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Mia Miller

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**Importance of Guidance Counselors on High School Student Success in College and Career
Readiness**

Mia R. Miller

California State University, Monterey Bay

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Advisor: Paoze Thao

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Abstract

High school guidance counselors are a valuable asset in the education system, and support their students in a variety of ways. An important aspect of high school is the emphasis on college and career readiness for students' post-secondary career goals where guidance counselors are the main resource for. Guidance counselors are the least understood within the education system and are not given enough credit for the types of services they provide to ensure student success. The purpose of this senior capstone research is to highlight and examine the role of high school guidance counselors and their impact on student success in college and career readiness. Through the use of a literature review, one high school guidance counselor written response survey, an anonymous high school student survey of forty-four students, an anonymous college student survey with ten responses, the result findings revealed that high school guidance counselors are not utilized by high school students in the ways they are intended to be and can potentially influence their postsecondary education and career goals.

Introduction and Background

Within the education system, there are many roles educators play for their students. Whether it is a role model, a guide, or an inspiration, the education system has tried to build a system that supports students' needs. Guidance counselors are often called and seen as school counselors, and are thought of to only oversee academic advising to prepare students for graduation, which in part, is true, but guidance counselors do much more than just recommend classes and put together schedules each year (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). The guidance counselor profession has become a fundamental part of the education school system, and they play an important role in students' success (Cicco, 2018). Guidance counselors also play a fundamental role in a student's academic experience. It can be negative or positive, depending on a variety of factors like race, ethnicity, environmental demographics, socioeconomic status, etc (Linnehan et al., 2011). Sometimes even the school climate or district resources can affect the quality of the services (Mau et al., 2016).

When I was in high school, I had a more negative interaction with my guidance counselor. I was not properly prepared for my post-secondary education, and felt lost within what I wanted to do for a career. I have never had the proper preparation, guidance, or resources on how to navigate life after high school. I lived in an area where the student to educator ratio was too high, which resulted in a lack of counselors due to the population in the area. That added to the issue of many students being enrolled in school without a counselor for support (Cratty, 2019). I solely relied on my own upbringing and resources to navigate my way through my life in and out of the classroom, but I believe that if I had a better relationship and experience with my guidance counselor, I would have had more options and opportunities to choose from. Guidance counselors play a vital role in their students' success, and I want to show their

importance and value in the education system. School counselors are very influential to a student's experience, but there is a lack of research that demonstrates their power within the education system. This leads me to my primary question that I propose to answer: How important are guidance counselors for high school student success in college and career readiness? The related questions are as followed: What is the role of guidance counselors in high school and how does it involve student success in college and career readiness? What does research say about the importance of guidance counselors on the success of high school students in college and career readiness? How do guidance counselors prepare high school students to succeed in college and career readiness? How do students feel their guidance counselor has contributed to their students' success in preparation for post-secondary college and career goals? Are there sufficient resources for high school guidance counselors to effectively provide services to their student population? If not, what types of resources do they need?

Literature Review

The guidance counseling profession has a lot of responsibilities and focuses that are aimed to help student achievement and success. A main focus that counselors prioritize is postsecondary transitions, whether that be development of career aspirations or decision making (Watkinson, 2014). This is a huge priority that high school guidance counselors take, especially for graduating seniors. They have the opportunity to prepare them throughout their time in high school, and best prepare them in the ways they need. Students' who are being supported by their counselor are more likely to graduate high school, apply to college, have less behavioral problems, improve their ACT and SAT scores, and have better attendance (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). It is important to recognize the guidance counselor profession and go

into depth on their role and responsibilities they hold, and potential barriers and resources they face with an emphasis on college and career readiness.

The Role of Guidance Counseling. A guidance counselor's role is to contribute to their educational experiences provided by the support team the school system had built for them (Cratty, 2019). Guidance counselors provide social-emotional and academic support, as well as provide resources to help students critically think about their postsecondary goals and set them on that path for success (Cratty, 2019). High schoolers start to shift their focus on what they may want to do after high school and help students explore those interests to connect them to potential careers (Cicco, 2018). There are three main areas in which guidance counselors focus on which include: academic counseling and support, social and emotional support, and college and career preparation (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.).

Guidance counselors build relationships with students in order to understand them, their academic strengths and weaknesses, interests, hobbies, and extracurricular activity involvement (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). The more a counselor knows about the student, the more they will be able to understand the student and how to prepare them. The more knowledge a school counselor has about their student population, the more opportunities to design career development strategies that are relevant to the strengths and weaknesses their students face (Watkinson, 2014). A part of this could look like giving options of courses the student may be interested in or recommending tutoring services or alternatives to students who may be struggling with curricula; This could also be providing accommodations to those with disabilities, and working with other school faculty and staff in order to create individualized education plans (IEP's) that best support the students' needs (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.).

High school students' age typically ranges between 14-18 years old. During this time, they are going through a pubescent transitional period where some are in need of more support. Guidance counselors can recognize and provide that social and emotional support that relates to bullying, harassment, discrimination, mental health, and cyberbullying (Cicco, 2018). Technology and its advancements contribute to more altercations and reactions to social media which can affect young students and their expectations for themselves. Guidance counselors can help students navigate through these experiences and recommend strategies to help students recognize and overcome these situations and feelings (Cicco, 2018). School counselors also possess a variety of competencies and continue to work with professional organizations in order to create a safe school environment for those who may be at risk for bullying and other issues (Cicco, 2018).

School counselors are challenged day by day to support diverse student populations. When looking at students of color, it is reported that school counselors are seen to be the most influential person within specific groups of students (Cholewa et al., 2015). The role of guidance counselors performs as a role of an advocate for those diverse students who may lack the resources to reach their full potential: Counselors ensure that diverse students are being met with their learning needs to provide equal access to services (Cicco, 2018). Through individual planning and advocacy, counselors are able to best support their students. They are able to provide educational planning and guidance to students, making them an important source of information for students in their post secondary options (Linnehan et al., 2011). Students who have positive interactions and services with their counselors are more likely to view a positive school climate than those schools that provide limited counseling services.

Guidance counselors also serve the role as mental health professionals within the system. They are able to utilize their knowledge of resources and experience to offer recommendations and early detection of issues in order to ensure all students receive the support they need (Pincus et al., 2021). Due to recent events like the Coronavirus (COVID-19), mental health experts and professionals predict higher levels of depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal thoughts within students (Pincus et al., 2021). Guidance counselors serve that role of support to the student in order to assess and intervene when these issues are detected. Students with increased mental health and social emotional issues can impact students academic and career success (Pincus et al., 2021). Counselors have the ability to provide resources and assistance to students who feel they are unable to go to anyone for support. They are able to refer students to psychologists for many multiple mental health issues such as eating disorders, depression, substance abuse, or self-harm behavior (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). High school counselors are seen as a safe adult where students can go for any type of need; A person a student can go to if they feel in danger, hurt, or unknown harmful situations (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.).

School Counseling Barriers. There are a few factors that actually affect the way guidance counselors serve their students. It can range from personal stigmas to district limitations. School counseling looks different depending on the area students live in, the types of schools that are in the area, and the diverse student populations. It is mentioned that within the education system, there could be policies that affect underrepresented populations (Cholewa et al., 2015); Underrepresented students could include students of color, students with disabilities, and students who identify with the LGBT+ community. District to district, school to school, area to area can all look different, so it can be difficult to find and calculate resources that benefit all

students. There can be an overrepresentation of a specific group over another which can lead to an underrepresentation of students (Cholewa et al., 2015). Looking at different types of students, research showed that African American Students viewed school counselors to be the most influential people compared to Caucasian or Hispanic students (Cholewa et al., 2015). This suggests that students of color experience different interactions within school and with their guidance counselors, which also suggests the different treatment of students. It is mostly known that individuals who are demographically similar are more likely to have similar experiences, values, and beliefs, so when it comes to the representation of guidance counselors, students tend to be attracted or influenced more by those whom they perceive to be similar to them (Linnehan et al., 2011). This can look different demographically which can potentially put a strain on students' willingness to meet with their counselors. Research suggests that theories of relational demographics show that the race of the student and the race of the counselor play a role in examining different recommendations for students of different races when it comes to post-secondary education (Linnehan et al., 2011). This calls for counselors to develop deep "self-awareness of their own potential biases and multicultural competence to provide optimal counseling services" (Cicco, 2018). Counselors' expectations and attitudes towards their student population plays a huge role in the students personal, social, and academic development and performance (Mau et al., 2016). These attributes can depend on the type of school a counselor is giving support at. Public, private, charter, and magnet schools differ in few ways, and the way services are offered can vary. When looking at public versus private schools, private schools generally have more access to support and resources (Cholewa et al., 2015), which puts public schools at a disadvantage.

In some student cases, there can be a lack of teacher or parent involvement which can lead to students being underprepared for post- secondary education. Sometimes parents lack experience and possibly self-efficacy within their own experiences which causes a disadvantage to students (Bryant & Nicolas, 2011). Also, there are times where there is little to no involvement with parents and teachers which can make it difficult for counselors to properly assist students. Since school counselors have access and contact with teachers to find out students' academic and behavioral status, they should have more involvement in connecting with parents via email or phone to give feedback at home (Berger, 2013). Research has also shown that student and parent perceptions of guidance counselors can affect the accessibility of assistance within marginalized groups (Cholewa et al., 2015).

Resources and Models for School Counselors. School counselors are trained to provide services to students to ensure they are safe and comfortable. They have tools and strategies that can effectively and successfully serve their students population, school, and community (Mau et al., 2016). Guidance counselors follow the ASCA National Standards for Students which allow them to properly assist students and recognize their needs. These standards are used as a resource for counselors to ensure that they can deliver effective services. The ASCA National Standards for Students consist of four components: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (Mau et al., 2016).

Each of these components focuses on methods that counselors can use to approach their students. The foundation component focuses on “mission statements, goals, student standards, and professional competencies that guide and support both students and school counselors in academic, career, and personal-social domains” (Mau et al., 2016). This sets the tone for the students, counselors, and schools in order to create basic requirements that allow everyone

involved to succeed. Without the foundation stage in the model, it can be difficult to navigate and set standards that can promote success within the school environment. The second component includes delivery which uses methods that involve individual student planning, responsive services, school counseling curriculum, and system support (Mau et al., 2016). This helps guide school counselors and gives them their own guidelines to follow in order to ensure the proper support to give their students. Following would be the management section which includes “school counselor competency, school counseling program assessments, use-of-time assessments, annual agreements, advisory councils, use of data, action plans, and calendars (Mau et al., 2016).” Documentations like this allow counselors to keep data records of students to build on their profiles which allow them to properly handle and assess students. The last component of this model addresses accountability which includes the effectiveness of school counseling programs and its measurement on student achievement impacts and behavior (Mau et al., 2016). School counselors can facilitate these comprehensive school counseling programs that are designed to further expand the students personal, social, career, and academic growth, all while addressing achievement-related behaviors and beliefs that support student success and achievement (Watkinson, 2014).

College and Career Readiness. A major part of the high school experience is preparing students for postsecondary college and career paths. Career orientation is very important for students to determine their career plans, ambitions, and goals (Suryadi et al., 2020). Counselors are experienced and more familiar with college and career paths, making them one of the most reliable sources when navigating students. Counselors can provide students with tools and strategies when deciding what their potential path would be, whether that be college bound or the workforce. There can be gaps in students deciding factors for their postsecondary plans like

school size, location, and initial course of study (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). Guidance counselors can advise students on financial aid, scholarships, and walk them through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). These are key components for high school students, especially for diverse student populations. There can often be parental expectations for their children to go to college to be successful, but they can sometimes not have the support or resources to get their children there: That is where guidance counselors come in, and help give those resources to students and support their college and career goals. If a student is not interested in college, counselors are able to provide alternative suggestions like apprenticeships, trade schools, military, or other work-based learning opportunities (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.).

School counselors often use the support of colleges and universities to host college and career fairs to expose students for what comes after high school. Guidance counselors will bring such events to school grounds to help plan campus visits, gather application materials, and examine different programs of study that match their strengths and interests with their long-term goals in mind (Cicco, 2018). In association to the interactive way to show students different college and career paths, they also have access to use diverse college and career preparation programs. A known program used in schools is Naviance which is a program that provides “comprehensive career and college readiness services for students grades K-12” (Cicco, 2018). This program is a great tool for students looking into different college and career options. It has the ability to show data from a diverse pool of students based on GPA, SAT, and ACT scores. Comprehensive counseling and programs promote college and career readiness, which can be a concern for high schools (Cicco, 2018).

Methods and Procedures

To answer the research questions, I gathered information and research from peer-reviewed and scholarly journal articles, and a couple organizational websites that gave me an insight on the roles of guidance counselors and the basic resources they provide students with. There were limits to how many scholarly, peer-reviewed journals I could use because there seemed to be a lack of research about the correlation of high school counselors and college and career readiness. Regardless, what I did find provided me with data and analytics that helped me shape the importance and impacts of the roles they serve. To help support the literature I researched, I conducted interview questions for one high school counselor in the local Seaside, California area. Due to the scheduling conflicts, I was not able to formally conduct the interview in-person, but I was able to share a separate Google Doc form with the interview questions and gave them access to answer the questions in short-essay format (See Appendix 1).

I wanted to get the high school student perspective, so I conducted a student survey from a local high school in Seaside, California. There were two classrooms from the same high school teacher that completed the student survey: period three's class that consisted of 33 high school students, and period six's class which had 27 students. The survey was a Google Form that had questions relating to their own experiences with their guidance counselors (See Appendix 2). This survey gave me data on how often they meet with their counselors and how that affects their post-high school college and career goals (See Appendix 2). For some extra support, I thought it would be beneficial to get the perspective of current college students, so I created a student survey that asked students to reflect on their past experiences with their high school guidance counselor (See Appendix 3). I sent out the student survey via a social media platform that is only accessible to current college students at the university in order to control the accuracy.

With each set of questions I gave out to the three groups of participants, I based them off of my research questions in order to find the most accuracy in the project. Having the Google Forms benefited my way of collecting research that was accommodating to my schedule, as well as the subject participants. The different perspectives will give me some variation on those involved in the education system. I strongly believe that I have collected enough research from the interviews and student surveys, alongside the literature review to help thoroughly answer my research questions.

Results and Discussion

Through student surveys and a guidance counselor written response survey, my results indicate that guidance counselors have the best interest in the students and want to set them up for student success in and out of the classroom, but the majority of the resources are not taken advantage of by students.

What is the role of guidance counselors in high school and how does it involve student success in college and career readiness?

Guidance counselors' role is to provide social-emotional support, academic support, and provide resources to help students plan and process their postsecondary goals and set them on that path for success (Cratty, 2019). High school guidance counselors have a wide range of tasks to accomplish throughout the school year, but one of their main responsibilities is to support and assist students in college and career readiness. In a survey written response from a guidance counselor, it was found that one of the main tasks they do consist of meeting regularly with high school seniors to ensure they are meeting graduation requirements and preparing them for the next step after high school (See Appendix 1 B for reference question). It was mentioned in the survey written response that they were responsible for meeting with students at all grade levels to

help them with their schedules, social and emotional support, and academic support (See Appendix 1 B for reference question). In the anonymous high school student survey, students were asked what type of support do they go to their counselor for, and fifty-nine percent (59%) of the respondents chose academic support, fifteen percent (15%) chose social and emotional support, and twenty (20%) chose college and career preparation (See Appendix 2 D). Most academic support consists of schedule changes, offering support courses for curriculums, or recommending tutoring services. Academic support can also look like individualized education plans (IEP's) that best support the students needs (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). Guidance counselors attend meetings with teachers and staff to go over and create 504 plans, IEPs, tier I and tier II meetings (See Appendix 1 B for reference question). The role of a guidance counselor, in addition to supporting students in academics, social and emotional issues, and college and career readiness, is to also encourage individual motivation and self-efficacy. In the written response survey, the guidance counselor described how to support unmotivated students (See Appendix 1 E for reference question). It was explained that students' needs are different when it comes to how to increase motivation; Students suffer from other underlying issues like home life, social circles, self-esteem, and learning disabilities (See Appendix 1 E for reference question). It was noted that guidance counselors meet with students for weekly check-ins, and can refer them to school therapists, social groups, or pairing them up with a trusted adult (See Appendix 1 E for reference question). A guidance counselor can only give so much support and resources, but the students need to do their part in taking the help and support.

What does research say about the importance of guidance counselors on the success of high school students in college and career readiness?

High school guidance counselors have a diverse range of skills and tasks that allow them to assist their student population. Their diverse duties show how their involvement has an impact on student achievement and success (ASVAB Career Exploration Program, n.d.). High school guidance counselors are noted to be the key college and career planning resource, thus contributing to their student success. In order to gain a perspective on how important guidance counselors are on the success of high school students in college and career readiness, high school students were asked in their survey if they would say their guidance counselor has contributed to their overall student success. Twenty-two percent (22%) reported “yes,” while forty percent (40%) reported “a little” (See Appendix 2 J for reference question); Twenty percent (20%) of college students reported “yes,” while seventy percent (70%) reported “a little” when asked the same question in their survey (See Appendix 3 J for reference question). These two groups are important to look at because we can see the transition from high school to college students, and both perspectives on their guidance counselors. Fifty percent (50%) of college students reported they felt “very prepared” when coming to college (See Appendix 2 H for reference question); yet, only ten percent (10%) reported “yes” to their guidance counselor having an affect on how they felt coming to college (See Appendix 3 I for reference question). The research collected from these surveys offer direct answers on the student perspective from current high school students and current college students, which alongside the literature review, has suggested their impact and importance is ample in overall student success in college and career readiness.

How do guidance counselors prepare high school students to succeed in college and career readiness?

Guidance counselors advise students on financial aid, scholarships, and walk them through the FAFSA because it is a main attribute to supporting students and their post-secondary

career paths. Supporting high school seniors with college and career readiness is one of the main themes that was discussed in the literature review, and explains how crucial it is for students to receive this type of guidance. In the survey written response, the guidance counselor touched on the aspect that post-secondary education is not suitable for everyone because in sum, everyone has different learning styles and goals to obtain (See Appendix 1 F for reference question). Because of this, it was mentioned that they discuss different career options like trade schools, community colleges, employment opportunities, on-the-job training, and four-year universities (See Appendix 1 F for reference question). Counselors will meet regularly with students in order to prepare them for graduation and college and career readiness. Sometimes schools and counselors will go out on college fairs and college tours for students to broaden their views on college life. This helps students prepare and research programs, majors, communities, and organizations they may want to be a part of. Eighty percent (80%) of college student respondents claimed that they were provided with services and programs to allow them to prepare for college and career readiness (See Appendix 3 K).

How do students feel their guidance counselor has contributed to their students' success in preparation for post-secondary college and career goals?

In order for counselors to properly give their students the type of support they need, it is important that they build relationships with each student. The better relationship the counselor has with the student, the more knowledge they will have on their students weaknesses, learning styles, strengths, etc. (Watkinson, 2014). In the high school student survey, students were asked about their knowledge of their guidance counselor and their relationship with them (See Appendix 2 A and B). Of the respondents, eighty-four percent (84%) knew who their guidance counselor was, and fifteen percent (15%) did not know who their counselor was (See Appendix 2

A). What was interesting about the results from that question was that following it was how often students visited their counselor, and eighty-eight percent (88%) of the students never visited their counselor, and only nine percent (9%) visited their counselors at least once a week (See Appendix 2 B). This can imply that the high school students may not be comfortable or have a trusting relationship with their counselor which affects how often they are meeting with their counselor, thus impacting how students feel counselors contribute to their student success. When looking at current college students, eighty percent (80%) knew who their guidance counselor was and twenty percent (20%) did not (See Appendix 3 A); yet, there was a mixed income of results for how often those students visited their counselors (See Appendix 3 B). Fifty-nine percent (59%) of high school students responded that they feel “kind of” prepared for their plans after high school (See Appendix 2 H), even though seventy percent (70%) of the student respondents responded that their guidance counselor did not have and affect on how they feel about their plans after high school (See Appendix 2 I). In the high school student survey, seventy-two percent (72%) of the students reported that they planned on going to community college or four-year universities after high school (See Appendix 2 E); yet, sixty-one percent (61%) reported that their guidance counselor did not have an influence on their decision (See Appendix 2 F), which can imply that students already have a decision on their post-secondary goals before they get into high school. When looking at current college students, seventy percent (70%) of the respondents claimed that their counselor had at least a little bit of an effect on their college and career preparedness (See Appendix 3 J), while sixty percent (60%) felt that their counselor had no influence on their plans after high school (See Appendix 3 F). This poses the implication that students are getting their resources from outside sources rather than their school counselor.

Although preparing students for post-secondary education and careers, it is possible that the counselor could be dealing with other factors that take away from that main role.

Are there sufficient resources for high school guidance counselors to effectively provide services to their student population? If not, what types of resources do they need?

During the literature review, it was found that high school guidance counselors have an abundance of resources to give students. Guidance counselors are skilled and trained to follow the ASCA National Standards for Students. What this does is it allows guidance counselors to properly assist students and recognize their needs. These standards are used as a resource for counselors to ensure that they can deliver effective services. School counselors have outside resources they use to help support their student population. In the written response survey, the guidance counselor noted that their average student to counselor ratio is 1:300 (See Appendix 1 C for reference question); This equates to the average across high schools which is 1:311 (Cratty, 2019). Because of this, school counselors often use the support of colleges and universities to host college and career fairs to show students the variety of different paths they can take. School counselors also use interactive online programs like Naviance. These resources counselors provide to students to help give college and career readiness services for students (Cicco, 2018). The research indicated that there are sufficient resources available for guidance counselors to properly provide services and support to their student population, but there are other challenges that stand in the way with certain circumstances like large student bodies and socio economic issues.

Problems and Limitations

Gathering information to seek the answers to my research questions was not too difficult. There seems to be a sufficient amount of literature research on the topic of guidance counselors

and their impact on students, however, when looking for the specific topic of college and career readiness, there is not enough current research studies nor literature. Majority of the literature collected was at least ten years old, which suggests that there needs to be updated data collected. It is important to use literature that is no more than ten years old due to the relevancy of the world's state. Literature from the past ten years ago does not reflect the more recent events like the Covid-19 pandemic. Regardless, there was a sufficient pool of literature that was relevant to the topic overall.

A common theme I noticed when conducting my literature review was that there is a large student to counselor ratio which affects the relationships guidance counselors can have with their students. Also, the way schools run affects the workload on guidance counselors which takes them away from their typical duties of supporting students in more urgent matters and situations with social and emotional needs, academics, and college and career readiness. They are often completing tasks that are outside of that main support system they initially need to be for their students.

An issue I had when conducting my research was getting in contact with a high school guidance counselor who stayed in contact with me to use for my survey. I started with five initial contacts, but by the end of my project, only one continued with me in the survey. Because of this, I was not able to get a diverse perspective from the guidance counselors standpoint. Likewise, I was only able to use two high school class periods, for a total of forty-four students, which was not a big enough sample size for me to really assess their relationship with their guidance counselor. Also, only ten college students responded to the survey which was a very small sample size to collect data from.

Recommendations

Guidance counselors have a very high student to counselor ratio which ultimately disrupts their ability to provide efficient academic, social and emotional, and college and career readiness support to students. I would recommend that schools consider hiring more school counselors in order to decrease the number of students a counselor is assigned to. With this, it will allow guidance counselors to build more meaningful relationships with their students and properly prepare them to assist and support their students. Counselors will become more knowledgeable in their student population and gather information like their strengths and weaknesses, interests, and skillset. This may increase the amount of times a student visits their counselor because they will feel more comfortable and understood by the counselor. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends that counselors should have and maintain a student ratio of 250 students per counselor (Cratty, 2019). This would better ensure that all students are getting the proper support they need, and could possibly lead to better outcomes for students. I would also recommend that counselors make themselves more available and accessible to students, as well as involve themselves in school events and activities. If counselors make themselves more known on campus and promote their role and services. If counselors are more involved on campus, they can be seen and recognized as a familiar face and students will feel more comfortable to approach and meet their counselor for their needs. Also, if students are more aware of the types of support and resources available to them by their counselor, they may be more inclined to utilize them.

I would recommend that there needs to be more recent and in depth research about the effects of the world's current climate on students and the relationship between guidance

counselors. A lot of the research is not as current and it is important when looking at the education system that we are consistently looking at the roles that impact students the most.

Conclusion

The education system has many roles that educators take to be guides, role models, inspirations, and support systems. Guidance counselors play a vital role in the education system and are supposed to be a fundamental structure in a student's life. Throughout this research project, it is clear to see that high school guidance counselors are not being utilized by students in the way they are intended to be. The guidance counselor profession is supposed to be the main support system for students to use in any way they need, whether that be academic, social and emotional support, or college and career readiness. My research has shown that students are aware of their guidance counselors, but do not utilize them as much as they should be. This could be for a variety of reasons like accessibility, weak relationships, or insufficient support, but for the small some that do visit their counselor, they seem to go for majority of academic support and college and career readiness. Due to the lack of counselors and demands of students, it is possible that counselors are not able to best support students in the way they intend to. It seems to be that guidance counselors main focus is to make sure students are on track for graduation and have a plan for their post-secondary goals and paths, since that is one of the main roles they provide students. School counselors and the schools themselves provide students with programs and college and career fairs to expose them to the variety of college and career options they have. Although it was not best reflected in the results, it is safe to imply that guidance counselors have a role in influencing students to at least think about post-secondary college and career plans, thus them being an important factor on high school student success in college and career readiness. Whether students recognize it or not, guidance counselors and the schools are consistently

exposing students to what their future could look like in regards to college and career readiness.

The guidance counselor profession is very important for the education system, and there needs to be an increase of those positions in schools to ensure students are receiving the most quality of support and guidance they can get.

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Appendix 1

Guidance Counselor 1 Survey Written Response Questions

1.
A. Why did you choose to be a high school guidance counselor?
2.
B. What are the main tasks that you do in your role as a guidance counselor?
3.
C. In a rough estimate, what is the student to counselor ratio?
4.
D. What are the most common questions or concerns that students come to you for?
5.
E. How do you navigate situations where a student is unmotivated for their own success?
6.
F. How do you prepare your students for transitional post-secondary education?
7.
G. What types of resources are available that you provide for your students?
8.
H. What does the school do to help support you and your students' success in college and career readiness?
9.
I. How do you feel you have contributed to your students' success in preparation for post-secondary college and career goals?
10.
J. Is there anything you would like to share in your experience as a high school guidance counselor that we didn't cover?

Appendix 2

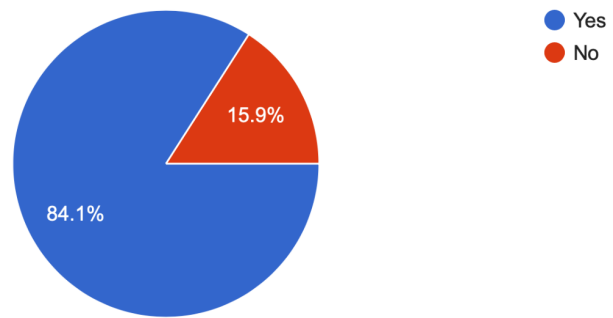
Anonymous High School Student Survey Questions

[Anonymous High School Student Survey Link](#)

1. Do you know who your guidance counselor is?

A.

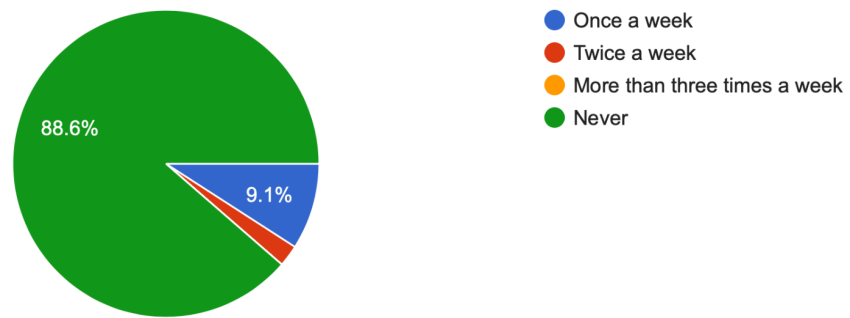
Do you know who your guidance counselor is?
44 responses



2. How often do you visit your guidance counselor?

B.

How often do you visit your guidance counselor?
44 responses

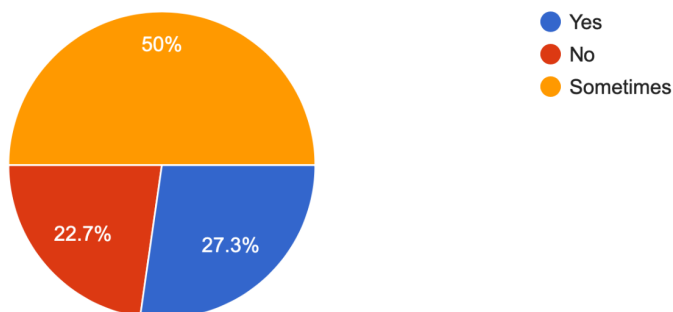


3. Do you feel comfortable going to your guidance counselor for any type of support?

C.

Do you feel comfortable going to your guidance counselor for any type of support?

44 responses

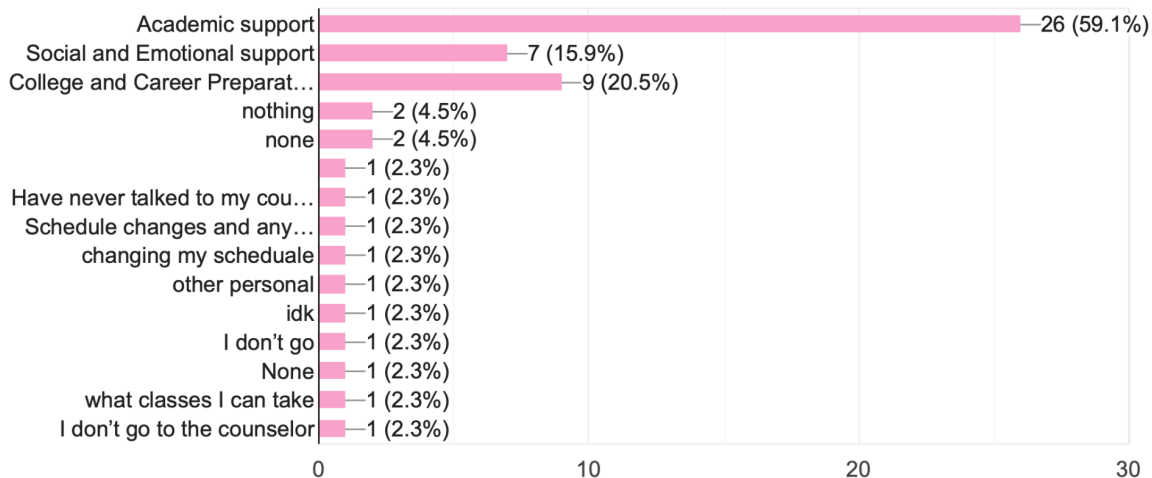


4. What type of support do you go to your counselor for?

D.

What type of support do you go to your counselor for? (check all that apply)

44 responses

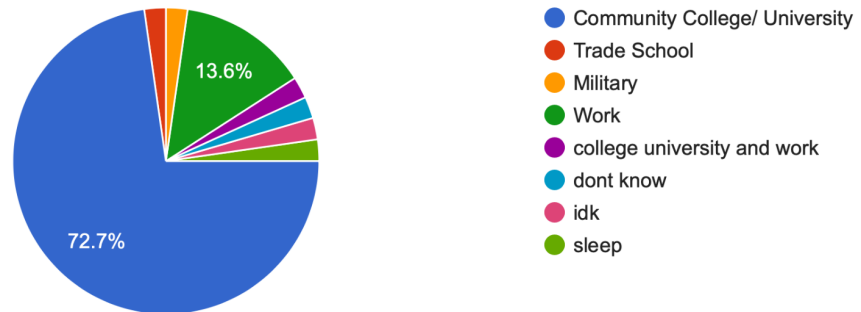


5. What are your plans after high school?

E.

What are your plans after high school?

44 responses

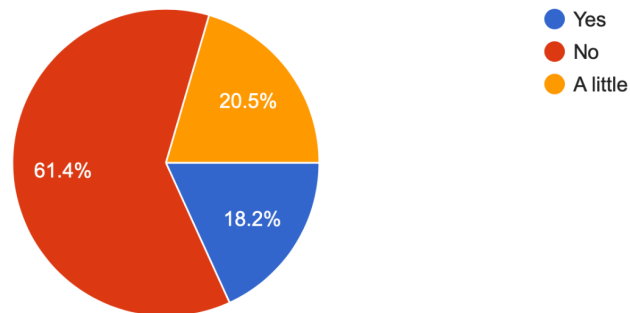


6. Did your guidance counselor influence your plans for after high school?

F.

Did your guidance counselor influence your plans for after high school?

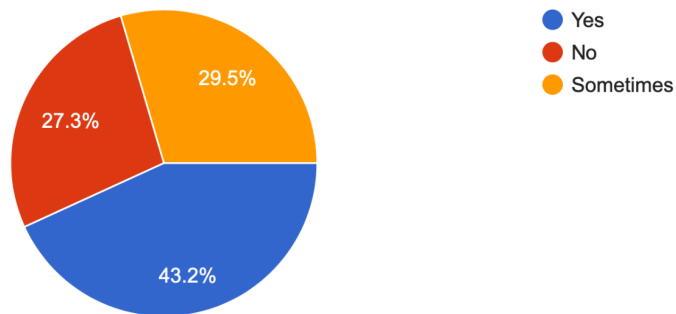
44 responses



7. Are you given helpful resources from your guidance counselor when you meet with them?

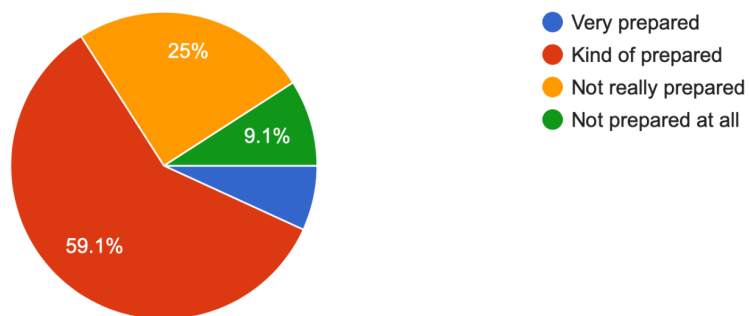
G.

Are you given helpful resources from your guidance counselor when you meet with them?
44 responses



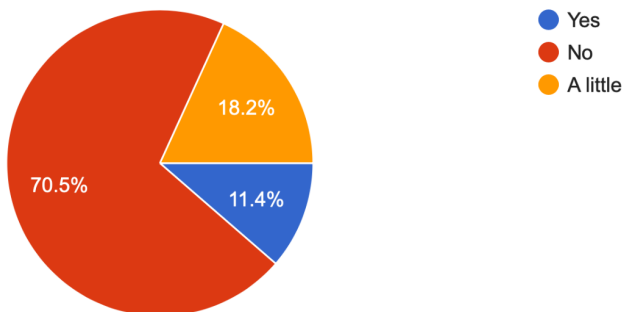
8. How prepared do you feel for your plans after high school?
H.

How prepared do you feel for your plans after high school?
44 responses



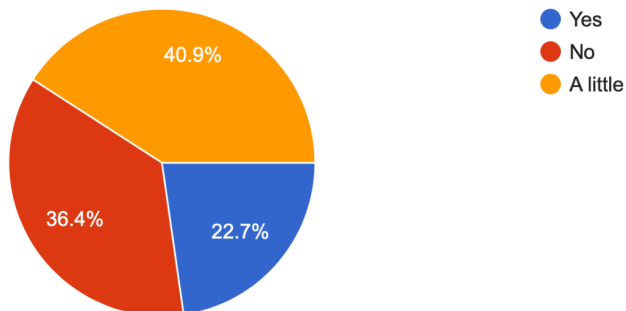
9. Did your guidance counselor have any affect on how you feel for your plans after high school?
I.

Did your guidance counselor have any affect on how you feel for your plans after high school?
44 responses



10. Would you say your guidance counselor has contributed to your overall student success?
J.

Would you say your guidance counselor has contributed to your overall student success?
44 responses



Appendix 3

Anonymous College Student Survey

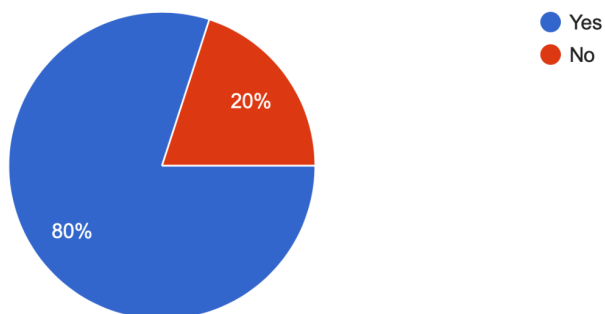
[Anonymous College Student Survey Link](#)

1.

A. Do you remember who your guidance counselor was in high school?

Do you remember who your guidance counselor was in high school?

10 responses

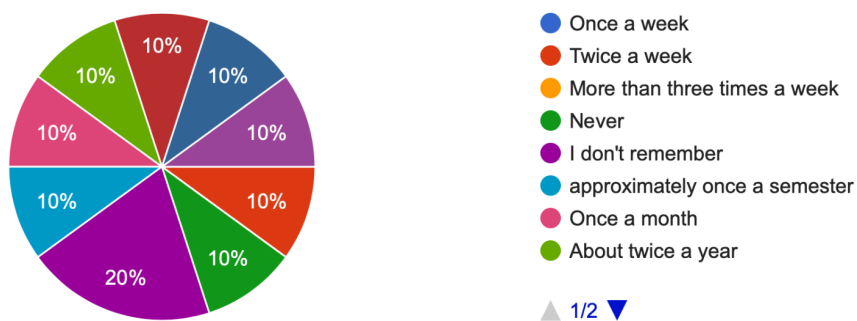


2.

B. How often did you visit your guidance counselor?

How often did you visit your guidance counselor?

10 responses

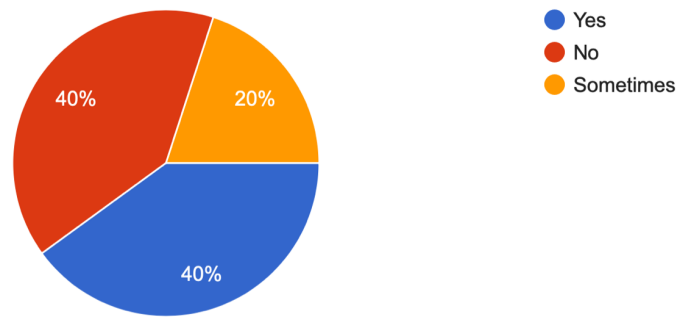


3.

C. Did you feel comfortable going to your guidance counselor for any type of support?

Did you feel comfortable going to your guidance counselor for any type of support?

10 responses

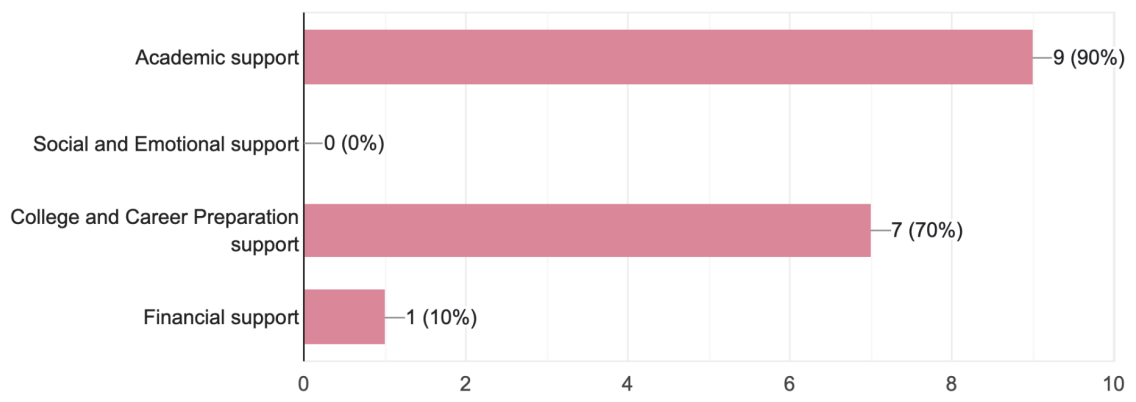


4.

D. What type of support do you go to your counselor for? (check all that apply)

What type of support did you go to your counselor for? (check all that apply)

10 responses

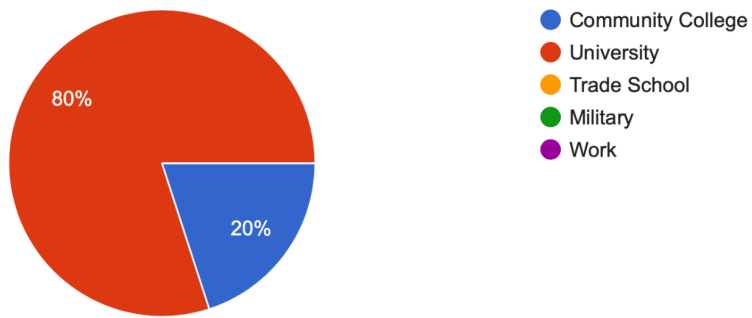


5.

E. What were your plans after high school?

What were your plans after high school?

10 responses

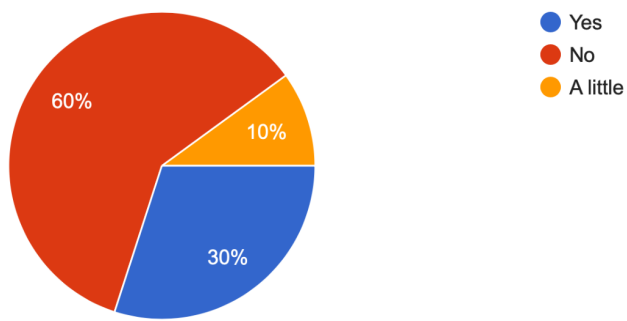


6.

F. Did your guidance counselor influence your plans for after high school?

Did your guidance counselor influence your plans for after high school?

10 responses

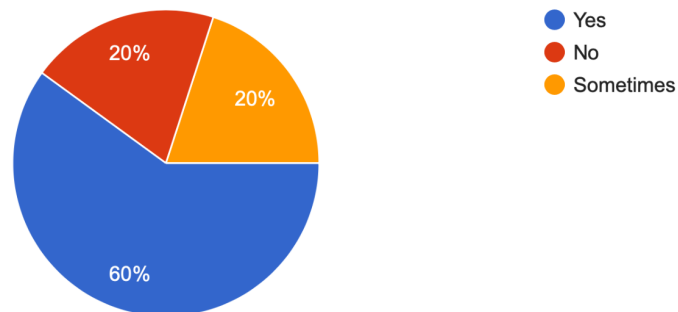


7.

G. Were you given helpful resources from your guidance counselor when you met with them?

Were you given helpful resources from your guidance counselor when you met with them?

10 responses

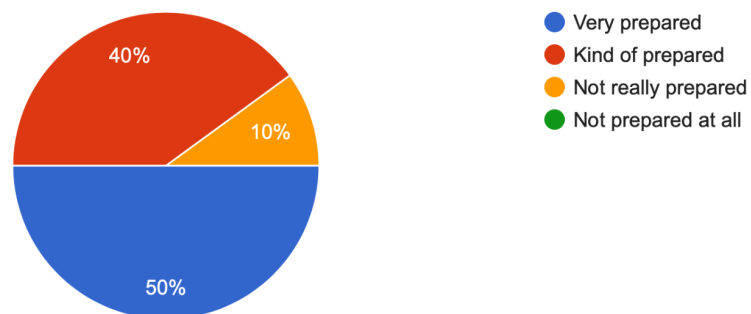


8.

H. How prepared did you feel when you came to college?

How prepared did you feel when you came to college?

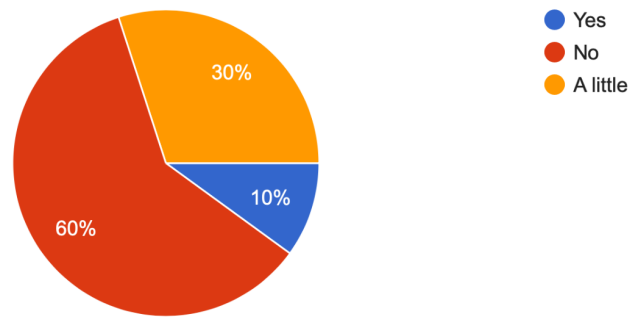
10 responses



9.

I. Did your guidance counselor have any affect on how you felt when you came to college?

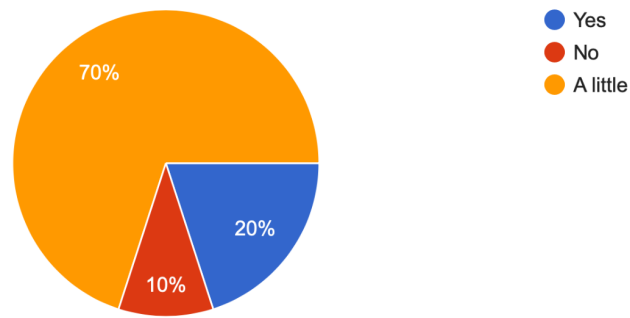
Did your guidance counselor have any affect on how you felt when you came to college?
10 responses



10.

J. Would you say your guidance counselor contributed to your overall student success in college and career readiness?

Would you say your guidance counselor contributed to your overall student success in college and career readiness?
10 responses

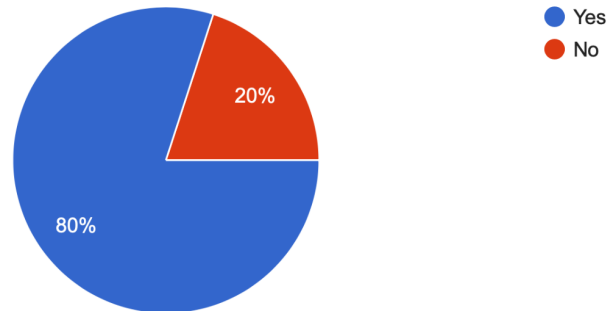


11.

K. Did your high school offer any type of program that was made to assist students with college and career readiness?

Did your high school offer any type of program that was made to assist students with college and career readiness?

10 responses

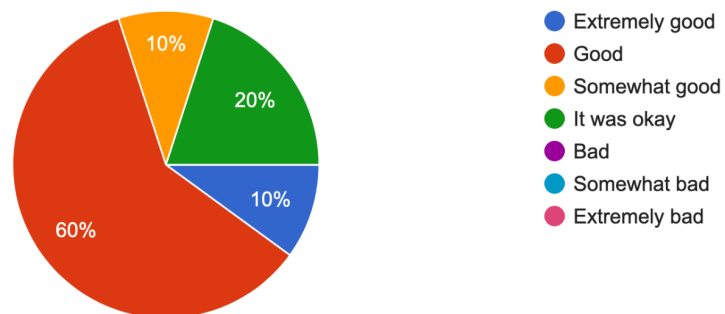


12.

L. Overall, how would you describe your experience with your high school guidance counselor?

Overall, how would you describe your experience with your high school guidance counselor?

10 responses



13. Is there anything you would like to share from your high school experience that relates to this survey?

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in high school with your guidance counselor that is relevant to this survey? (Do not include personal information)

4 responses

The student to counselor ratio at my high school was extremely high so I imagine their workload was intense and could not accommodate everyone the best

I did not know of any of the student assist programs so that does not mean for sure we did not have them so I put no since I was not sure.

My guidance counselor helped me with applying for FAFSA and she was super nice and answered any questions I had!

no