test coordinating, and serving as quasi-administrators (Brown, Galassi, & Akos, 2004; Chandler, Burnham, & Dahir, 2008). School counselors have stated that they experience significant barriers to effectively doing their jobs (DeMato & Curcio, 2004). To successfully address this problem, school counselors must gain support from key decision makers who have the power to influence change.

Principals are key decision makers who significantly influence the role and function of school counselors; therefore the impact of principals on CSCP activities has been examined in a number of studies (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dolarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005). School boards and school
board policy also influence the role and function of school counselors; however this relationship has received little attention in the literature. School boards are responsible for all aspects of district operations and for developing policy that communicates the board’s vision and the procedures for bringing that vision to fruition (Washington State School Directors’ Association [WSSDA], n.d.).

School counselors should be familiar with the school counseling policies and procedures in their district (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Further, they should advocate for their school board to adopt or update school counseling policy as a way to align the role and function of school counselors with CSCP practices. According to ASCA (2005), “Systemic change occurs when policies and procedures are examined and changed in light of new data” (p. 25). Showing the impact that school counseling interventions have on student achievement can be particularly persuasive when attempting to gain political support (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

State school counseling legislation and subsequent mandates are often the precursor to the adoption of school board policy regarding the development and implementation of CSCPs (WSSDA, n.d.). States frequently have mandates that at minimum specify school counseling certification requirements. In some states, legislation mandates the presence of school counselors, the ratio of school counselors to students, and/or the role of school counselors (ASCA, 2012b).

State-adopted CSCPs can provide a strong argument for the adoption of school board policy regarding school counseling. Martin, Carey, and DeCoster (2009) examined state school counseling models and found that 44 states claimed to have a written model.
However, of the 44 models, only 17 were established; 24 were deemed to be progressing, and 10 were at a beginning stage (Martin et al., 2009). School counselors in states with established models can easily use the state model to advocate for CSCP-aligned school board policy by citing the endorsement of important bodies such as the department of education. Then again, even if a state model is at a beginning stage of implementation, school counselors can still use it as an advocacy tool when attempting to gain the support of school boards.

School board policies regarding school counseling are often outdated or nonexistent. Gysbers, Lapan, and Jones (2000) examined school counseling policies outlined in 24 state school board association manuals. State school board associations typically write these example policies for school districts to adopt, modify, or reject. Gysbers et al. hypothesized that the state example policies would provide evidence of school counseling policies in local districts. They found that 23 out of 24 model policies were inadequate, in large part because the model policies did not align with comprehensive guidance and counseling practices. Further, Gysbers et al. posited the state association model policies were actually damaging to school counselors because the policies marginalized the counselors’ work.

Individual state efforts to update school board policy regarding school counseling can provide helpful insight into school counseling for leaders. Washington State serves as an example of recent efforts to align school board policy regarding school counseling with CSCP practices. The Washington School Counselor Association (WSCA) worked with the Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) to update the model
guidance and counseling policy and the accompanying procedures.

Upon completion of the policy revision, WSSDA sent the model to school board members in school districts across Washington. School board members received a rationale for adopting the revised sample policy and procedures, which identified the role of school counselors in supporting student success through the development of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (WSSDA, 2008). School counselors were also notified of the policy and procedures revision through WSCA newsletters, email, the WSCA website, and professional conference presentations. School counselors were encouraged to familiarize themselves with their district’s school counseling policy. They were also advised to advocate for adopting or updating district policy and procedures to better align with school counseling standards and best practices.

School counselors would be well served to develop a working relationship with school boards because school board members are district policy makers and have the power to adopt policies that stipulate the role and function of school counselors. “The board develops and adopts policy governing all facets of school operations—including employment of staff, administration of student services, educational programs, instructional materials, school facilities and equipment, finance and support services” (WSSDA, 2011, p. 13).

**Rationale and Purpose**

School counselors must continue to develop strategies that maximize the amount of time they spend providing CSCP services to all students. School board support through policy adoption is a necessary step in the development of a CSCP (Gysbers & Henderson,
2000). Unfortunately, the amount of research on the importance of school board policy to CSCPs is lacking (N. C. Gysbers, personal communication, July 25, 2012).

In this study, I sought to differentiate between school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of school board knowledge and priorities related to CSCPs. I also explore school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of school board actions and policies. These two distinct perspectives can illuminate the relationship between CSCPs and school board policy.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were developed to investigate school counselors’ perceptions of school board members and school board members’ perceptions about CSCP practices and policy:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between school board members’ level of knowledge about comprehensive school counseling activities and the priority they assign to these activities?

Research Question 2: What is school board members’ self-perceived level of knowledge about CSCP activities?

Research Question 3: What is the level of priority that school board members assign to different activities commonly prescribed by CSCPs?

Research Question 4: Given that the Washington State School Director’s Association in 2008 suggested that school boards adopt a policy related to CSCPs, what school board policies and procedures do school board members indicate have been adopted?
Research Question 5: Do school counselors’ ratings of school board members’ level of knowledge of CSCP activities differ from school board members’ self-perceived level of knowledge of CSCP activities?

Research Question 6: Do school counselors’ ratings of school board members’ level of priority for CSCP activities differ from school board members’ self-perceived level of priority for CSCP activities?

Research Question 7: Given that the Washington State School Director’s Association in 2008 suggested that school boards adopt a policy related to CSCPs, what school board policies and procedures do school counselors indicate have been adopted?

Hypotheses

H1: There is a direct relationship between school board members’ level of knowledge about comprehensive school counseling activities and the priority they assign to these activities.

Ho: There is no relationship between school board members’ level of knowledge about comprehensive school counseling activities and the priority they assign to these activities.

H2: School counselors and school board members will have different perceptions about school board members’ level of knowledge about CSCP activities.

Ho: School counselors and school board members will not have different perceptions about school board members’ level of knowledge about CSCP activities.

H3: School counselors and school board members will have different perceptions about the priority school board members assign to different activities.
commonly prescribed by CSCPs.

Ho: School counselors and school board members will not have different perceptions about the priority school board members assign to different activities commonly prescribed by CSCPs.

Methods

Design. I used two surveys in this study. The School Board Perception Survey assessed school board members’ knowledge and prioritization of school counseling activities. The School Counselor Perceptions of School Boards survey assessed school counselors’ perceptions of school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for school counseling activities. The surveys also included exploratory questions to gain information about examples of school board policy regarding school counseling.

A sample of school board members and school counselors received a one-time online survey. Using a self-administered online survey had several advantages. First, the self-administered format made asking numerous and more complex questions more practical (Fowler, 2009). In addition, the online questionnaire format enabled me to keep the cost of data collection to a minimum, allowed for quick return of responses, and gave respondents time to carefully answer the questions (Fowler, 2009).

Participants. Participants were 169 school board members (78 women and 91 men) and 349 school counselors (268 women and 73 men) in Washington State. The school board members all belonged to the WSSDA. Board members identified their title as follows: 77.2% were school board members (n = 129), 20.4% were board chairs (n = 34), 1.2% were vice chairs (n = 2), and 1.2% had another title (n = 2). Members reported
serving on the school board for the following number of years: 8.9% had served less than 1 year (n = 15), 9.5% had served 1 to 2 years (n = 16), 21.4% had served 3 to 4 years (n = 36), and 60.1% had served 5 or more years (n = 101). School board members in districts with fewer than 1,000 students represented 34.9% of the sample (n = 59), members in districts with 1,000 to 5,000 students represented 33.7% (n = 57), members in districts with 5,001 to 15,000 accounted for 19.5% (n = 33), and school board members in the largest districts with over 15,000 students accounted for 11.8% of the sample (n = 20).

School counseling participants were recruited with assistance from the WSCA. The WSCA maintains a database of most school counselors in Washington, including WSCA members and nonmembers. School counselor and school counselor–related job titles were as follows: 92.4% were school counselors (n = 318), 2% were former school counselors (n = 7), 2% were counselor educators (n = 7), and 3.5% had another title (n = 12). School counselor experience was reported as follows: 8.8% had 2 years or less experience (n = 30), 9.7% had 3 to 5 years experience (n = 33), 27.6% had 6 to 10 years experience (n = 94), and 54% had more than 10 years experience (n = 184). School counselors reported the number of students in their district as follows: 9.9% worked in districts with fewer than 1,000 (n = 34), 22.7% worked in districts with 1,000 to 5,000 students (n = 78), 33.2% were in districts with 5,001 to 15,000 students (n = 114), and 33.2% worked in districts with over 15,000 students (n = 114). School counselors working at the elementary level represented 18.4% of the sample (n = 94), middle/jr. high counselors accounted for 14.8% (n = 76), high school counselors represented 26% (n = 133), K-8th grade counselors made up 2.1% (n = 11), counselors in K-12 settings
represented 4.9% \((n = 25)\), and “other” setting was represented by .2% \((n = 1)\).

**Instrument.** A modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) was used to assess how school board members rated their knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP-related activities (Scarborough, 2005). A modified version of the SCARS was used to assess how school counselors rated school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP-related activities. The original SCARS has 50 items representing counseling, coordination, consultation, curriculum, and other categories. Within each category are school counselor task statements that reflect professional standards such as the National Model for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005), the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), and other journal and text publications (Scarborough, 2005). The SCARS uses a five-point verbal frequency scale to measure school counselors’ actual and preferred counseling tasks (Scarborough, 2005). Results from the initial investigation of the SCARS instrument suggested content validity, construct validity, and reliability (Scarborough, 2005).

Modified versions of the SCARS have been used to assess the perceptions of school counseling stakeholders. Thus far, the modified versions have been used to examine issues such as parental preferences for school counselor activities and principal perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors engage in school counselor activities (Buchanan, 2011; Wider, 2010). With permission from the SCARS author, I used a modified version of the SCARS to assess school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions.
The questionnaire used in this study contained three sections. Section 1 was designed to gather demographic information. Section 2 contained 24 items that fell under the categories of counseling, consultation, curriculum, or coordination activities. These items came directly from the SCARS, were slightly reworded, or in a couple cases were completely new. A scale that assessed knowledge and priorities was applied to the modified SCARS items. School board members and school counselors were asked to rate their knowledge of each item on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all knowledgeable*) to 5 (*completely knowledgeable*). The alpha coefficient for the 24 knowledge items is .968, suggesting that the knowledge items have fairly high internal consistency. Respondents were also asked to rate the priority given to each item on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*not a priority*) to 5 (*essential*). The alpha coefficient for the 24 priority items is .975, suggesting relatively high internal consistency. The final section of the questionnaire answered Research Questions 4 and 7: “Given that the Washington State School Director’s Association in 2008 suggested that school boards adopt a policy related to CSCPs, what school board policies and procedures do school board members indicate have been adopted?” and “Given that the Washington State School Director’s Association in 2008 suggested that school boards adopt a policy related to CSCPs, what school board policies and procedures do school counselors indicate have been adopted?”

In section 3, participants received a sample list of school board policies and actions that would indicate support of CSCPs. They were instructed to indicate which policies and actions their board had taken. School counselors, counselor educators, and
school board members served as experts to assess all three sections for face validity.

**Procedures.** The tailored design method for Internet surveys was utilized to encourage maximum school board participation in the online survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The online survey was administered using Survey Monkey. A directory of 1,300 school board member e-mail addresses was created to constitute the school board sample population. First, school board members were e-mailed an invitation to participate in the study and a link to the school board member perception survey. A week later, school board members received the online survey and a reminder to participate in the study.

The WSCA maintained an e-mail list containing 2,100 school counselors in Washington. According to WSCA, the list represented nearly every practicing school counselor in the state. The WSCA agreed to e-mail the school counselor perception survey using the directory. Because I relied on the WSCA to e-mail the survey, I used a variation of Dillman et al.’s (2009) tailored design method. I only made two attempts to solicit participants: First the WSCA e-mailed an invitation to participate with the online survey. Then a second e-mail containing the online questionnaire and a reminder to participate was sent the following week.

Using survey research methods and a causal comparative design, I collected data from two groups: school counselors and school board members. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 19.0. A Pearson product–moment correlation was used to examine the nature of the relationship between school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for school counseling policies and procedures. This was followed by a one-way
ANOVA to examine the differences in school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of the knowledge of school board members. A second ANOVA was used to examine the differences in school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of the level of priority school board members assigned to CSCP-related activities. Bonferroni’s correction method was used to adjust the alpha level to the .025 level for multiple comparisons.

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used in the assessment of school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP-related activities. Finally, frequencies and percentages were computed to report the results of the board policies and procedures that the school counselors and school board members indicated had been adopted.

Results

Relationship between knowledge and priority. The relationship between school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP activities was investigated using Person product–moment correlation coefficient. The results indicated a moderately strong direct relationship between school board members’ knowledge and priority scores ($r[150] = .338, p < .001$). Results supported the hypothesis that there was a correlation between school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP activities. The findings suggested that as school board members’ knowledge of school counseling activities increased, the priority they assigned to these activities increased.

Variation in knowledge scores. To determine whether knowledge scores differed between school counselors and school board members, a one-way ANOVA was
conducted using knowledge scores as the dependent variable and school counselor and school board member as independent variables. The results of the analysis indicated statistically significant differences between school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of the knowledge of school board members regarding CSCP activities ($F[1, 416] = 31.39, p < .001$). The mean knowledge composite score for school board members ($M = 2.61, SD = 0.72$) was significantly higher than the mean knowledge composite score for school counselors’ perceptions of school board members ($M = 2.21, SD = 0.68$).

**Variation in priority scores.** In order to determine whether differences in priority scores existed, another one-way ANOVA was conducted with priority scores as the dependent variable and school counselors and school board members as independent variables. The results supported the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between school counselor and school board member priority scores, however, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated. The results of the ANOVA showed that the difference in perceptions about school board priorities was significant for the two groups ($F[1, 414] = 235.67, p < .001$). The priority composite score for school board members ($M = 3.72, SD = 0.58$) was higher than the mean score for school counselors’ perceptions of school board members ($M = 2.59, SD = 0.79$).

However, Levene’s test showed that variances for the priority scores were not equal ($F[1, 414] = 15.72, p < .001$). An inspection of the histogram and P–P plots found no violations of the assumption of normality for the priority data. School board members’
mean priority scores for each CSCP activity ranged between a low score of $M = 3.14$ to a high score of $M = 4.39$.

**Knowledge scores of school board members.** Mean scale scores for school board members’ knowledge of school counseling activities, provided in Table 1, were below the midpoint of 3.0, indicating moderate knowledge, on all items except two. “Counseling individual students regarding academic issues” ($M = 3.04$) and “Counseling students regarding school behavior” ($M = 3.01$) had the highest scores. Additionally, “Counseling individual students regarding academic issues” ($SD = .87$) and “Counseling students regarding school behavior” ($SD = .86$) had the lowest standard deviations, indicating that school board members had the greatest amount of agreement on their perceived knowledge of these CSCP activities. The two items with the lowest mean scores were “Providing reports to stakeholders regarding school counseling program effectiveness” ($M = 2.04$) and “Conducting parent education classes/workshops” ($M = 2.22$).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling individual students regarding academic issues</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing group counseling for academic issues</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling individual students regarding career development</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing group counseling for career development</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students regarding school behavior</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students regarding crisis/emergency issues</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students regarding relationships</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling individual students about personal/family concerns</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting groups regarding family/personal issues</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coordinating referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals 148 2.74 .985 149 3.99 .893
Consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent development 148 2.51 .929 149 3.68 .894
Consulting with school staff concerning student behavior 148 2.87 .942 148 3.94 .851
Conducting classroom lessons addressing career development and work 145 2.66 .938 147 3.80 .891
Conducting classroom lessons addressing academic success 146 2.69 .972 147 3.96 .827
Conducting classroom lessons on personal and/or social traits 146 2.70 .882 146 3.68 .877
Conducting classroom lessons on conflict resolution 145 2.64 .895 146 3.61 .850
Conducting classroom lessons on relationships with others 146 2.48 .970 145 3.20 .969
Coordinating with stakeholders to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs 138 2.58 .942 139 3.70 .795
Evaluating student progress as a result of participating in school counseling program activities 137 2.29 .964 136 3.63 .796
Conducting needs assessments to determine counseling interventions 137 2.27 .959 137 3.73 .800
Coordinating comprehensive school counseling program that serves all students’ academic, personal/social, and career development needs 137 2.26 .926 138 3.85 .870
Coordinating school-wide response for crisis management intervention 139 2.58 .978 140 3.79 .861
Conducting parent education classes/workshops 138 2.22 1.025 138 3.14 .892
Providing reports to stakeholders regarding school counseling program effectiveness 139 2.04 .984 139 3.37 .854
Composite score 151 2.60 .722 151 3.72 .582

Priority scores of school board members. Mean scores for the priority school board members assigned to each school counseling activity (see Table 1) were at or above the 3.0 midpoint indicating medium priority. “Counseling individual students regarding academic issues” had the highest mean score ($M = 4.39$) and the lowest standard deviation ($SD = .74$). “Counseling individual students regarding academic issues” demonstrated the highest level of agreement among respondents regarding school board members’ knowledge of and priority for helping students with academic needs.
“Counseling individual students regarding career development” had the second-highest mean score (\(M = 4.18\)), suggesting that board members placed a very high value on helping students with academic and career development needs. “Conducting parent education classes/workshops” (\(M = 3.14\)) and “Conducting classroom lessons on personal and/or social traits” (\(M = 3.20\)) had the two lowest priority scores, suggesting that board members placed a lower value on these items.

**School district actions and adopted policies.** Two exploratory research questions focused on school board policies and actions that have been adopted in Washington. The first question aimed to identify school board members’ perceptions of board actions and policies. The second question focused on school counselors’ perceptions of board actions and policies. Table 2 presents the frequency with which participants reported the school board taking three possible actions or adopting six possible policies discussed in documents related to school counseling.

School board members reported that they undertook each of the nine policies or actions more often than school counselors reported they did. “Discuss school counseling programs at board meetings” showed the greatest discrepancy between school board members’ and school counselors’ responses: 58.5% (\(n = 79\)) of board members reported that school counseling programs were discussed at board meetings, whereas only 24.2% (\(n = 57\)) of school counselors said that CSCPs were discussed at meetings. For “The board adopted the updated (2008) Washington State School Directors’ Association sample guidance and counseling policy,” 50.7% (\(n = 68\)) of school board members, versus 23.6% (\(n = 55\)) of school counselors, responded that the policy had been adopted.
As an important note, both groups responded that they did not know if the WSSDA policy had been adopted, at a rate of 44% \((n = 59)\) for school board members and 59.2% \((n = 138)\) for school counselors.

School counselors and board members differed in their responses about staffing issues related to school counseling. In all, 22.2% \((n = 30)\) of school board members, versus 39.2% \((n = 93)\) of school counselors, stated that the school board had not maintained school counseling full-time equivalent (FTE) positions thus suggesting that school counselors perceived that school counseling positions had been cut more frequently than school board members perceived. A large discrepancy between school counselors and school board members also existed regarding the ratio of school counselors to students: 30.5% \((n = 47)\) of school board members and 69.8% \((n = 40)\) of school counselors said the board had not increased the number of school counselors. Nearly a third (33.6%) of school board members indicated that they did not know if the number of school counseling FTEs had increased.

Table 2

*Frequencies and Percentages of School Board Actions and Policies That Support CSCPs as Perceived by School Board Members and School Counselors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School board policies and actions</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>School counselors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss school counseling programs at board meetings</td>
<td>Yes 79, No 51, Don’t know 5</td>
<td>Yes 57, No 105, Don’t know 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>维持学校辅导员（FTE）数量在预算削减的情况下</td>
<td>58.5% 37.8% 3.7%</td>
<td>24.2% 44.5% 31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain the number of school counselors (FTE) in the face of budget cuts</td>
<td>93, 30, 12</td>
<td>131, 93, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.9% 22.2% 8.9%</td>
<td>55.3% 39.2% 5.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of school counselors (FTE) when student populations increases</td>
<td>47, 40, 44</td>
<td>38, 164, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.9% 30.5% 33.6% 16.2% 69.8% 14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Directors’ Association sample guidance and counseling policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The policy reflects school counseling programs that serve all students.</th>
<th>50.7%</th>
<th>5.2%</th>
<th>44%</th>
<th>17.2%</th>
<th>23.6%</th>
<th>59.2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The policy reflects the counselors’ role in student career development.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy reflects the counselors’ role in student academic development.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy reflects the counselors’ role in student personal and social development.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy reflects school counseling crisis services.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Other types of policies and actions. | A few school board members ($n = 6$) and school counselors ($n = 25$) included comments about other types of board policies or actions that were not listed on the survey. These comments were treated as qualitative data and analyzed using a data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2007). The data analysis spiral consisted of five nonlinear phases as described by Creswell (2007). In the first phase, respondents’ comments were organized by hand. In the second phase, comments were read several times and memos were written in the margins. Next, five categories were developed based on themes and were later winnowed into three categories. The three categories consisted of comments about school board policies related to school counseling, ensuring school counseling program accountability, and reliance on noncounseling staff in small districts. Some comments had more than one theme and were therefore placed in more than one category. Table 3 presents the categories, the number of comments in each category, and a description of each category. |

| Table 3 |
### Categories of Other Types of School Board Policies or Actions on the School Board Member Survey (n = 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written policies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Examples of adopted policy such as an adapted version of 2140, suicide prevention, and substance abuse. Comments also about looking up the policy and being “surprised” about the policy or needing to look up counseling policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School counseling program accountability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indicated who is responsible for overseeing school counseling: administrators, counseling team, or school board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliance on noncounseling staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use of other personnel such as teachers and administrators to counsel students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School counseling comments were analyzed using the same data analysis spiral method (Creswell, 2007). Table 4 presents four categories, the number of comments in each category, and a brief description. Although school board members tended to mostly describe actions and adopted policies that supported school counseling programs, several school counselors who described feeling unsupported by the school board and gave examples of school board actions such as cutting positions, hiring noncounseling staff to fulfill counseling duties, and spreading counseling resources too thin.

Table 4

### Categories of Other Types of School Board Policies or Actions on the School Counselor Survey (n = 25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsupportive actions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>The school board cut school counseling positions, cut positions while outsourcing counseling services, cut positions while hiring academic intervention specialists, and/or spread counseling time too thin. Reductions in elementary positions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another category, written policies, describes comments related to school board policies regarding school counseling that were not mentioned in the survey. For example, some policies described the role of counselors in suicide prevention or in improving assessment scores. A couple of comments outlined policies that described school counselors as test coordinators. There were a few comments highlighting resources given to support the CSCP, such as a director of school counseling or secretarial support. Of particular interest were three comments that described the results of presentations made to the school board. Two of the three comments described situations that resulted in increased school counseling support following school counseling presentations to the school board. In one case, the school board responded by reducing counselor caseloads from 450 to 375.

**Additional comments.** Several school board members ($n = 22$) and school counselors ($n = 61$) included optional additional comments. The comments were treated
as qualitative data, and the data spiral analysis method was employed. The additional school board comments are represented in Table 5, and the additional school counselor comments are represented in Table 6. School board members made several comments about the unique issues in small districts related to counseling staffing. Most frequently school board members stated that there was little to no counseling staff. In some cases, school board members mentioned resources for filling the school’s counseling needs. Six board members addressed the importance of increasing the number of FTE counselors. A few expressed concerns about school counselor effectiveness.

School counselors had an overwhelmingly apathetic or discouraged view of their school board’s support of school counseling. Over half of the comments mentioned feeling not valued and being assigned a low priority. Often these comments were based on concerns related to a reduction in FTE counselors. Several comments related to feeling supported by the school board. Supportive comments often described resources that were allocated to counseling.

Table 5

*Categories of Additional Comments on the School Board Member Survey (n = 22)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small district issues</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Issues that small districts experience such as little or no counseling FTE staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing school counseling time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The board recently increased counselor time, had the desire to increase time, or was in the process of investigating the need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliance on other resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use of noncounseling staff; granting employee, student help group, and community resources to fill counseling needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific counseling services 3 Services that are provided to students such as planning for high school and beyond

Lack of effectiveness 3 Concerns about school counselor effectiveness due to cuts in FTE counselors, lack of services provided, or lack of competence

Accountability concerns 2 Comments about immeasurable policy constructs and uncertainty about how to hold school counselors accountable.

Discussion

A significant finding from this study was that as school board members’ knowledge of CSCP activities increased, the priority they assigned to those activities increased. The results support the recommendations found in the literature about the importance of educating policy makers regarding CSCPs and the impact of counseling interventions (ASCA, 2005; Dimmit et al., 2007; Herr, 2001; Sink, 2009).

Table 6

Categories of Additional Comments on the School Counselor Survey (n = 61)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not valued</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>The school board does not value, understand, and/or allocate resources to support the role of the school counselor. Frequent concerns about cuts, overwhelming caseloads, and being spread too thin. Many comments related to the elimination of elementary positions. Several comments about administrators not understanding CSCPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board supports school counseling</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>The school board fully supports (e.g., made counseling a budgeting priority) or supports certain aspects of school counseling (e.g., supports career counseling and high school positions).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of knowledge about school board 11 School counselors had little or no contact with school board members regarding school counseling issues or policies.

Conditions of support 6 Conditions that made support possible, such as a former school counselor on the school board, grants that provided funding for school counseling positions, parent questionnaire responses that indicated the desire not to cut counseling staff, board support when counselors actively report what they are doing in schools, committees that include counselors, and periodic program reviews.

Policy adopted but not supported 5 The school board adopted policies that aligned with comprehensive school counseling, but the board did not support the policies through actions or resources.

Results from this study also indicated that school counselors rated school board members as having less knowledge about CSCP activities than school board members reported. In addition, results of the ANOVA indicated that school board members perceived that they placed higher priority on CSCP activities than school counselors perceived. School counselor comments revealed frustration and apathy toward school board actions and policy making. However, several comments described examples of supportive board actions, especially allocation of resources to support CSCPs. These comments highlighted the possibilities and positive impact of strong working relationships between the school board and school counselors.

Overall, school counselors appeared to have a more negative perception of school board members’ knowledge and priorities than school board members had. It was predicted that perceptions about school board members’ knowledge and priorities would
differ between school board members and counselors. Therefore, it was not surprising that school counselors rated school board members’ lower than school board members rated themselves. Of particular interest were school board members’ rankings of the priority they placed on CSCP activities, which resulted in a violation of the assumption of homogeneity. One possible explanation for the results of Levene’s test was that the data were skewed because of school board members’ desire to give socially acceptable responses.

Another possible explanation for the difference in perception of school board members’ knowledge of and priority for school counseling activities was the lack of contact school counselors may have had with school boards. A few school counselors commented that they had little or no contact with board members. Further, school counselors may not have been aware of school board policies regarding school counseling due to a lack of communication. Conversely, a lack of communication may have contributed to school board members’ lack of awareness of the need to update policies and actions. Over half of the school counselors (59.2%) and 44% of school board members indicated that they did not know if the board had adopted an updated school counseling policy recommended by the WSSDA. Moreover, a high percentage of counselors and school board members reported not knowing if the current school board policy for school counseling addressed career, academic, personal/social, and/or crisis counseling for students.

There were some noteworthy limitations to this study. The response rate was lower than desired for both school counselors and school board members. Therefore, the
sample may not have accurately represented each population. Invitations to participate were sent via e-mail; however school district filters might have prevented some e-mails from reaching potential participants, which could have impacted the response rate. Also, some e-mail addresses were inaccurate or no longer in service. Participants were from Washington only. Replication of the study with a larger national sample is recommended.

Finally, an additional limitation was the use of a questionnaire asking about perceptions of school board actions and policies rather than directly evaluating school board policies and behaviors. Future studies should address school board policy documents regarding school counseling throughout the state. In addition, an analysis of changes in school board members’ knowledge of and priority for CSCP activities as a result of training might provide helpful information about effective strategies to gain the support of school boards. A future study that focuses on the differences in school board knowledge, priorities, and policies in small versus large districts is also recommended.

**Implications for school counselors.** The amount of time school counselors spend on noncounseling services instead of CSCP activities continues to be an area of great concern (Bringman, Mueller, & Lee, 2010; Chandler et al., 2008). Working with principals and other stakeholders to increase the time counselors spend on CSCP activities has received a lot of attention in the literature (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dollarhide et al., 2007; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005). School board members should be regarded as important stakeholders with influence over the role and function of school counselors. School board members reported having moderate or less than moderate knowledge of school counseling activities, which is particularly significant
considering the finding that there is a direct relationship between school board members’ knowledge of and level of priority for CSCP-related activities. Results from this study demonstrate the need for counselors to actively engage with school board members to increase understanding and knowledge of CSCPs.

School counselors are encouraged to become involved in school counseling policies at the district and state levels (ASCA, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). School board policies are often easily found on district websites. However, school counselors may find that their board’s school counseling policy is outdated or nonexistent. Therefore, advocacy efforts are often necessary.

Inventing a new policy can be a cumbersome task. School counselors can use sample policies that already align with CSCP concepts. Both Washington and Missouri have sample policies that can be adapted to fit local needs. It is possible that other states have updated their sample school board policies for school counseling following an examination by Gysbers et al. (2000). It would be well worth counselors’ time to check with their state school board association and ask to see the sample school board policy regarding school counseling. Washington and other states give school districts a sample policy as an example of what the school counseling policy should include. As Gysbers et al. noted, outdated policies might be damaging to counselors and therefore are in serious need of revision.

Updating school counseling policies is an important step in the development of a CSCP. However, as a few counselors noted in their comments on the survey, the policy may not be enough to spur administrators and board members into action. School
counseling policy can be used as a strategy to help institutionalize best practices, but it is critical to obtain the support of the school board to implement and improve CSCP services.

The findings of this study suggest that although school board members report having greater knowledge of CSCP activities than school counselors reported, school board members nevertheless report having only moderate or less-than-moderate knowledge. School board members’ level of priority for CSCP activities was directly related to their level of knowledge, indicating that board members may assign higher priority to activities they have more knowledge about. This implies that school counselors should work to increase the knowledge of board members. The findings also suggest that both school counselors and school board members should become more familiar with their current school counseling policies and when needed, they should adopt or revise a policy that aligns with CSCP components. Further research is needed to better understand the relationship between school boards and school counseling programs.
References


Chapter 4: General Conclusion

This dissertation study thematically links two manuscripts through examination of school board policies regarding school counseling. A review of the literature suggested the importance of advocating for school counseling policies that reflect the current understanding of school counseling best practices. This dissertation also provided research on school board policy by studying school counselors’ and school board members’ perceptions of school board actions related to comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP) activities.

Identifying why school counseling policy is important is a critical step in addressing the use of school board policy regarding school counseling. Both manuscripts addressed adopting or changing school board policy as a strategy for changing the role and function of school counselors. Efforts to help counselors advocate for increased time spent on CSCP activities continues to be a key issue for practitioners and counselor educators. School board actions and policy can play a role in increasing the time counselors spend on best practice such as CSCPs.

Investigating the influence of key stakeholders, such as school boards, on school counseling is a key element of this dissertation research. Both manuscripts indicate a need for school counselors to better inform school boards about CSCPs and to advocate for policy that aligns with CSCPs. Chapter 3 also addressed school board members’ knowledge of CSCP activities, their prioritization of those activities, and their policy actions related to school counseling.
My original interest in school board policy regarding school counseling arose from the time I spent updating Washington’s sample counseling and guidance policy, a collaborative effort between the Washington School Counselor Association and the WSSDA. After the WSSDA sent the sample policy to all Washington school districts, there was no way of tracking what schools adopted the policy and why. Several counselors informed the WSCA that their school boards had adopted the policy, but administrators and school board members did not make any efforts to actually support the policy. It was unknown how many other schools lacked support for implementing the school counseling policy. In addition, although the policy was made available to school counselors and school board members throughout Washington, many expressed that they did not know about it. Thus, I wanted this research project to increase awareness and understanding of school board policy regarding school counseling.

My early research on school board policy regarding school counseling identified a lack of literature on the topic. The two manuscripts were meant to raise awareness about school board policy regarding school counseling. School counselors and counselor educators who are not familiar with school board policy regarding school counseling can use the information found in these manuscripts as a starting point. Both manuscripts contain suggestions and resources for the use of board policy.

Overall, I am extremely interested in exploring strategies that help school counselors become more effective by decreasing the time they spend on clerical, supervisory, and other noncounseling tasks. As a former school counselor, I have a great deal of personal experience with addressing students’ developmental needs while
fulfilling other noncounseling duties. Thus, this dissertation was intended to address the issue of decreasing the number of noncounseling duties assigned to school counselors.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Researchers should continue to examine the relationship between school boards and the role and function of school counselors. Additional research may help bring increased understanding of how best to work with school boards regarding school counseling policy. This study addressed school board members’ beliefs and actions regarding school counseling positions and programs. These perceptions can be used as a starting point for future research exploring school board policy.

Gysbers, Lapan, and Jones (2000) examined school board policy regarding school counseling at the state level and observed that policies were mostly outdated and in some cases harmful to school counselors. Research that scrutinizes school board policy documents at the district level might increase understanding about the current state of school counseling. Some school counselors and school board members indicated that policies had been adopted; however many indicated that they were uncertain. This finding suggests that researchers should address the extent to which school boards have adopted policies that align with CSCP. More-detailed information could assist school counselors and school counseling leaders in their advocacy efforts.

To my knowledge, no research has provided an in-depth view of school board attitudes about school counseling programs. Findings from this study indicated that board members place a moderate to high priority on all CSCP activities outlined in this study. However, school counselors indicated a perception that school boards place a lower
priority on the same activities. It is possible that school board members were trying to give socially acceptable answers and did not actually assign a high priority to each activity. Further research into this phenomenon could be useful in determining school board members’ actual beliefs. Qualitative research that explores school board members’ beliefs and related actions could provide helpful insight.

In addition, a qualitative study of school districts that have successfully adopted updated school counseling policies and have gained the support of the school board to implement the policies could be helpful. First, it could provide a roadmap for how school counselors might advocate for school board support. Second, it would show school counselors that it is possible to change the school system by working with the school board. The results of this study suggested that some school counselors have worked with school boards to improve counselor ratios, roles, and functions.

Finally, researchers should consider studies that explore school board members’ knowledge and priorities before and after trainings and updates given by school counselors. Researchers such as Dimmit, Carey, and Hatch (2007) have suggested that showing policy makers the outcomes of school counseling programs and interventions might be the most effective method of gaining the support of influential parties such as school boards. Exploring training modes and models would be very useful to practitioners and counselor educators when advocating for change and support.

**Future Uses of Results from This Study**

The purpose of this dissertation project was to provide a rationale for the importance of school board policy regarding school counseling and to study perceptions
of school board policy and actions. A review of the literature identified (a) the need to continue advocating for school counseling programs and (b) advocacy strategies that have been studied and suggested. Most importantly, the literature on school board policy was explored. Because there is extremely limited information about school board policy regarding school counselors and other school staff, future research might focus more deeply on school board support of other staff such as teachers and administrators. Future studies on the relationship between school boards and school staff could help outline effective approaches to working with school boards. In addition, future studies using a national sample could help researchers to generalize the results.

The comments made by respondents warrant further study. For example, a few comments ($f = 3$) indicated that school counselors had successfully gained support from the school board through presentations. A few school counselors ($f = 6$) commented on specific conditions that they felt influenced the support they had from board members. Researchers might want to take a closer look at the factors influencing support and nonsupport.

Examining responses related to the adoption of school counseling policy would be particularly useful. Several questions arise about the differences in perceptions between school board members and school counselors. For example, why did 68.9% of board members versus only 55.3% of school counselors indicate that the number of school counselors remained constant? In addition, why are so many counselors unaware of the policy in their district? For example, 59.2% of counselors said that they did not know if their district had adopted an updated policy. Therefore, researchers must look for ways to
increase awareness and understanding of school board policy regarding school counseling.

Finally, analyzing the differences in school board member perceptions in small, medium, and large size districts could offer valuable information. Several school board members commented on issues specifically related to small districts. It is quite possible that school board members in small districts have more frequent contact with school counselors, and therefore may have different perceptions about the role and function of school counselors.

School counselors should consider advocating for changes in their role and function through the adoption of a school board policy that aligns with CSCPs. This research study provides school counselors with information that can help with advocacy efforts. In addition, this study helps to fill a gap in the literature about school board member perceptions regarding school counseling. To better understand school counseling school board policies, further research is suggested.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Informed Consent

Explanation of Research Study

The purpose of this research project is to gain information about school boards regarding school counseling activities and policy in Washington State. You are invited to participate in this research because you are a school board member and have valuable information about school counseling in your district.

The procedure involves filling out a one-time online survey that will take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and we will not collect identifying information such as your name, e-mail address, or IP address.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data are stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this survey study. A possible benefit of participation is exposure to current school counseling standards.

You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Dr. Gene Eakin by phone at 541-737-8551 or e-mail at gene.eakin@oregonstate.edu or Megyn Shea at 360-991-6371. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board, and if you have any questions about your rights to participate in the study, you can call them at (541) 737-8008.
### Appendix B

#### Demographic Section of School Board Member Perception Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Board Member Title: 1=School board member</th>
<th>2=Board chair</th>
<th>3=Other (please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Gender: 1=Female 2=Male 3=Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years you have served as a school board member:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Less than 1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = 1-2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = 3-4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = 5 or more years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in your district: 1=fewer than 1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=1,000-5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=over 15,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Demographic Section of School Counselor Perception Survey

| Your job title: 1=school counselor 2=former school counselor 3=counselor educator 4=other (please specify) |
| Your Gender: 1=Female 2=Male 3=Other |
| Years you have been employed as a school counselor: 1=2 years or less 2=3-5 years 3=6-10 years 4=more than 10 |
| Your level: 1=Elementary 2=Middle/Jr. High 3=High School 4=K-8 5=K-12 |
| Number of students in your district: 1=fewer than 1,000 2=1,000-5,000 3=5,001-15,000 3=over 15,000 |
## Appendix C

### School Board Member Perception Survey Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counseling Activities</th>
<th>Rate your knowledge using the scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = No knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Some knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Moderate knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Very knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Extremely knowledgeable (expert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate your priority using the scale:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Not a priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Low priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Medium priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = High priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Essential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Counseling individual students regarding academic issues (e.g. on-time graduation, drop-out prevention, grades, study skills)**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Providing group counseling for academic issues (e.g. on-time graduation, drop-out prevention, grades, study skills)**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Counseling individual students regarding career development (e.g. post-secondary planning, employment skills, career options, college entrance)**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Providing group counseling for career development e.g. post-secondary planning, employment skills, career options, college entrance)**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Counseling students regarding school behavior**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Counseling students regarding crisis/emergency issues**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Counseling students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Counseling individual students regarding personal/family concerns**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5

- **Conduct groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)**
  - Knowledge: 0 1 2 3 4 5
  - Priority: 0 1 2 3 4 5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Activities</th>
<th>Rate your knowledge using the scale:</th>
<th>Rate your priority using the scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle your response to the following about your level of knowledge of each school counseling activity and the priority you give to each school counseling activity:</td>
<td>1 = No knowledge 2 = Some knowledge 3 = Moderate knowledge 4 = Very knowledgeable 5 = Extremely knowledgeable (expert)</td>
<td>1 = Not a priority 2 = Low priority 3 = Medium priority 4 = High priority 5 = Essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, suicide intervention)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with school staff concerning student behavior</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Activities</th>
<th>Rate your knowledge using the scale:</th>
<th>Rate your priority using the scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle your response to the following about your level of knowledge of each school counseling activity and the priority you give to each school counseling activity:</td>
<td>1 = No knowledge 2 = Some knowledge 3 = Moderate knowledge 4 = Very knowledgeable 5 = Extremely knowledgeable (expert)</td>
<td>1 = Not a priority 2 = Low priority 3 = Medium priority 4 = High priority 5 = Essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons addressing career development and work world</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons addressing academic success (e.g. study skills, organization, test-taking)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons on personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons on conflict resolution</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons on relationships with others (e.g. family, friends)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Coordination Activities

Circle your response to the following about your level of knowledge of each school counseling activity and the priority you give to each school counseling activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Knowledge Scale</th>
<th>Priority Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating with stakeholders (e.g. administrators, parents)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of student progress as a result of participating in school counseling program activities</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting needs assessments to determine counseling interventions</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating a comprehensive school counseling program that serves all students academic, personal-social, and career development needs</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating school-wide response for crisis management intervention</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting parent education classes/workshops</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing reports to stakeholders regarding school counseling program effectiveness</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following questions are important for understanding the current state of school counseling school board policy. Please check all that apply.

1. During your term/s as a school board member, has your school board made public statements in support of school counseling programs? (e.g. discussed school counseling issues at board meetings).  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
2. During your term/s as a school board member, has your school board provided resources to support the continuous improvement of school counseling programs?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   (if yes, check all that apply)
   ☐ Training for school counselors to improve school counseling programs
   ☐ Training for administrators to learn about school counseling programs
   ☐ School board participation in education/workshops to learn more about school counseling
   ☐ Allowing school counselors to present school counseling information at school board meetings
   ☐ Increasing school counselor FTE as student changes occur (i.e. student population growth, increase in student needs, increase in counselor caseload)
☐ Other resources, not listed above (please specify)

3. Does your school board have a written school counseling school board policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, check all that apply)
☐ The school counseling policy reflects school counseling programs that serve all students
☐ The school counseling policy reflects the counselor’s role in enhancing career development
☐ The school counseling policy reflects the counselor’s role in enhancing academic development
☐ The school counseling policy reflects the counselor’s role in enhancing personal and social development
☐ The school counseling policy reflects Washington State school counseling legislation
☐ The school counseling policy reflects school counseling crisis services
☐ Other written school counseling board policy, not listed above (please specify)

☐ 4. Other type of school board policy or action, not listed above (please specify)

For additional information contact:

Megyn Shea, M.Ed.
(369) 991-6371
megynshea@comcast.net

Appendix D

School Counselor Perception of School Board Survey

| Counseling Activities                                                                 | Rate your school board knowledge using the scale:  
|                                                                                       | 1 = No knowledge  
|                                                                                       | 2 = Some knowledge  
|                                                                                       | 3 = Moderate knowledge  
|                                                                                       | 4 = Very knowledgeable  
|                                                                                       | 5 = Extremely knowledgeable (expert)  
|                                                                                       | Rate the priority your school board gives to each item using the scale:  
|                                                                                       | 1 = Not a priority  
|                                                                                       | 2 = Low priority  
|                                                                                       | 3 = Medium priority  
|                                                                                       | 4 = High priority  
|                                                                                       | 5 = Essential  
| Counseling individual students regarding academic issues (e.g. on-time graduation, drop-out prevention, grades, study skills) | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Providing group counseling for academic issues (e.g. on-time graduation, drop-out prevention, grades, study skills)                     | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Counseling individual students regarding career development (e.g. post-secondary planning, employment skills, career options, college entrance) | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Providing group counseling for career development e.g. post-secondary planning, employment skills, career options, college entrance)     | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Counseling students regarding school behavior                                         | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Counseling students regarding crisis/emergency issues                                  | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Counseling students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)          | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Counseling individual students regarding personal/family concerns                     | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  
| Conduct groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)                 | 0 1 2 3 4 5                                                                                          0 1 2 3 4 5  


### Consultation Activities

Circle your response to the following about the knowledge and priority school boards in your district give to the following school counselor activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rate your school board knowledge using the scale:</th>
<th>Rate the priority your school board gives to each item using the scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, suicide intervention)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with school staff concerning student behavior</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Curriculum Activities

Circle your response to the following about the knowledge and priority school boards in your district give to the following school counselor activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rate your school board knowledge using the scale:</th>
<th>Rate the priority your school board gives to each item using the scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons addressing career development and work world</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons addressing academic success (e.g. study skills, organization, test-taking)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons on personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting classroom lessons on conflict resolution</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conducting classroom lessons on relationships with others (e.g. family, friends)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Coordination Activities

*Circle your response to the following about the knowledge and priority school boards in your district give to the following school counselor activities:*

**Rate your school board knowledge using the scale:**
- 1 = No knowledge
- 2 = Some knowledge
- 3 = Moderate knowledge
- 4 = Very knowledgeable
- 5 = Extremely knowledgeable (expert)

**Rate the priority your school board gives to each item using the scale:**
- 1 = Not a priority
- 2 = Low priority
- 3 = Medium priority
- 4 = High priority
- 5 = Essential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating with stakeholders (e.g. administrators, parents) to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of student progress as a result of participating in school counseling program activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting needs assessments to determine counseling interventions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating a comprehensive school counseling program that serves all students academic, personal-social, and career development needs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating school-wide response for crisis management intervention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting parent education classes/workshops</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing reports to stakeholders regarding school counseling program effectiveness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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The following questions are important for understanding the current state of school counseling school board policy. Please check all that apply.

1. During your term/s as a school board member, has your school board made public statements in support of school counseling programs? (e.g. discussed school counseling issues at board meetings). ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. During your term/s as a school board member, has your school board provided resources to support the continuous improvement of school counseling programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No (if yes, check all that apply)
   - ☐ Training for school counselors to improve school counseling programs
   - ☐ Training for administrators to learn about school counseling programs
   - ☐ School board participation in education/workshops to learn more about school counseling
   - ☐ Allowing school counselors to present school counseling information at school board
meetings
☐ Increasing school counselor FTE as student changes occur (i.e. student population
growth, increase in student needs, increase in counselor caseload)
☐ Other resources, not listed above (please specify)

3. Does your school board have a written school counseling school board policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(If yes, check all that apply)
Association’s sample Guidance and Counseling Policy 2140
☐ The school counseling policy reflects school counseling programs that serve all
students
☐ The school counseling policy reflects the counselor’s role in enhancing career
development
☐ The school counseling policy reflects the counselor’s role in enhancing academic
development
☐ The school counseling policy reflects the counselor’s role in enhancing personal and
social development
☐ The school counseling policy reflects Washington State school counseling legislation
☐ The school counseling policy reflects school counseling crisis services
☐ Other written school counseling board policy, not listed above (please specify)

☐ 4. Other type of school board policy or action, not listed above (please specify)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For additional information contact:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Megyn Shea, M.Ed.</td>
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<td>(369) 991-6371</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:megynshea@comcast.net">megynshea@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adapted from “The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An Instrument for Gathering