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**CHAIR'S MESSAGE**

# DATA SHOWS YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BY SUMMER KUBA



When I was in graduate school, there was one question my professors asked repeatedly and that continues to resonate in me each day as I implement a comprehensive school counseling program. This question is not only one that we should be asking ourselves after we meet with students but one that we must also ask ourselves as we evaluate our school counseling program as a whole. As school counselors, our day is filled with classroom guidance lessons, small

group and individual counseling as well as consultation with a variety of individuals. However, we must dedicate time to ensuring that our program is planned, organized, implemented and evaluated in a way that will best meet the needs of our students and will provide us with the answer to the question: How are my students different as a result of what I do each day?

Although analyzing student data will provide us with valuable information about how our students are different or how our school culture has improved, it is also critical for us to evaluate the school counseling program's impact. We can do this effectively through the disaggregation of data, which will help us to ensure that the needs of all student groups are being met through the implementation of a comprehensive, evidence-based program that will ultimately lead to student success. We must use this data (process, outcome and perception) to identify barriers that may be hindering academic success, social/emotional development and college and career readiness.

When I started out, I was uneasy about data and feared it would take more time from my already very busy day. It was actually the exact opposite. The data I collected not only provided me with relevant and applicable information but it also provided me with a plan, a plan to guide me as I moved my program forward. Remember, you don't have to be a statistician to effectively analyze data. There are computer-based programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.), books and webinars that will help guide you through the process of tracking your data and creating visual representations demonstrating the progress you and your comprehensive program are making and have made over time. Your data will guide you as you create a plan for the future.

So, as you make your way into the new year, consider a resolution that focuses on accountability and ways to improve your data-driven program. Make 2017 the year of demonstrating your value by showing how your students are different based on what you do each and every day. Take on the responsibility as a school counselor to provide tangible data that supports your overarching obligation to meet the academic, social/emotional, and career-related goals of your students. ■

Contact Summer Kuba, Ed.S., FSCA Governing Board Chair, at [president@fla-schoolcounselor.org](mailto:president@fla-schoolcounselor.org).



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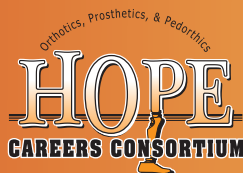
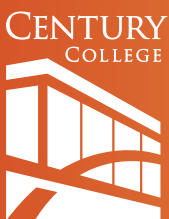
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# 2016 FSCA AWARD WINNERS

**F**SCA congratulates these outstanding school counselors and administrators.

## FLORIDA SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

**Dr. Melissa Garcia**, Seminole Ridge Community High School, Palm Beach County

## FLORIDA SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

**Na'Toria Campbell**, Venetia Elementary School, Duval County

## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

**Christine Baird**, assistant principal, Volusia County

## ADMINISTRATOR ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

**Lori Brooks**, assistant director of School Counseling Services, Lee County



FSCA president Summer Kuba and Melissa Garcia



Summer Kuba and Na'Toria Campbell



Summer Kuba and Christine Baird

# USING MINDSETS AND BEHAVIORS TO DESIGN A SURVEY

BY CAROL J. KAFFENBERGER AND ANITA YOUNG

School counselors understand the importance of using data to drive program decision making and to demonstrate the impact of their school counseling interventions on student success. However, training on collecting and making sense of data, especially creating and using surveys, is still in high demand.

School counselors are asked to collect three types of data: process, outcome and perception data. Collecting process and outcome data is simple. Process data involves keeping track of the number of participants and outcome data compares pre- and post-intervention data (e.g., grades, attendance or behavior) to determine impact of the intervention on students.

Collecting perception data is a little more complicated. Perception data describes what students believe, think they know, or can do. Surveys provide the best way to understand these data elements. But designing a survey that accurately collects the correct and most appropriate data to analyze poses a challenge. How can we be sure we are asking the right questions? How will we know that our survey will evaluate changes in attitudes, knowledge or skills as a result of our intervention?

“The ASCA Implementation Guide” (2016) provides some guidance for designing surveys using the “ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student.” The 35 mindsets and behaviors are research based and can be applied to the three broad domains: career, academic and social/emotional development. The standards describe specific attitudes, knowledge and skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of the school counseling program. You can use these



Type of Data	How to Calculate	Examples
<b>Process:</b> The number of identified students, or participants	Count the number of participants	25 students
<b>Outcome:</b> Achievement, attendance, and/or behavior/safety	Compare pre- and post-intervention outcome data	Attendance increased by 2%; GPA increased by .4; Discipline referrals declined by 4%
<b>Perception:</b> Change in attitudes or beliefs, attainment of knowledge or skills	Conduct pre-post-test, needs assessment or evaluation	25% of students say they don't feel safe at school

mindsets and behaviors to design lesson plans and create surveys.

## STEPS TO SURVEY DESIGN

**1** Determine the goal for the intervention. Is the intervention related to a SMART goal? What additional concerns do you have for this group of students? What have you learned about this particular group of students after reviewing their data, or from stakeholders such as parents, teachers or ad-

ministrators? Based on your understanding of this group, what do you want to accomplish?

**2** Identify one to three mindsets and behaviors that relate to the goal for the intervention for this group. What attitudes, knowledge or skills do you want them to have? It might be that the entire purpose of your intervention is to change

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



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beliefs (such as “coming to school is important”). In this case, you want to understand the students’ attitude about coming to school and your intervention will focus on changing attitudes toward regular attendance. You may not want to focus on knowledge or skill questions, such as “I know how to use an alarm clock” (skill question) or “After five unexcused absences my grade will be lowered” (knowledge question). You can choose as many mindsets and behaviors as you wish, but be sure that the ones you choose are related to the goal of your intervention.

**3** Write questions based on the mindsets and behaviors you

have identified. These questions may look like competencies, ways to measure whether the standard has been met. For instance, if you chose the standard SM.1, Demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility, your skill question might be, “I turn in my homework every day.”

**4** Last, assign a Likert scale for each question, such as 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - agree, 4 - strongly agree. Choose the scale that is most appropriate for the age group you are working with. Consider adding an open-ended question at the end of the survey.

Here is an example of how a school counselor can follow the process above.

A middle school counselor identified a group of students with poor grades and poor attendance. He was concerned that this group was struggling academically and lacked interest in school. He wrote a SMART goal for this group and chose to use small group counseling to help the students understand the importance of school, improve study skills and increase school engagement. To understand what students’ attitudes, knowledge and skills were prior to implementing the intervention, he created a survey to collect perception data using the process below.

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**1** SMART Goal: By June 2017, seventh graders with a GPA of 2.0 or lower in the first quarter will increase their GPA by .7.

**2** The mindsets and behaviors he chose:

- M.6 Positive attitude toward work and learning
- LS.3 Use time management, organizational and study skills
- SM.3 Demonstrate the ability to work independently

**3** Based on these mindsets and behaviors, he wrote the following survey questions:

- Attitude questions: “Going to school and being successful is important” and “I believe graduating from high school is important.”
- Knowledge question: “I know how to organize my time in order to get my homework done.”
- Skill question: “I can complete my homework and turn it in on time 75% of the time.”
- He wrote one open-ended question related to all three mindsets and behaviors: “What would help you be more successful in school?”

**4** He chose a 5-point Likert scale: 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree 3- unsure, 4 - agree, 5 - strongly agree The survey example shows what his survey looked like.

### SURVEY EXAMPLE

Questions	Scale
1. I believe going to school every day is important.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I believe graduating from high school is important.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I know how to complete my homework.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I complete my homework and turn it in on time.	1 2 3 4 5
5. What would help you be more successful in school?	

### *Collecting pre- and post-test data by using surveys is the best way to understand the impact of an interventions on students’ change of attitudes, knowledge or skills gains.*

This survey not only functions as a pre- and post-intervention assessment, it also helps the school counselor plan the intervention. Based on this survey, the counselor would know what students need and could plan his group counseling intervention accordingly.

Once you have determined the questions, the Likert scale and the format of the survey, it’s important to consider other details such as how you will administer the survey.

### CREATING SURVEYS: A CHECKLIST

- Do my questions align with the goals of the intervention?
- Based on the goals for the intervention, have I identified related mindset/behavior standards?

- Does the survey have face validity?
- Is there a title and an introduction to explain the purpose of the survey?
- Are the directions and questions clearly written and appropriate for the developmental age of the students?
- Is the purpose of the survey clear? Is the purpose to understand an issue? To conduct a pre/post of an intervention? Or to evaluate a program/intervention?
- Does every question in the survey have a purpose? To assess attitudes, knowledge and/or skills?
- Have I chosen appropriate question formats (e.g., scaling, Likert scale statements, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, check all that apply, etc.)?
- Are the questions phrased positively and parallel?
- Have I included at least one open-ended question?
- Have I considered how to analyze the results of the survey data? Will the question formats will allow for easy data analysis?
- Have I field tested the survey with a small group of participants to assess survey reliability?

Collecting pre- and post-test data by using surveys is the best way to understand the impact of interventions on students’ change of attitudes, knowledge or skills gains. Using mindset and behavior standards will increase the likelihood that your survey will reflect the goals of your intervention. ■■■

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# WHAT'S TRENDING?

*Top tech tools school counselors are using today and will be using tomorrow*

BY ANGELA CLEVELAND AND SAQI MEHTA

**A**s school counselors' responsibilities grow, technology can help streamline your practice to fulfill your professional responsibilities more efficiently and effectively. To connect with other counselors, find innovative and creative counseling ideas or simply make your job a little easier, look no further!

## TRENDING TODAY

**1** **Twitter** is one of the most powerful professional networking sites – harness the power of the hashtag to connect with counselors across the country. Find, follow and engage in professional dialogue on a local and global scale. If you are new to Twitter, simply search using hashtags. Once you get more experience, you can participate in Twitter Chats, live Twitter events usually lasting about an hour focused on a specific topic. They are at a set time and filtered into a single conversation using a specified hashtag. Typically, a moderator will pose about five questions and participants respond.

**2** **Pinterest** is known as a fun place to get recipes, craft ideas, fitness tips and more. But it's also a great source for free school counseling resources and ideas. The site has more than 100 million monthly active users and many of them are school counselors who post pictures of bulletin boards and share lesson plans, group activities and organizational tips for school counselors and students. Check out the following pinners, who have thousands of pins (ideas) organized by theme/topic. *School Counselor Central*, *Savvy School Counselor*, *Creative Elementary School Counselor*, and *School Counselor Blog*.



**3** **Doodle** is a free website that simplifies scheduling a work meeting or any other event for which several people have to identify a date and time when they are all available. It's free and easy to set up an account, select dates/times of meetings, and email the provided link to participants. Their names are then automatically listed in the Doodle survey and each participant can easily check the box next to dates/times that they are available. Doodle color codes the chart with yes/no/if need be and lists the number of responses for each at the bottom of the chart. This tool eliminates lengthy back-and-forth emails with colleagues when trying to find a mutually agreeable time to meet, set up conferences and more.

**4** **Nearpod** is an interactive presentation and assessment tool.

Many presentations (and lessons) are largely one directional with information being given to participants. It's nearly impossible to engage *all* participants simultaneously and easily assess their knowledge. Nearpod allows for all that and more. You can incorporate participant quizzes and polls along with drawings that you can choose to project out or view for yourself to get a fast and thorough glimpse of your entire audience's response. No more passive learning! Sign up is free and easy. You can quickly import your existing PowerPoint or Google Slides presentations or search for free and low-cost lessons on Nearpod.

**5** **On Facebook**, school counselors are coming together to collaborate in members-only Facebook groups that are hidden gems with numerous resources and supports. "Elementary School Counselor Exchange," "High School Counselors' Network" and "The School Counselor Store" are some of the larger groups, each with thousands of active members. You can post questions, follow conversations, or search the groups by key words. Do keep in mind that while the groups

## TOP 3 LISTS

### Top 3 Twitter Hashtags for School Counselors

#SCCHAT  
#SCCROWD  
#ESCHAT

### Top 3 Twitter Handles to Follow

@ASCATweets (ASCA)  
@ecmmason (Dr. Erin Mason)  
Your state school counselor association

### Top 3 Facebook Groups to Join

"Elementary School Counselor Exchange"  
"High School Counselors' Network"  
"The School Counselor Store"

### Top 3 Pinners to Follow

*School Counselor Central*  
*Savvy School Counselor*  
*School Counselor Blog*

are closed, they are not completely private. If you are seeking advice, keep the request very general and about the topic without giving out details of your situation so as not to breach confidentiality.

### TRENDING TOMORROW

**1** *Slack* allows individuals to collaborate with other colleagues, replacing traditional email back and forth. You can create small groups for your immediate team, or channels with hashtags for a topic or project (such as #AntiBullying). People can react to a post with an emoji. Think of it as a group text message with the ability to add pictures, GIFs and links. Moreover, you can keep

groups public or private with full access control. The best part is that you can not only upload files easily, but also search through Word, PDF, and any other file type. A group member can send you a direct message or, within a large group conversation, tag you with an @ sign to get your attention. The Slack app is available on iPhone or Android systems so that you can stay on top of messages on the go.

**2** *Wunderlist* is a great app for those who like lists and staying organized and was acquired by Microsoft last year. It has a simple, clean design and is very easy to use. You can put in any type of task: school supply shopping lists, to-read

books or household items. Wunderlist allows you to share your (selected) lists with friends or colleagues for increased accountability. Anyone you share it with will be able to comment on tasks. You can assign certain tasks to yourself and star other items. Once you check them off, they disappear with a friendly chime for positive reinforcement.

**3** *Calm* is helping many people increase mindfulness and focus on meditation. Greeting their website visitors is a serene mountain lake. You can choose your three main goals (happiness, build self-esteem, reduce stress and anxiety,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## School Counselors Say Great Things About Salisbury University

**“** *SU falls into that ideal mid-size university category: small enough to afford personal attention yet large enough to provide a wide range of opportunities.* **”**

Linda Campbell • Lancaster, PA

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Paul Sommers • Mullica Hill, NJ

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and others). Options are many: 7 Days of Calm teaches the basics; timed or open ended mediation includes chimes to keep you in the present; and other guided meditations address love, kindness and forgiveness. The newest addition is Sleep Stories, which narrate around national parks like Yosemite or Yellowstone. Options without speaking include effects to play in the background, such as rain on leaves, ocean waves and rippling streams.

**4** *Pocket* helps with the challenge of coming across an interesting article online but not having time to read it right then. With Pocket, a click of one button can save articles, videos or images to your list. You can share or rec-

ommend them to others and follow others on Pocket to read what they are saving. An extension is available on your browser that allows you to save directly from your desktop computer. Best of all, you can read saved articles without WiFi, so it's perfect for long plane rides or nighttime reading without phone notifications.

**5** *Draw a Stickman* is a fun, interactive app that kids and adults can enjoy together. You choose an episode and draw your own hero or heroine, then the app takes you through an adventure. You have to draw other items along the way to help your leading character get to the next stage. For example, it will ask you to draw a key

so that a box can be unlocked, or draw a raincloud to put out a fire. There is no drawing skill required and it is sure to bring a smile!

*Angela Cleveland, M.S.Ed., M.Ed., MA is a school counselor at Auten Road Intermediate School in Hillsborough, New Jersey, and a Google Certified Educator. Follow her on Twitter (@AngelaCleveland1).*

*Saqi Mehta, M.S.Ed., is a career counselor and currently the university recruiting lead at Square. Follow Saqi on Twitter (@callmesaqi). Together, Saqi and Angela provide insight into the world of education, technology and advocacy to #LetGirlsLearn via the story-sharing platform on their blog, Medium.com/@ReigningIt. Check out their blog and follow on them Twitter @ReigningIt*

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all of which contain teaching notes, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and hands-on activities.

**Module 1** examines the definition of entrepreneurship and small business, while providing an overview of the past and present small business environment.

**Module 2** delves into the steps involved with turning an idea into a business: identifying a passion that can provide a product or service, researching the market, & weighing the risks of starting a business.

**Module 3** explores the nuts and bolts of starting a business: writing a business plan, obtaining funding, & learning about the agencies with which a legitimate business interacts with.



# WEBINARS: A BRIEF HOW-TO GUIDE

BY ANDREW J. KNOBLICH AND CLARE MERLIN

Only 150 of your school's 3000 parents and guardians attended your annual information night at your school. Over the following weeks, you field dozens of phone calls and emails from parents who did not attend and are now requesting the information covered during the meeting. You wonder, "How can I reduce this redundancy and be more efficient delivering information to parents?"

You may recall the 1996 film "Multiplicity," starring Michael Keaton and Andie MacDowell. In the film, Keaton is given the opportunity to clone himself to help offset the demands of his daily life, thus freeing up more time to spend with his family and pursue recreational activities. Although it is unlikely that any of us will have such an opportunity during our lifetimes, technology can help to mitigate the need for duplicative efforts and lead to greater efficiency in our work. One technological medium already exists to help us do just that: webinars.

## USING WEBINARS IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

A webinar is a live, online educational presentation in which participants can submit questions or comments. Webinars can also be recorded for later viewing. This provides tremendous value for school counselors, as it reduces the need in instances like the above scenario for one-on-one follow-up with parents and other school stakeholders. Furthermore, webinars are versatile and can be used to access stakeholders outside the school and students and faculty inside the school. Using webinars to distribute information to multiple stakeholders at once frees up more time for school counselors to work with students in need.



When deciding to conduct a webinar, know your school's population. Webinars can enhance services but should not always replace traditional communication avenues. Not all stakeholders will have access to the technology required to view a webinar, so it is important to ensure that specific populations are not excluded.

## GETTING STARTED

At first, conducting a webinar may seem like a daunting task; however, you or your school likely have all of the tools you need to get started.

### ■ Computing Device (desktop, laptop or tablet)

Most school-issued devices will have sufficient processing capability to appropriately conduct a webinar; however, consulting with a designated school IT point person and testing your equipment in advance is prudent.

### ■ Webcam

Many newer computing devices come equipped with a quality webcam, which would likely meet your needs. If you need to purchase a webcam, a high-quality webcam can be purchased for less than \$100 though most tech-oriented retailers.

### ■ Microphone

Most computing devices are equipped with a microphone. Depending on the acoustics of where choose to record your webinar, you may want to invest in an external microphone and headset. Again, testing your equipment in advance is key.

### ■ Internet Connectivity

To prevent delayed speeds or presentation malfunctioning, we recommend that you have an internet connection speed of 1 Mbps or higher. In most instances you will have access to these speeds through your school's LAN.

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### ■ A healthy dose of enthusiasm

Eventually, using webinars to distribute information to school stakeholders can save school counselors time. However, when first setting up a webinar, you will need time to choose a platform, design your content and become comfortable with the process. Patience and enthusiasm will help.

### SELECTING A WEBINAR PLATFORM

A variety of webinar platform options are available. Selecting the appropriate interface will depend on the needs and resources of your

school (your targeted population, budgetary limits, etc.). Below are three basic options for broadcasting your webinar to your stakeholders: commercial software, video conference software and custom-made webinars.

#### Commercial Software

Several commercial webinar platforms have emerged over the last decade. User licenses can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars per year. Some platforms often utilized in education include Blackboard Collaborate ([www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com)), Adobe Connect ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)) and Canvas

([www.canvaslms.com](http://www.canvaslms.com)). Other options include GoToWebinar ([www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)), Cisco WebEx ([www.webex.com](http://www.webex.com)), MegaMeeting ([www.megameeting.com](http://www.megameeting.com)), ReadyTalk ([www.readytalk.com](http://www.readytalk.com)) and Fuze ([www.fuze.com](http://www.fuze.com)). Several of these offer free trial periods, so they could provide viable options for limited or singular use. Although commercial platforms are not free, they are typically user-friendly and may be worth the cost if purchasing a license is an option. These software programs are designed for conducting webinars and online meetings, so they are functional and effective.

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### Videoconferencing Software

Videoconferencing platforms offer similar features to the commercial software programs noted above; however, they tend to offer low- or no-cost options. Google Hangouts ([hangouts.google.com](http://hangouts.google.com)) and Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)) are two leading examples of videoconferencing software. These platforms are great options if your school does not currently have a license for a commercial platform. A drawback of both Google Hangouts and Skype is that they limit the number of individuals who can participate in an online meeting at the same time. If this becomes an issue, YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)), which is a subsidiary of Google, has created a live streaming tool called YouTube Live. This platform allows an infinite number of participants to view an online webinar. As a no-cost option, videoconferencing has its benefits for school counselors hosting webinars.

### Custom-Made Webinars

School counselors can also create custom-made webinars by pairing two tools together: screen capture software and interactive communication tools. Screen capture software allows users to record a video while recording a voice-over presentation on their computer. Free, user-friendly examples include Screen-Cast-O-Matic ([www.screencastomatic.com](http://www.screencastomatic.com)), Screenr ([www.screenr.com](http://www.screenr.com)) and Educreations ([www.educreations.com](http://www.educreations.com)). If you voice over an electronic presentation, then record it using screen capture software, you can post the video to your website for school stakeholders to view. To make the video viewing interactive like a webinar, you also can load an interactive communication tool

*Much as we do in counseling,  
we must put our trust in the  
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onto the website, so that stakeholders can communicate with the school counselor while viewing the video. Examples of interactive communication tools include Padlet ([www.padlet.com](http://www.padlet.com)), Linoit ([www.linoit.com](http://www.linoit.com)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)). Custom-made webinars involve several steps to set up, but offer another no-cost option.

### TRACKING DATA

Comprehensive school counseling programs collect and analyze data to inform decision making. Tracking relevant process, perception and outcome data from your webinar can help improve future webinars. For the most part, you can track this type of data in the same fashion as you would when presenting information in person. An added benefit of using a webinar is that you can record and upload your webinar as a video to your website or YouTube. Both Google and YouTube provide free analytical tools that can help evaluate how your webinars are accessed and used by stakeholders after they are uploaded. This data may help you develop methods of promoting information avenues to parents and lead to further reduction in individual inquiry.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Most school counselors understand the benefits of collaboration. If you are thinking about using a webinar to broadcast information to your school's stakeholders, you may find

it helpful to keep administrators, teachers and fellow counselors abreast of your intentions. Other professionals within your school system may be able to share insight about their own experiences with webinars and these conversations may affirm or help improve upon the foundation you have set.

Much as we do in counseling, we must put our trust in the process with webinars. Conducting webinars may seem like a lot of work on the front end, but keep in mind the long-term benefits that can result from your efforts. Recording and uploading your webinars to a school website or hosting site such as YouTube can reduce the volume of direct inquiries from your stakeholders about a specific topic. Depending on the topic, you could reuse some webinars in future years.

### CONCLUSION

Most school counselors are charged with myriad responsibilities. Webinars provide one way for counselors to streamline communication efforts, reducing redundancy and allotting additional time to other areas of need. It is important that counselors identify any issues of access when using webinars so as not to exclude stakeholders from obtaining information. Overall, webinars are a useful way to distribute information to target populations, create a virtual video resource library and reduce redundancy in communication efforts. ■

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# THE POWER OF DATA

## *How one district transformed its school counseling program*

BY ERNEST COX, JR.

**W**hen school counselors use data, we build awareness of the strengths in our school counseling programs while also pinpointing the areas requiring focus and growth. With data, we can evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms – we can determine how students are different as a result of the program. Specifically, school counselors can show the impact of our programs on student achievement, attendance and behavior, and analyze school counseling program assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students.

### WHERE WE STARTED

Historically, our school counselors provided responsive services, focusing on individual counseling and crisis counseling services on an as-needed basis. There was an uneven emphasis on services for individual students instead of focusing on the trends and needs of all students. School counselors were quasi-administrators and were largely involved in administrative duties such as state assessment coordination, discipline, section 504, language proficiency coordination and, of course, other duties as assigned. The comprehensive school counseling program was nonexistent for most and unstructured for all. The department was full of advocates for students but lacked direction for the program and a way to measure and track effectiveness. The department lacked a program leader.

### PROGRAM IN DEVELOPMENT

Over the past seven years, our school counseling program has transformed its culture, beginning



with the hiring of a director of School Counseling. Since the creation of that position, the district and program have taken active steps toward a program with focus, one that now provides equitable services for all students, delivered with intentionality. The school counseling program is planned, developed, implemented, analyzed and evaluated on an ongoing basis. It is data driven, results oriented, involves all stakeholders (students, staff and parents) and allows every student access to the services of school counselors. Over a four-year period, the school counselors decreased non-counseling related activities from 45% to 11% and increased direct services to students.

### DATA AND EVALUATION

Reshaping the counseling program required several steps. The initial step was to evaluate the program and communicate with campus and district leadership. To determine the effectiveness of service delivery, we first focused on process data. Student outcome and perception data are imperative in a comprehensive program, but process data pinpoints what is being done, when it is happening and what needs to be changed. It provides evidence of where school counselors are allocating time within the four service components and non-school-counseling duties. Process data also describes the activities conducted and the number of students participat-

ing in an activity. The department developed a method for counselors to identify where time was being allocated and determine whether a disproportionate amount of time was being allocated to non-school-counseling duties.

### DEVELOPING A TOOL AND BUY-IN: STANDARDIZING, CALIBRATING, BUILDING TRUST

Of the many data templates available, we sought to find a tool that was easy to use, tracked what we wanted and could be modified over time. Using an Excel spreadsheet, we created "The Professional School Counselor: Guidance and

Counseling Program Tracking and Data Analysis Report." It provided a method to help the school counselors and director develop, monitor and organize the school counseling program. School counselors could use the tool to identify how time was being allocated. Based on process data (weekly, monthly and annual) the counselor can initiate a plan of action to reallocate time to the service components requiring attention. If a counselor identifies that a disproportionate amount of time is being spent on non-school-counseling duties and/or indirect services, they may modify the data

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*School counselors can show the impact of our programs on student achievement, attendance and behavior, and analyze school counseling program assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students.*



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analysis template to more intentionally focus on the areas requiring change.

Before implementing the data tool, we made sure that all school counselors in our district understood the importance of using it. The process data tracking tool was (and continues to be) an “I’ve got your back” rather than an “I got you” tool. The department gathered and calibrated data for two years before publishing the findings for others to see. Initially, some of the school counselors were ambivalent and fearful of data. Some didn’t see the point and felt that they were being questioned. Once they observed over time how the results were being used, however, everyone in the department came to trust the data.

### USING THE DATA

Guidance and counseling departments often provide support for regular educational programs and testing, discipline, and management – up to 30-40% of school counselors’ time can go to such support, according to Gysbers and Henderson’s 2006 study. Obviously, this cuts the amount of time allocated for the delivery of the comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors need to build awareness about counselor responsibilities so that they can define, communicate and clarify the difference between counseling and non-counseling services.

Our first step in gathering process data, therefore, was to specifically identify where time and services were being allocated. Prior to collecting data, our school counselors spoke in feeling: “I feel that...” They communicated that they were performing certain clerical or non-counseling-related tasks but lacked evidence. But with data, things changed! Our year-one

*Structures were put in place to begin to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that served all students, meeting their academic, personal, social and career development needs.*

findings were not surprising, with department data indicating that over 45% of school counselors’ time was spent in non-counseling-related functions such as state assessments, clerical duties or serving in coordinator type capacities (Section 504, ARD, LPAC or RTI). The data provided an opportunity to move from “I can feel” to “I can show.”

### SCHOOL COUNSELORS’ ROLE CHANGE

The next step was to meet with campus and district leaders and share the data. Data allocations were presented side by side with school counselors’ codified role. We provided supportive documentation and expansion in alignment with state and national definitions and discussed school counselors’ roles and responsibilities in relation to non-counseling-related tasks and duties not related to the development, implementation or evaluation of the comprehensive school counseling program. Our presentation of data and literature was met with an immediate response to change historical practice. Program leaders immediately supported the department by taking steps to remove clerical and administrative (non-

counseling-related) responsibilities such as testing and other coordinator duties, reassigning these responsibilities to administrators. The role of the school counselor started to shift. Structures were put in place to begin to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that served all students, meeting their academic, personal, social and career development needs.

### NEW PROGRAM FOCUS

The district’s comprehensive program is continuously developing. School counselors continue to submit monthly data that we report to campus principals, district leaders, the board of trustees, and district constituents. The program’s focus uses and incorporates process, perception and student outcome data into practice. School counselors use data in developing needs assessments; assessing stakeholders (students, staff and parents); identifying priorities and creating calendars; implementing guidance lessons, small groups, and individual counseling services; conducting pre/post-tests; and identifying next steps.

Today, our school counselors manage the comprehensive school counseling program and use data to aid the growth and development of our students and the counseling program. Data has created an opportunity for our program to increase and sustain direct counseling services for all students. District school counselors inspire change and have a reinvigorated outlook on the innovative school counseling services they provide. What is your next step? ■

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