Collaborative Principal & School Counselor Relationships

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Background:

• When principals strive to engage practitioners and the school community to work together, **school counselors are logical and natural partners** to include within such professional communities of practice.

• Further, working as allies, principals and school counselors are in a unique position to forge systemic change that promotes **social justice**, fosters **student success**, and develops **partnerships** with school community to support school’s vision.

Connolly & Protheroe, 2009; Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Martin, 2013
Purpose:

- In our study, learned that our principal graduates were not adequately prepared to effectively collaborate with school counselors to support a comprehensive school counseling (CSC) program in the following areas:
  - Misunderstanding of school counselor roles/responsibilities
  - Lacked awareness about ASCA Standards
  - Utilizing data to personalize school curriculum

- Thus, the results of this research propelled us to embark on an initiative to create a framework to foster school counselor and principal collaboration, and to include other community partners in pre-service preparation and in-service engagement.
Theoretical Framework

• Social Capital Theory
  • Social Capital = relationships and social networks (i.e. school counselor-principal-families) where information resources are shared.
  • Plays a critical role in educational outcomes for P-12 students.

Basic Tenets:

• Trust
• Goodwill
• Authority
• Community
• Empathy
• Shared values and/or identity
• Respect
• Collaboration
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Framework:

- The framework at hand included the following elements:
• **Effective Pre-Service Preparation**
  • Intentionally created and implemented a core reader for pre-service principal students throughout a three-year plan.
  • After aligning the NELP Standards for Building Level Leaders, ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, and ASCA School Counselor Competencies, we *developed six curricular units* for intentional preparation of pre-service school principals under the CSC Model.
    • Introduction to Comprehensive School Counseling
    • The Roles of the School Counselor and the Administrator
    • Delivery and Management of Counseling Services
    • Professionalism, Ethics, and Legal Issues
    • Evidence-Based Accountability and Improvement Processes
    • Family and Community Partnerships and Engagement

ASCA, 2012a, 2016; Boyland et al., 2019; NPBEA, 2018
**Stakeholder Collaboration**

- Educational leadership and school counseling faculty have intentionally sought out community partners who possess unique expertise that can enhance P-12 schools as well as SCP collaboration.

- For example, a partnership between a local school district and the school counseling program allowed us to develop for training opportunities for pre-service and in-service SCPs.
• **Current Practitioner Support**

  - Roles as educational leadership and school counseling faculty allow us to provide ongoing consultation and coaching to in-service practitioners as they are continuing to grow their collaboration as well as comprehensive school counseling program.

  - This consultation and coaching is implemented in the form of **on-site feedback on day to day efforts** in addition to short term and long term goals developed by each respective school/SCP.
• **Model Site Development**

  • Pre-service training programs support the creation of a model site on best practices for training and supporting school counselors and principals in sustaining CSC models that *address P-12 students holistically.*

  • This site will be incorporated in pre-service training for school administrators and school counselors as a *unique opportunity to see an exemplary model* that takes the theory and puts it into practice.
School Counselor – Guiding Principles

• *Facilitate Development of all Students*
  – Social-Emotional (Personal-Social)
  – Academic
  – Career

• *Standards for Student Success*
  – Mindsets
  – Behaviors
    • Learning strategies
    • Self Management
    • Social Skills

Ball State University
## Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Activities for School Counselors</th>
<th>Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ advisement and appraisal for academic planning</td>
<td>■ building the master schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students</td>
<td>■ coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests</td>
<td>■ coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent</td>
<td>■ signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems</td>
<td>■ performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ providing short-term individual and small-group counseling services to students</td>
<td>■ providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data</td>
<td>■ covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ interpreting student records</td>
<td>■ maintaining student records</td>
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<td>■ analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement</td>
<td>■ computing grade-point averages</td>
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<td>■ consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success</td>
<td>■ supervising classrooms or common areas</td>
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<td>■ protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations</td>
<td>■ keeping clerical records</td>
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<td>■ consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems</td>
<td>■ assisting with duties in the principal's office</td>
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<td>■ advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards, as necessary</td>
<td>■ coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data</td>
<td>■ serving as a data entry clerk</td>
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Establishing Principal/School Counselor Collaboration

Action-Step to Improve Partnerships

Schedule meetings between the school counselor
Intentional planning helps promote collaborative discussions surrounding the comprehensive school counseling plan, social justice/equity initiatives, student achievement gaps, and other topics relevant to the school success plan

Include School Counselors on School Leadership Teams
Including school counselors as influential members of school leadership teams provides broader and more comprehensive student support

Review ASCA national model, mindsets and behaviors, roles and responsibilities
Being familiar with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model, school counselor mindsets and behaviors, and roles and responsibilities is vital to ensuring the school counselor is being most effectively utilized within the school environment
https://www.schooieounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/School-Counselor-Roles-Responsibilities

Utilize the 80/20 model
The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) found that for schools’ to most successfully benefit from a comprehensive school counseling plan, school counselors must spend 80% of their time on direct student services and 20% on indirect student services

Partner with school counselors community stakeholders to establish professional development opportunities over the school counselor role
Together, principals and school counselors can serve as change makers in their school environments by discussing seen equity and social justice competencies and needs, and collaborating to establish professional development opportunities to better educate staff!

Utilize MTSS in combination with the Comprehensive School Counseling Plan
The school’s multi-tiered systems of support and comprehensive school counseling plan must be in alignment for the academic and social-emotional success of all students, as this collaboration ensures equity, and increases the efficacy and effectiveness of program delivery

Understand and address barriers to collaboration
Some common barriers to effective collaboration include a lack of role understanding and mutual respect from both principals and school counselors, a lack of communication, and a lack of perceived time to intentionally meet. Understanding these potential barriers is vital to being able to overcome them

Effective principal-school counselor collaboration is a critical component to:
- Improved student academic achievement
- Increased attendance rates
- Closing equity gaps in the school environment
- More supportive school climates
5 WAYS TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION:

1. **Strong Communication**
   - Schedule a time to meet and discuss the various aspects of the comprehensive school counseling plan
   - Plan monthly update meetings to maintain open communication

2. **Use Data**
   - Utilize and explain school data to convey the importance of CSC goals and interventions

3. **Committee Inclusion**
   - Have principals join the school counseling advisory council and/or have school counselors join the administrative leadership team to aid in policy understanding

4. **Professional Development**
   - Work together to organize school-wide professional development opportunities that advance social justice competencies
   - e.g. trauma-informed education, implicit bias awareness, ending the school to prison pipeline

5. **Utilize Use of Time Documents**
   - Outlining the amount of time spent on various roles and responsibilities will provide data that can prove ineffective use of time due to role misunderstanding, and can help establish 80/20 model
Collaboration in Practice: Insights from Mark Fahey & Libby Ritchie
Breakout group guiding questions:

• What questions do you have related to principal-school counselor collaboration?

• What are the key ways principals and school counselors can collaborate to close out the school year and support students?

• How can we plan now for SY 2021-2022 to support students’ needs:
  • Social and emotional?
  • academic and career/college?

• What would you like to see in a collaborative school counselor-principal conference?

• Would you be interested in a ½ day summer retreat? What time would be best? (Zoom poll)
References:


References:


