



**IGNITE A MOVEMENT**

PUTTING EQUITY INTO ACTION

# IOWA SCHOOL COUNSELORS and College and Career Readiness

A study of school counselors' roles, responsibilities, and practices to prepare Iowa students for their future as reported by school counselors and administrators.



# IOWA SCHOOL COUNSELORS and College and Career Readiness

A study of school counselors' roles, responsibilities, and practices to prepare Iowa students for their future as reported by school counselors and administrators.



- **Erin Lane**, Doctoral Candidate, University of Iowa
- **Dr. Matthew Beck**, Assistant Professor, Western Illinois University-Quad Cities
- **Dr. Laura Gallo**, Assistant Professor, Boise State University
- **David Ford**, Director, AEA PREP (Postsecondary Readiness & Equity Partnership)
- **Special Acknowledgements:**
  - Rob Denson
  - Meredith Dohmen
  - Casey McMurray
  - Sue Schirmer
  - Matthew Steele



**IGNITE A MOVEMENT**

PUTTING EQUITY INTO ACTION

1: HOW DO STAKEHOLDERS  
DEFINE THE SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR'S ROLE IN  
COLLEGE AND CAREER  
READINESS?

2: WHAT IS THE  
STAKEHOLDER'S PERCEPTION  
OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTION  
OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

3: HOW DO STAKEHOLDERS  
COMPARE THE RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS' CURRENT  
FUNCTION AND THEIR FORMAL  
STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE?

# KEY FINDINGS

## ROLE AND FUNCTION

career and postsecondary planning is an important role and function of school counselors

school counselors trained to implement career and postsecondary planning activities and are interested in increasing the amount of time spent with students in this area

## TRAINING & PD NEEDS

school counselors want and need updated training with information related to in-demand careers and postsecondary options to pursue those careers

school counselors want and need additional professional development on the importance of using data, specifically with program advocacy and identifying inequities in college and career placement

## ADMIN/SC RELATIONSHIP

the school counselor/administrator relationship is crucial to successful student support and outcomes

school counselors and administrators must communicate more regularly regarding the role and practice of school counselors in implementing college and career planning activities

## BARRIERS

time and resource allocation are barriers to adequately delivering college and career programming for all students when school counselors maintain excessively large caseloads (423 students per school counselor in iowa)

school counselors spend too much of their time in non-counseling related activities, such as test coordination, clerical tasks (data entry, record keeping), and master scheduling, according to state and nationally recommended standards

# THEMES FROM WRITTEN COMMENTS

## COLLABORATIONS

Respondents felt that college and career planning often involved more than just the school counselor interacting with the students.

## TIME AND RESOURCES

Respondents repeatedly reported that while they feel that college and career planning is important to students, they feel that there is not enough time and too few resources to effectively implement these programs.

## NON-COUNSELING TASK INTERFERENCE

School counselors report that the clerical and administrative tasks they are required to perform often interfere with their ability to spend time on college and career planning with students.



## ENHANCE THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR-ADMINISTRATOR PARTNERSHIP

- Clarify school counselor role for school counselors and administrators to one that prepares all students for college and career, at the preservice level and through ongoing training.
- Schedule regular school counselor and administrator meetings to review data and develop college and career programming
- Conduct time/task analyses; identify/discuss barriers that inhibit college and career readiness tasks
- Advocate for appropriate school counselor roles in order to best support college and career readiness
- Clearly define the purpose behind school counselors conducting non-counseling related tasks
- Use evaluation models accurately reflecting the roles and responsibilities of school counselors
- Recognize the school counselor's role in supporting teachers to include college and career components throughout all curricular areas and classroom instruction

## INCREASE COLLEGE AND CAREER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop statewide professional development for counselors and administrators focused on data-informed college and career readiness programming, including the school counselor's role and addressing inequities
- Provide training support to existing school counselors and administrators that reflects their unique geographic needs
- Partner with university training programs to include college and career readiness in preservice training programs for both school counselors and school administrators

## UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY AND DATA TO DRIVE COLLEGE AND CAREER DECISION MAKING

- Examine the impact of student-to-school counselor ratios on student outcomes
- Analyze school and student data to identify inequities in college and career development and student outcomes
- Facilitate audits of graduation rates, student access to courses, college application rates, college matriculation rates, and college completion rates
- Gather process, perception, and outcome data to determine effectiveness of college and career interventions
- Share results and leverage support with education stakeholders





# Recommendations Connected to School Counseling

3. Expand high-quality work-based learning experiences in high-demand fields and careers for all students, particularly traditionally underrepresented students.

- School counselors should be trained in career development
- Remove non-counseling duties to increase time and focus on career development with K-12 students
- At every opportunity, integrate employability skills/non-cognitive skills/social-emotional learning

4. Identify and scale effective early academic and career development and delivery approaches so all students are prepared for a changing world.

- Bolster the 21st century skills component of Iowa's state academic standards to encourage teachers to incorporate career information into the classroom.
- Utilize Iowa's new College and Career Readiness definition, which is a roadmap for meeting the Future Ready Iowa goal
- Support the implementation of House File 2392, which focuses on effective career and academic planning; high-quality career-technical education instruction; and regional partnerships
- Maximize and further expand dual credit/concurrent enrollment opportunities including year-round as part of the overall career pathway.

# THINK/PAIR/SHARE

1. Choose one of the specific recommendations that you would like to commit to implementing THIS YEAR. See handout (3 minutes)
2. Break into three groups based on the overarching theme of the recommendation you chose. (2 minutes)
  - a. Enhance the School Counselor- Administrator partnership
  - b. Increase college and career training opportunities
  - c. Utilize technology and data to drive college and career decision-making
3. In your group, brainstorm: (10 minutes)
  - a. Strengths and supports in your district that will help you accomplish this recommendation
  - b. Possible roadblocks (e.g. people, technology, policies) that may slow implementation
  - c. Ways to overcome roadblocks - possibly using the assets named previously
  - d. Use the recommendation chart to address all impacted stakeholders
4. Process as full group (5-7 minutes)

## ENHANCE THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR-ADMINISTRATOR PARTNERSHIP

- Clarify school counselor role for school counselors and administrators to one that prepares all students for college and career, at the preservice level and through ongoing training.
- Schedule regular school counselor and administrator meetings to review data and develop college and career programming
- Conduct time/task analyses; identify/discuss barriers that inhibit college and career readiness tasks
- Advocate for appropriate school counselor roles in order to best support college and career readiness
- Clearly define the purpose behind school counselors conducting non-counseling related tasks
- Use evaluation models accurately reflecting the roles and responsibilities of school counselors
- Recognize the school counselor's role in supporting teachers to include college and career components throughout all curricular areas and classroom instruction

## INCREASE COLLEGE AND CAREER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop statewide professional development for counselors and administrators focused on data-informed college and career readiness programming, including the school counselor's role and addressing inequities
- Provide training support to existing school counselors and administrators that reflects their unique geographic needs
- Partner with university training programs to include college and career readiness in preservice training programs for both school counselors and school administrators

## UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY AND DATA TO DRIVE COLLEGE AND CAREER DECISION MAKING

- Examine the impact of student-to-school counselor ratios on student outcomes
- Analyze school and student data to identify inequities in college and career development and student outcomes
- Facilitate audits of graduation rates, student access to courses, college application rates, college matriculation rates, and college completion rates
- Gather process, perception, and outcome data to determine effectiveness of college and career interventions
- Share results and leverage support with education stakeholders

# AEA PREP Postsecondary Readiness & Equity Partnership



**THANK YOU!!**

**COMMENTS/QUESTIONS?**

Dr. Matthew Beck - [mj-beck@wiu.edu](mailto:mj-beck@wiu.edu)

David Ford - [dford@mbaea.org](mailto:dford@mbaea.org)

Erin Lane - [erin-lane@uiowa.edu](mailto:erin-lane@uiowa.edu)

Casey McMurray - [mcmurrayc@bfschools.org](mailto:mcmurrayc@bfschools.org)

