

2013

Are Middle School Counseling Programs Meeting Early Adolescent Needs? A Survey of Principals and Counselors

Suzanne McCotter

Montclair State University, mccotters@mail.montclair.edu

Sarah Cohen

Thom Stecher and Associates, SJC264@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.wcsu.edu/jcps>

Recommended Citation

McCotter, S., & Cohen, S. (2013). Are Middle School Counseling Programs Meeting Early Adolescent Needs? A Survey of Principals and Counselors. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 5(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.0015>

Are Middle School Counseling Programs Meeting Early Adolescent Needs? A Survey of Principals and Counselors

Abstract

This article explores the needs of middle school students in regards to how their school provides for their academic, career, personal, and social development. School counselors and administrators in the state of New Jersey completed an online survey that explored how well their programs attend to the needs of their students and the guidelines set forth by the American School Counselor Association. A discussion is provided which explores multiple aspects of the data. The authors explore the perceptions of respondents on their guidance program's effect on students. The relationship between the counselor's and administrator's perceptions is also discussed.

Keywords

Middle school, school counselor, administrators, American School Counseling Association, counseling programs, academic needs, career needs, social needs, personal needs

Are Middle School Counseling Programs Meeting Early Adolescent Needs? A Survey of Principals and Counselors

Suzanne McCotter & Sarah Cohen

This article explores the needs of middle school students in regards to how their school provides for their academic, career, personal, and social development. School counselors and administrators in the state of New Jersey completed an online survey that explored how well their programs attend to the needs of their students and the guidelines set forth by the American School Counselor Association. A discussion is provided which explores multiple aspects of the data. The authors explore the perceptions of respondents on their guidance program's effect on students. The relationship between the counselor's and administrator's perceptions is also discussed.

Keywords: Middle school, school counselor, administrators, American School Counseling Association, counseling programs, academic needs, career needs, social needs, personal needs

The needs of early adolescents in our society are paramount; teens and tweens must learn about themselves, relationships, safety, and school. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends that school counseling programs meet student needs in three broad areas: Academic Development, Career Development, and Social/Personal Development (2004). These standards dovetail with the needs of adolescents laid out by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) in the 4th edition of their position paper, *This We Believe* (2010). Namely, the needs of middle school students which should be attended to in schools that serve 4th through 8th graders include: physical development, cognitive-intellectual development, moral development, psychological development, and social-emotional development.

This research examines the perceptions of middle school counselors and administrators in the state of New Jersey about the overall counseling program in their schools, particularly focused on how well programs meet the needs of students and the ASCA guidelines. An online survey sent to all practitioners in these categories focused on these research questions:

1. In what areas do counselors and administrators feel like they are meeting the needs of students?
2. Do middle schools counseling programs tend to focus on some ASCA-recommended areas more than others?
3. What attributes contribute to the success of schools meeting ASCA guidelines?

Literature Review

Meeting the needs of middle school students often falls on the shoulders of school guidance counselors, who ideally work in collaboration with administrators to best serve

adolescent students. Studies in the area of middle school counseling programs describe programs and their success rates. To support counselors and schools in meeting student needs, the American School Counselor Association has a set of standards and a national model for their implementation, including accountability and evaluation measures. Since the standards' publication in 2004, research has focused on the extent to which they impact the lives of students.

Academic Needs

Several studies show that counseling programs with focuses on group counseling (Brigman & Campbell, 2003), goal setting and progress monitoring (Cook & Kaffenberger, 2003), career (Fouad, 1995), and mentoring (Lampley & Johnson, 2010) positively impact student achievement. Such studies typically have examined the impact of counseling programs on student achievement as measured by standardized tests and grades. Schools that deliberately focus on implementation of ASCA's standards for five or more years show significantly better academic performance than schools that do not (Sink, Akos, Turnbull & Mvuddud, 2008).

A connection between social development and academic development is also apparent in the literature, as programs typically associated with improving students' social and personal growth lead to additional benefits in the area of academic achievement. Examples link book club groups to increased reading indicators (Whittingham & Huffman, 2009), social support and parent involvement to reduced dropout rates (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009), and group interventions to achievement test scores (Campbell & Brigman, 2005).

Career Needs

Effective career counseling programs in middle schools, while more general than the targeted programs found in high schools, help provide students with early exposure to identifying their interests and aptitudes. Such programs often give students opportunities to sample relevant and challenging work, including opportunities to work or volunteer in businesses (Maddy-Bernstein & Dare, 1999).

The influence of career programs in middle school is often measured by examining survey data regarding student perceptions. The programs that are structured in systematic and integrated ways have shown increases in student confidence (Chaplin, Bleeker, & Booker, 2010), career maturity and attitude (Legum & Hoare, 2004), and school engagement (Perry, Xiongyi & Pabian, 2010).

Social and Personal Needs

Middle school counseling interventions that successfully address social and personal development include problem solving (Hall, Rushing & Owens, 2009), strategies to deal with bullying (Young et al., 2009), and cultural awareness (Bernier, 1995). After-school programs, service learning, and various group strategies have all contributed to effectively supporting students in their social, emotional and moral development.

The success of these initiatives is often measured by examining student perceptions about social and personal indicators. Other measures include the frequency of disciplinary referrals (Hall, Rushing & Owens, 2009) and academic achievement (Stott & Jackson, 2005).

ASCA National Model

Several studies have connected the success of counseling programs with the perceptions of counselors about the implementation of ASCA standards and their self-reported work distribution. Counselors in high-achieving schools tend to spend more time than their counterparts in low-achieving schools on program management and evaluation, maintenance of professional standards, and coordination of activities (Fitch & Marshall, 2004). In terms of counselor preferences, counselors who indicated that they attempted to incorporate the ASCA standards into their work were more likely to be practicing in their preferred way (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Finally, a survey of middle school counselors also revealed their collective belief that their participation in school-level activities related to academic and social achievement are important to the overall health of a school, as well as the alignment of the counseling program with standards (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). This connection between the administration of the school-as-a-whole and the success of counseling programs bears further investigation. In this descriptive study, both middle school principals and counselors provide perceptions about the success of meeting the developmental needs of the adolescents they serve.

Methodology

Every middle school counselor and principal in New Jersey was invited by e-mail to participate in a twenty-minute survey using the online tool Survey Monkey. After multiple reminders, 123 participants completed the survey. Of that number, 53.6% work as school counselors, 16.2% are school principals, and 30.2% did not indicate their position. The greatest number of respondents indicated that their school is in a suburban area (80.6%), followed by rural (13.8%), and urban (5.4%). The size of the school ranged from fewer than 200 students to over 600 students. Each school had between one and four counselors (see Table A1).

Each respondent was asked to complete an online survey (see Appendix B) which focused on the programs in place to meet the needs of middle school students; the extent to which academic, career, personal, and social needs of those students were being met; and the involvement of various stakeholders in program development and implementation.

Most questions consisted of Likert scale responses on a 4-point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which a particular statement was true of their school. Additional open-ended questions sought information about the typical types of programs offered in the school setting. After the data had been collected, SPSS was used for quantitative, descriptive analysis. Qualitative responses were coded and categorized.

Findings

Fifty-two percent of respondents feel that most or all of student needs are being met by existing programs. The percentage declined in respect to career needs, with 37.5% of respondents perceiving that most or all of student needs are met by existing programs. Personal needs are perceived as a relative strength, with 60.2% of participants believing that most or all of student needs are met. 51.3% of participants feel that most or all social needs are met. Table A2 depicts in greater detail the extent to which participants believe student needs are being met. Respondents perceive that counseling programs are best meeting the needs of students in terms

of personal and social development, while meeting fewer of their academic and career needs. In some cases, differences exist between the perceptions of counselors and administrators (see Table A3). The largest discrepancy was in the area of career needs, where counselors see more needs than administrators.

Participants were also asked to reflect on the specific ways in which school counseling programs meet the needs of students in their schools. The detailed questions were taken from subgroups within the four key areas of the ASCA standards. An additional question in each category prompted participants to list specific programs that meet student needs.

The Likert scale nature of the questions allowed us to quantify responses and develop mean scores for each, using the following key for ordinal categories, using a typical sample response:

- Students have not acquired those needs = 0
- Students have acquired some of those needs = 1
- Students have acquired most of those needs = 2
- Students have acquired all of those needs = 3

Means, then, could range from 0 to 3, with higher means indicating perceptions of stronger aspects of programs.

Academic Needs

In terms of student's academic needs, means of participant responses range from 1.83 (relationship of academics to life at home) to 1.39 (attitude toward learning outside of school) (see Table A4). The greatest variance was found in the relationship of academics to the world of work, which links perceived academic needs to perceived career needs.

In the open-ended question, respondents discussed programs developed within their schools that address the academic needs of the students. Some of the most popular programs revolve around tutoring and teaching skills to students so that they become better equipped to deal with academic demands. Tutoring programs involve extra help from teachers or student tutors. Respondents noted how these programs can be beneficial to at-risk students or gifted students. Homework clubs are also created in which students are given a time after school and a mentor to help get homework done. Additionally, study skills and organizational skills are taught to students. The skills provided are both preventative and remedial. Academic programs delivered by counselors are somewhat balanced between individual, small group, and whole class models.

Career Needs

Overall, the area of career needs has lower means than the ones for academic needs, ranging from 1.51 (strategies to achieve career goals to gain satisfaction) to 1.13 (skills to investigate the world of work) (see Table A5). Variables related to knowledge are less strongly rated than variables related to employing strategies.

Although there were fewer specific examples of career programs in participants' open-ended responses than other categories, respondents shared the career development programs that are offered at their middle schools. Programs target career exploration, career education, career planning, and career development. Much of the career development that respondents considered

includes individual sessions with students. Career planning also includes career days where students are educated on various possible careers. Interest inventories are used by schools to aid in the exploration of student interests as well. Counselors also offer high school preparation and future course selection to try to link the student's interests with future career choices.

Social and Personal Needs

Personal and social needs, combined in the ASCA standards rank higher than either academic or career needs (see Table A6). The highest mean is 1.94 (understand safety and survival skills) and the lowest is 1.62 (interpersonal skills to understand and respect self and others). Again, the cognitive areas, related to understanding, rank lower than the variables regarding setting goals and taking action, which are more applied areas.

Participants had several examples of the types of programs in their schools that meet the personal and social needs of students. Social and personal programs include teaching students about tolerance and diversity, bullying prevention, anger, anxiety and stress management, and support groups. A popular type of program that is used to address social and personal needs is a lunchtime group. This type of group targets both the social and the personal development of students by bringing them together with peers while letting them talk about their own concerns.

Support groups offered in the schools include divorce and changing families, death, illness, and grief groups, social support or social skill groups, and groups that target self-esteem issues. The interaction involved in such groups merges the personal and social needs of the students.

Overall Needs

After thinking carefully and evaluating the impact of their current programs, respondents were asked to think about the needs of students in their schools, and the extent to which the needs of various groups of students are being met. In addition to asking about the needs in general areas of the ASCA standards, participants also reflected on various other needs related to middle school students, including bullying, self-esteem, drug use, sexual behavior, relationships, and school behavior (see Table A7). Consistent with earlier results, career development is regarded as the lowest-ranking need of students, while needs related to social and personal development, including self-esteem and bullying prevention, are the highest.

Who is Involved?

Respondents used a Likert scale to answer how much various stakeholders are involved in the implementation of counseling programs (see Table A8). School counselors receive the highest rating of 2.33 (on a scale of 0 to 3), falling right between involved in the implementation of "most" and involved in the implementation of "all" programs. The next group of answers falls in between involved in the implementation of "some" programs and involved in the implementation of "most" programs. Administrators follow school counselors with a mean of 1.75, followed by students at 1.33, and teachers at 1.18. People outside of the school receive the lowest mean, being involved in an average of a little less than "some" of the programs. Parents and family members receive a mean of 0.91 while community members receive a mean of 0.75.

Programs are perceived as serving the needs of a broad base of students. Respondents said that some or most programs were designed and implemented to meet the needs of all students (see Table A9). The highest average is for the whole student body; students with developmental needs, special needs, and at risk students are closely grouped in the next cluster. The student group with the lowest mean is gifted students.

Student/Counselor Ratios

In schools with over 600 students, we explored whether counselors thought their school have programs to meet students' needs dependent on the number of counselors working at the school. The responses of counselors from schools with two, three, and four counselors in this size school were compared. In the case of schools with four counselors, 100 percent of them said that they have programs to meet students' personal needs and 100 percent said they have programs to meet students' academic needs (see Table A10).

Schools with two counselors, three counselors, and four counselors are about even in terms of meeting the students' personal needs (see Table A11). Even though 100% of counselors in schools with four counselors said they have programs to meet academic needs, the average extent to which these programs meet students' needs is slightly less than that with two or three counselors.

Regarding career needs, the schools with two counselors are more likely to say they have programs to address these needs than the schools with more counselors employed. Looking at the extent to which programs meet career needs, on average the schools with two counselors said they meet those needs more than schools with a greater number of counselors.

In terms of social needs, the schools with two and three counselors were more likely to say that they have programs that address these needs than the schools with four counselors. Although we found that schools with four counselors responded with the lowest mean for whether they have programs to meet students' social needs, they have the highest mean regarding to what extent they have met the social needs of students.

Discussion

Stepping back from the data, several trends and areas of interest can be raised by this study. The first area relates to the perceptions of how well student needs are being met in the various ASCA areas. The second focuses on the relationship between principal perceptions and counselor perceptions. Finally, the data found in this survey raise other questions to be investigated.

Are Needs Being Met?

Although ASCA recommends that school counseling programs meet the needs of students at all levels (including middle school) in the areas of academics, career, and personal/social, both counselors and principals in New Jersey perceive differing degrees of success in how well those needs are being met. Personal/social needs tend to have the highest perceived degree of success, while career needs are seen as being least met.

Students' career needs, on the Likert responses to the survey, trended more towards "not being met" or "some being met". Specific questions about out-of-school career needs had more responses in the category of "a lot of needs met" than did other questions. Specific areas that were perceived as weaknesses included investigating the world of work, making informed career decisions, and understanding the relationship between school and careers. At the middle level, career decisions may seem far removed. However, because decisions about high school course selection have a ripple effect on a student's future trajectory, it is important for students to begin to understand the long-term ramifications of decisions that they make. Guidance for high school course selection is appropriate career guidance for intermediate level students. The exploratory nature of the middle school student also makes it an appropriate time to start thinking about their preferences and interests.

Responses to the perceived effectiveness of academic programs tend to range from "meet some needs" to "meet most needs". By looking at the variables in order of increasing means, it is apparent that the attributes associated with learning outside of school are perceived as the least effective, while the ones regarding relationships between academic areas and external factors are perceived as the strongest. Interestingly, however, the latter also have the widest standard deviation. Specific areas of strength in academic counseling programs included those that involved out-of-school aspects, including the relationship of academic learning to the community, home, and world of work. The latter is a seeming discrepancy from the career findings, but may be explained by the focus on meeting academic needs rather than career needs.

Both counselors and principals perceived meeting the needs of students in the area of personal and social development as a relative strength of counseling programs. Many of the responses on the Likert scale fell in the "meets most of the needs" and "meets all of the needs" range. This finding is consistent with the trend found in the broader literature (Bernier, 1995; Hall, Rushing & Owens, 2009; Stott & Jackson, 2005; Young et al., 2009).

Varied Perceptions

In a few areas, there were notable differences between the perceptions of counselors and principals regarding student needs. One of those areas was in career needs, where fewer principals recognized that this is a need for middle school students than did counselors. This raises a critically important question of how well-versed administrators are in the counseling needs of the middle school population. If career decisions seem too far removed, does that imply, to these school leaders, the absence of a need to be addressed?

Another area in which there was some discrepancy was the area of academic programs facilitated by the counseling program. Principals saw these programs as meeting more academic needs than did counselors. However, elements of their open-ended responses, e.g., lists of all academic subject areas, beg the question of whether they were considering only counseling programs, or all programs in the school.

Different Populations

Counselors and administrators were more involved in implementation of counseling programs than "out-of-school" groups, including parents, family members, and community members. This suggests that some schools may involve these groups of people in some

programs while other schools do not involve them in the implementation of any programs. School improvement research indicates a (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010) link between parent and community involvement to increased student achievement and well-being, making this an area to potentially strengthen.

Both counselors and administrators did not see their programs as tailored to address the needs of specific groups of students, but as “one size fits all” programs, equally meeting the needs of all students. Because the needs of gifted students were not viewed as specifically met, however, it is possible that most programs focus on preventative and remedial programs targeting problems and solutions rather than strengthening already present skills.

Ongoing Questions

Like all descriptive survey studies, this one raises questions that can only be answered by further, more in-depth investigation. The discrepancies described in the previous section are an example of those questions – “How well do principals understand the roles of counselors and how well do they understand the functions of their programs?” Similarly, although our survey attempted to clearly define terms, we wonder if everyone brought the same context and understanding to their answers. These questions would likely benefit from a follow-up qualitative study with interviews or focus groups.

Another question needing further investigation is “Does the number of counselors in a school building impact the quality of programs?” Focusing on this question more specifically would give greater insight into that issue.

One final question regards the settings represented in this study: How effective are counseling programs in New Jersey’s urban middle schools?” The knowledge gained from this study pertains to the subset of counseling programs in New Jersey middle schools, and did not represent urban schools effectively. Further iterations could add to the knowledge base by filling in the gap of more diverse settings and other geographic areas.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.0015>

References

- American School Counselor Association (2004). *ASCA National Standards for Students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Bernier, C. S. (1995). *Multicultural education: Raising cultural awareness and reducing prejudice among a middle school population* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from Education Resources Information Center. (ED382386)
- Brigman, G., & Campbell, C.A. (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling, 7*, 91-98.
- Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Campbell, C. A., & Brigman, G. (2005). Closing the achievement gap: A structured approach to group counseling. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 30*, 67-82.
- Chaplin, D., Bleeker, M., & Booker, K. (2010). *Roads to success: Estimated impacts of an education and career planning program during middle school* (Document No. PR10-04). Retrieved from Mathematica Policy Research website: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/>.
- Cohen, J. S., & Smerdon, B. A. (2009). Tightening the dropout tourniquet: Easing the transition from middle to high school. *Preventing School Failure, 53*, 177-184.
- Cook, J. B., & Kaffenberger, C. J. (2003). Solution shop: A solution-focused counseling and study skills program for middle school. *Professional School Counseling, 7*, 116-123.
- Fitch, T. J., & Marshall, J. L. (2004). What counselors do in high-achieving schools: A study on the role of the school counselor. *Professional School Counseling, 7*, 172-178
- Fouad, N. A. (1995). Career linking: An intervention to promote math and science career awareness. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 73*, 527-34
- Hall, K. R., Rushing, J. L., & Owens, R. B. (2009). Anger in middle school: The solving problems together model. *Journal of School Counseling, 7*, 2-22.
- Hatch, T., & Chen-Hayes, S. F. (2008). School counselor beliefs about ASCA national model school counseling program components using the SCPCS. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, 34-42.
- Lampley, J. H., & Johnson, K. C. (2010). Mentoring at-risk youth: Improving academic achievement in middle school students. *Nonpartisan Education Review, 6*, 1-12.
- Legum, H. L., & Hoare, C. H. (2004). Impact of a career intervention on at-risk middle school students' career maturity levels, academic achievement, and self-esteem. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 148-156.
- Maddy-Bernstein, C., & Dare, D. E. (1999). *Career Guidance for Elementary and Middle School Students*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
- National Middle School Association (2010). *This we believe: Successful schools for young adolescents*. Youngsville OH: Author.
- Perry, J. C., Xiongyi, L., & Pabian, Y. (2010). School engagement as a mediator of academic performance among urban youth: The role of career preparation, parental career support, and teacher support. *Counseling Psychologist, 38*, 269-295.
- Scarborough, J. L., & Culbreth, J. R. (2008). Examining discrepancies between actual and preferred practice of school counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*, 446-459.

- Sink, C. A., Akos, P., Turnbull, R. J., & Mvuddud, N. (2008). An investigation of comprehensive school counseling programs and academic achievement in Washington State middle schools. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, 43-53.
- Stott, K. A., & Jackson, A. P. (2005). Using service learning to achieve middle school comprehensive guidance program goals. *Professional School Counseling, 9*, 156-159.
- Whittingham, J. L., & Huffman, S. (2009). The effects of book clubs on the reading attitudes of middle school students. *Reading Improvement, 46*, 130-136.
- Young, A., Hardy, V., Hamilton, C., Biemesser, K., Sun, L., & Nieberall, S. (2009). Empowering students: Using data to transform a bullying prevention and intervention program. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, 413-420.

Appendix A

Student Population	1 counselor	2 counselors	3 counselors	4 counselors
Fewer than 200	1	0	0	0
200-400	10	2	0	0
400-600	7	13	4	1
Over 600	0	19	24	6

ASCA Area	These programs do not meet needs	These programs meet some of needs	These programs meet most of needs	These programs meet all of needs
Academic	2.3%	45.3%	44.2%	8.1%
Career	16.7%	45.8%	31.9%	5.6%
Personal	2.4%	37.3%	54.2%	6.1%
Social	3.8%	45.0%	47.5%	3.8%

	Principal		Counselor	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Academic	90.0%	10.0%	92.3%	7.7%
Career	52.6%	47.4%	66.7%	33.3%
Personal	100.0%	0%	92.4%	7.6%
Social	100.0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
Understand relationship of academics to world of work	1.76	.862
Understand relationship of academics to community	1.62	.799
Academic preparation to choose post-secondary options	1.59	.751
Knowledge for effective learning in school	1.54	.552
Attitude toward learning in school	1.53	.503
Skills for effective learning in school	1.51	.530
Skills for learning outside of school	1.44	.552
Attitude for learning outside of school	1.39	.568

SCALE
 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met
 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met

Table A5 <i>Perceived Career Counseling Needs</i>		SCALE 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met	
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Employ strategies to achieve career goals to gain satisfaction	1.51	.750	
Knowledge of self, related to interests	1.43	.688	
Employ strategies to achieve career goals to gain success	1.43	.802	
Understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and world of work	1.40	.725	
Ability to make informed career decisions	1.15	.725	
Skills to investigate world of work	1.13	.691	

Table A6 <i>Perceived Social and Personal Counseling Needs</i>		SCALE 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met	
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Understand safety and survival skills for personal and social development	1.94	.784	
Take necessary action to achieve goals	1.90	.736	
Make decisions to achieve goals	1.88	.777	
Set goals for personal and social development	1.72	.643	
Knowledge to understand and respect self and others	1.70	.692	
Attitudes to understand and respect self and others	1.68	.657	
Interpersonal skills to understand and respect self and others	1.62	.644	

Table A7 <i>Perceived Counseling Needs of Middle School Students</i>		SCALE 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met	
Perceived Needs	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Bullying Prevention	2.01	.763	
Social Development	2.00	.646	
Personal Development	1.97	.598	
Academic Development	1.94	.756	
Self Esteem Development	1.94	.770	
Relationship Development	1.78	.688	
School Behavior Development	1.65	.748	
Drug Prevention	1.54	.800	
Sexual Behavior Programs	1.53	.872	
Career Development	1.41	.764	

Table A8 <i>Stakeholders Involvement in Implementation of Programs</i>

Stakeholder Group	Mean (on scale of 0-3)
School Counselors	2.33
Administrators	1.75
Students	1.33
Teachers	1.18
Parents/Family Members	0.91
Community Members	0.76

Table A9 <i>Student Group Needs Being Met</i>	
Student Group	Mean (on scale of 0-3)
All Students	1.9
Special Needs	1.7
At Risk	1.61
Developmental Needs	1.6
Gifted	1.24

Table A10 <i>Program Availability to Meet Needs of Students in Schools with 600+ Students</i>				
	Academic	Career	Social	Personal
2 counselors	94.4%	78.95%	89.47%	89.47%
3 counselors	83.33%	54.17%	91.67%	95.83%
4 counselors	100%	60%	66.67%	100%

Table A11 <i>Extent of Programs Meeting Needs of Students in Schools with 600+ Students</i>				
	Academic	Career	Social	Personal
2 counselors	1.59	1.29	1.59	1.56
3 counselors	1.62	1.25	1.5	1.61
4 counselors	1.5	1	1.75	1.6

Appendix B

Part I: Programs in Place

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **academic** needs of your students?

Yes / No

Please describe any **academic** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **academic** needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **career development** needs of your students?

Yes / No

Please describe any **career development** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **career development** needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **personal** needs of your students?

Yes / No

Please describe any **personal** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **personal** needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **social** needs of your students?
Yes / No

Please describe any **social** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **social** development needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Please describe any **other counseling** programs you have in place at your school.

PART II: Demographics

Please check all that apply:

What grades are served at your middle school?

4 5 6 7 8 9 Other _____

In what setting is your middle school located?

Rural Urban Suburban

How many school counselors work in your school?

1 2 3 4 5+

How many students attend your school?

Less than 200 students 200 – 400 students 400 – 600 students Over 600 students

What is your position in the middle school?

Administrator School Counselor Other _____

PART III: Addressing Academic Needs

Directions: For each of the following questions please think about the counseling programs at your school that address the **academic needs** of your students.

Through these programs students in my school have acquired an **attitude** that has contributed to effective learning in **school**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have acquired **knowledge** that has contributed to effective learning in **school**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have acquired **skills** that have contributed to effective learning in **school**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

To what extent do you think these programs have helped students acquire an **attitude** that has contributed to effective learning **outside of the school (across the lifespan)?**

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

To what extent do you think these programs have helped students acquire **knowledge** that has contributed to effective learning **outside of the school (across the lifespan)?**

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

To what extent do you think these programs have helped students acquire **skills** that has contributed to effective learning **outside of the school (across the lifespan)?**

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

those needs those needs those needs those needs

How much will these programs help students to complete school with the **academic preparation** essential to choose from a **wide range of post-secondary options**?

1	2	3	4
Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely	Extremely Likely

To what extent have these programs helped students to **understand the relationship of academics to the world of work**?

1	2	3	4
Have not at all helped	Have helped a little	Have helped a somewhat	Have helped a lot

To what extent have these programs helped students to **understand the relationship of academics to life at home**?

1	2	3	4
Have not at all helped	Have helped a little	Have helped a somewhat	Have helped a lot

To what extent have these programs helped students to **understand the relationship of academics to the community**?

1	2	3	4
Have not at all helped	Have helped a little	Have helped a somewhat	Have helped a lot

Part IV: Addressing Career Development

Directions: For each of the following questions, please think about the counseling programs at your school that address the **career development** of your students.

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **skills to investigate the world of work**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have the **knowledge of self-related to interests**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **ability to make informed career decisions**.

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs
--	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school are better able to **employ strategies** to achieve future career goals to **gain success**.

1 Students will not employ those strategies	2 Students will employ few strategies	3 Students will employ several strategies	4 Students will employ many strategies
--	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school are better able to **employ strategies** to achieve future career goals to **gain satisfaction**.

1 Students will not employ those strategies	2 Students will employ few strategies	3 Students will employ several strategies	4 Students will employ many strategies
--	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school are better able to **understand the relationship** between **personal qualities, education, training,** and the **world of work**.

1 Students will not employ those strategies	2 Students will employ few strategies	3 Students will employ several strategies	4 Students will employ many strategies
--	--	--	---

Part V: Addressing personal and social development

Directions: For each of the following questions, please think about the counseling programs at your school that address the **personal and social development** of your students.

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **knowledge** to help them **understand and respect self and others**

1 Students have not acquired those needs	2 Students have acquired some of those needs	3 Students have acquired most of those needs	4 Students have acquired all of those needs
---	---	---	--

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **attitudes** to help them **understand and respect self and others**.

1 Students have not acquired those needs	2 Students have acquired some of those needs	3 Students have acquired most of those needs	4 Students have acquired all of those needs
---	---	---	--

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **interpersonal skills** to help them **understand and respect self and others**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students will **set goals** for their **personal and social development**.

1	2	3	4
Students are not able to set goals	Students are somewhat able To set goals	Students are mostly able To set goals	Students are fully able To set goals

Through these programs students in my school will be able to **make decisions to achieve goals**.

1	2	3	4
Students will not do this to achieve goals	Students will do this few times To achieve goals	Students will do this some of the time To achieve goals	Students will do this often To achieve goals

Through these programs students in my school will be able to **take necessary action to achieve goals**.

1	2	3	4
Students will not do this to achieve goals	Students will do this few times To achieve goals	Students will do this some of the time To achieve goals	Students will do this often To achieve goals

Through these programs students in my school will **understand safety and survival skills** for their personal and social development.

1	2	3	4
Children do not understand these skills	Children will understand few of these skills	Children will understand some of these skills	Children will understand most of these skills

Part VI: Areas being addressed

To what extent is **academic development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **career development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **personal development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **social development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **bullying prevention** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **self esteem development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **drug prevention** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **sexual behavior programs** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **relationship development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **school behavior development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

Part VII: Target Population

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit **gifted students**?

1	2	3	4
None of the Programs target those students	Some of the programs target those students	Most of the programs target those students	All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit **students with developmental needs**?

1	2	3	4
None of the Programs target those students	Some of the programs target those students	Most of the programs target those students	All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit the **special needs population**?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

None of the Programs target those students

Some of the programs target those students

Most of the programs target those students

All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit the **at risk population**?

1

None of the Programs target those students

2

Some of the programs target those students

3

Most of the programs target those students

4

All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit the **student body as a whole**?

1

None of the Programs target those students

2

Some of the programs target those students

3

Most of the programs target those students

4

All of the programs target those students

Are there any other groups of students that you feel programs at your school benefit?

Part VIII: Stakeholders

Please indicate which stakeholders are involved in the implementation of counseling programs.

To what extent are **school counselors** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1

These stakeholders are not involved in programs

2

These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs

3

These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs

4

These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **administration** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1

These stakeholders are not involved in programs

2

These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs

3

These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs

4

These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **teachers** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1

These stakeholders are not involved in programs

2

These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs

3

These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs

4

These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **parents or family members** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1	2	3	4
These stakeholders are not involved in programs	These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **community members** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1	2	3	4
These stakeholders are not involved in programs	These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **students** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1	2	3	4
These stakeholders are not involved in programs	These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

Are there any other stakeholders that you feel are involved in school counseling programs at your middle school?

Author Note

Suzanne Schwarz McCotter, PhD, Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership, Montclair State University, 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07043
mccotters@mail.montclair.edu

Sarah Cohen, MA, Thom Stecher and Associates, SJC264@gmail.com

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Suzanne Schwarz McCotter at mccotters@mail.montclair.edu
