THE ROLE GUIDANCE COUNSELORS PLAY IN PREPARING URBAN AND SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Despite the efforts of urban and suburban high schools to break down barriers that exist in preparing students for post-secondary education, there is still progress to be made. Urban school counselors face barriers that do not exist in suburban schools in terms of the availability of resources, funding, economic status, social class, and ethnicity. In 2001, American School Counseling Association (ASCA) adopted the National Model for School Counseling to provide counselors with a framework for building, implementing, and evaluating school counseling programs. This thesis will analyze the differences in access to, and quality of, student counseling in urban and suburban schools, and the effects on student achievement in preparation for post-secondary education by comparing four high schools in Urban Baltimore City with four high schools in Suburban Baltimore County. The history, background and data will show that differences within urban and suburban educational systems exist when preparing students for academic achievement. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of high school counselors in increasing student access:

- As counselors strive to meet the challenges and demands of improving achievement by exploring the role parents, school staff, and experiences (in accordance to race, socioeconomic status and the challenges of today’s cultural population) play in educational planning for all students, not just those who are motivated.
• As counselors examine the extent of early exploration and planning for college readiness (i.e., setting educational goals, selecting classes and exploring post-secondary options) in their efforts to prepare all students to transition from high school to post-secondary education.

• As counselors build, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of utilizing the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Model to improve academic, career, college readiness, and personal/social skills and competencies to ensure educational equity for all students.

• As counselors assess and interpret student needs, recognizing differences in culture, languages, values, and backgrounds by setting high aspirations as they coordinate school and community resources for students, families and staff to improve academic achievement.

The broad range of concerns and suggestions for education reform reveals there is a need to improve the state of education.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When you journey through life, you leave behind footprints that will reach out to the multitudes and encourage others to reach for higher heights. It means nothing to utter words with no existence, but it is an honor when one can see your inside character shine on the outside. Through life trials and tribulations, I have grown to become a humble woman determined to persevere and achieve my life journey not only as an individual, but as an educator. I know the prints I have etched as I journeyed through life have made a tremendous impact in the lives of others—as a woman, mother, daughter, sister, aunt, teacher, friend and family member. I silently try to lead by example and allow the manifestation of my work to expresses my vision, beliefs, philosophies and principles.

My thesis may have only one official author, but good work is always accomplished by the multitudes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who played a vital role in supporting me through my journey. Thank you, God for walking side by side me on my journey. On days when I felt like giving up, God would quietly whisper, “I would not give you more than you can bear so stand on my promise and I will do all things.” Thank you, Mr. Richard and Dr. Elizabeth Duke for your continued support and guidance as my mentor teachers throughout the thesis process. Thank you, Dean Anne Ridder for taking my calls and meeting with me. I will forever be grateful to my daughter, Ashlee Robinson for her love, support and continuous encouragement. She would always remind me, “mommy you can do it and I will help you.” To my mother, Brenda Robinson; sister, Tarneisha Robinson; nephew, Robert Millhouse; and significant other, Barry Aberdeen, thank you so much for helping me out while I worked countless
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INTRODUCTION

My decision to research this topic was inspired by the experiences I have had at various junctures in my life. As a secondary teacher, I have had the opportunity to work in urban and suburban public school systems for the last nine years. Harvard Professor Edward Glaeser states in the *New York Times*:

> Why do I think that the chain of causality runs from education to democracy rather than the reverse? Democracy in 1960 is essentially uncorrelated with subsequent growth in the levels of education. Education in 1960, on the other hand, does an extremely good job of predicting increases in democracy.¹

> “U.S. education is strongly linked to civic engagement and membership in social groups. The ability to work together enables the defense of democracy.”²

The book, *Education of African Americans*, argues as follows:

> Change was energized only by pressure from the civil rights movement. As Martin Luther King, Jr., said of the 1964 Civil Rights Act: This legislation was written in the streets. But while the result was a popular triumph, the administration of the law could not be carried out on those same streets. Fair treatment of children was thereby negated as an education goal. Black children lost most from this regressive stance: they were not only denied the respect due every child, they remained academically ill served.³

Another study ten years later in the book, *African American Education* expresses the message in specific language:

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² Ibid.

The ideology of universal education is based upon the premise that a democratic society must have an educated citizenry because educated citizens can be productive and can make knowledgeable decisions about issues affecting the country. At the core of this publicly supported, universal education system are the doctrines of equality, equity, and quality:

- **Equality** occurs when the same number of resources is available to all schools within a school district.

- **Equity** in education is the manner in which fairness or impartiality is exercised to ensure that all students in the school have access to educational opportunities that will enable them to develop their potential.

- **Quality** is synonymous in this context with excellence.\(^4\)

Educational equity in a democratic society requires that all children have equal access to an education. The book, *Education Opposing Viewpoints*, argues as follows:

A fundamental purpose of schools is to prepare future citizens to be stakeholders in society. Public schools are one of the few institutions designed to produce a public, civic community. Schools distribute knowledge. Unequal schools distribute knowledge unequally. When schools distribute knowledge unequally, as they do, they contribute to the social stratification of the economy and the decline of democratic opportunity. Schools do not exist in a vacuum. They are not isolated from their neighborhoods and communities. Inequality in schooling reflects inequality in society.\(^5\)

During the 1980’s, educational reform did not address the civil rights concerns of equity and equality for all. Thomas Jefferson states, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”\(^6\)

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The educational reform movement of the 1980’s arose out of a growing concern about the quality and effectiveness of public education in the United States. In 1983 a report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, “Sparked states to increase aid to education, set higher high-school graduation standards, institute state-wide testing, require changes in teaching training and licensing, establish career ladders for teachers, and raise teacher salaries.” The publication *A Nation at Risk* sounded a common theme:

The American educational system was in trouble. *A Nation at Risk* issued the strongest indictment of the system: the average graduate of the country’s schools and colleges in the early 1980’s were not well-educated. . . . All of the studies concluded that students in the United States were not receiving the type of education necessary to meet the demands of a technological society or to maintain the nation’s competitive economic position internationally. Education reform had little to do with the necessary changes to improve the education system, instead it expanding upon what already existed. This is a wake-up call for public schools in the U.S. to address the reality that they have been unsuccessful in educating its youth.

Decades after *A Nation at Risk*, the U.S. is still faced with the reality that student achievement is defined by high scores on state mandated test. The results show that the U.S. remains far below the level needed for sustained social, economic, and cultural growth. The book emphasized the declining achievement of students and endorsed the

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implementation of reform initiatives like the No Child Left Behind Act adopted by President George W. Bush. “The act was designed to improve student achievement by ensuring that all states implement a system of standards, assessments, and the accountability of providing rigorous academic programs that will challenge students to achieve at high levels.”

Is this a temporary fix or a solution? President George W. Bush states, “These reforms express my deep belief in our public schools and their mission to build the mind and character of every child, from every background, in every part of America.”

The act calls for accountability, closing the achievement gap among racial/ethnic groups, as well as working to ensure that by the year of 2014 every student will be academically proficient.

In 2000, President Bush and the nation’s governors established six national goals for education:

- All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography.
- American students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
- Every adult American will be literate and will possess the skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

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9 Ekstrom, Goertz, and Rock, American Youth, 4-5.

Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.\(^{11}\)

The government increased per-student Title I funding for education and special programs under the *No Child Left Behind Act* contingent on the performance of school-wide academic testing. Corrective measures were outlined for schools that failed to maintain adequate yearly progress toward statewide proficiency goals. The Title I program was designed as follows:

To provide compensatory education for children whose combined family income is at or below the poverty level . . . to close the achievement gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged children in “poverty impacted” schools . . . to provide remedial programs, primarily in reading and arithmetic for disadvantaged students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, as of 2000 approximately 14,000 school districts received Title I funding.\(^{12}\)

“Public education is funded primarily by the federal, state, and local governments with the local and state governments providing the bulk of the proceeds. Most states and local communities support public education by using property tax revenues.”\(^{13}\)

Enrollment in the U.S. has increased in public schools; consequently, we are still in the midst of a crisis, and a profound era of change in history. The book, *Education and American Youth* raises the following questions:

1. Has the quality of education in American high schools deteriorated? Why are students dropping out of high school? What factors contribute to academic achievement in the high school? Do all students have equal access to learning

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\(^{11}\) Hansen and Mackey, *Your Public Schools*, 144.


opportunities that encourage educational attainment in American high schools? The question remains, “When will it end?”  

“It was not until the mid-twentieth century that school enrollment ratios of black and white children were similar.” Secretary of Education Arne Duncan believes, “In the world of education reform, success is all too often an orphan, while failure has many fathers. We don’t talk about success nearly enough, celebrate it, and replicate it. . . . I want to stop treating success as though it was a one-off . . . why can’t success be the norm?” President Barack Obama and Secretary Duncan believe, “Every child deserves a world-class education. When the president says every child, it is not just rhetoric he means every child, regardless of his or her skin color, nationality, ethnicity, or ability.”  

Work remains to be done in order to prepare public schools for a time when all students will graduate with the necessary skills, knowledge, and wisdom to survive in today’s changing world. The educational system must continue to search for new and innovative ways to adapt to the changing needs of all students.  

A relentless call for accountability and increased academic achievement for all students comes at a time of technological advances and rapidly changing diversity. President Barack Obama states in time of rising accountability, “… if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding


teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools – you will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential.”18 Given the dramatic changes in the U.S. and abroad, it is imperative that young people today are prepared to make successful transitions within the educational system in order to prepare for a competitive job market. In order for the U.S. to stay abreast with other countries, education must re-direct its focus to producing a community of successful learners. Students must be educated in a way that will allow them to maintain social, economic, and cultural competitiveness that will help them contribute to society. It is imperative for the U.S. to change the direction of schools, and not repeat the same temporary fix of tested and failed methodologies.

“Our school system resembles a giant rubber band; when force is placed upon it, it will bend or stretch. But its every fiber yearns to resume its previous shape, and, as soon as the force weakens, it snaps back to where it was.”19 It is clear that urban city schools face barriers that do not exist in suburban schools in terms of the availability of resources, federal funding, economic status, and social class causing differences in the outcome of academic excellence. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan believes, “Education for all is more than an economic issue. It’s a moral issue…it is the Civil

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Rights issue of our time.”

Urban schools are located in major cities drawing a significant portion of their enrollment from low-income and ethnically-diverse families. Suburban schools are ethnically diverse drawing students primarily from moderate to high-income sections of major cities. Despite urban and suburban public schools efforts to break down barriers within the education system, there is still progress to be made in order to prepare students for post-secondary education.

The transition from high school to college has become a highly anticipated rite of passage. Post-secondary education remains the most beneficial investment an individual can make. After visiting hundreds of schools Secretary Duncan states, “I know it’s possible for schools to prepare all of their students for success in college and careers.”

Although students express college aspirations early in high school, by the twelfth grade, low-income and first-generation students are less likely than other students to earn a bachelor’s degree or higher. It is important for high schools to encourage and support students’ by developing social networks to assist them with the necessary steps to prepare for post-secondary education. High schools must cultivate a culture that promotes the aspirations and behaviors of students conducive to preparing for, applying to and enrolling in college. Students are often overlooked as resources on how to better meet their needs in cultivating the culture of their school. Teachers, counselors, and school

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administrators play a pivotal role in preparing students with the necessary academic, social, and cultural skills for post-secondary education; however, the services available to students are only as helpful as they make them.

The preparation and success of students entering higher education is a national concern. In the twenty-first century, secondary schools must shift their focus to effective teaching and learning. In today’s society we live in a world where multi-culturalism and ethnicity has entered the classroom and teachers are now faced with an increased amount of students from diverse, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. In order to make positive changes, educators must design and implement new and innovative ways to approach the educational reform movement. It is important for educators and students to understand the importance of accepting, embracing, and understanding all cultural point of views.

Reaching college remains a challenge for many low-income and potentially first-generation students, because they are not prepared academically, and lack knowledge about how to apply and pay for college. According to Ocak, “In American public schools and colleges, about 46% of the student population comes from students from different ethnicity with 14% of school age youth living in homes in which English is not the native language.”22 It is challenging for students to get into a post-secondary institution and even more challenging for them to remain. Reports show an increase in students dropping out of college during their freshman year because they are unprepared for academic success at the collegiate level. In the efforts of the educational system to bridge the gap, it

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is important to allow students, parents, teachers and counselors to give feedback and solutions that contribute to academic excellence.

It is apparent that closing the achievement gap will require the educational system to create a new instructional approach in order to attain academic excellence. Young people are recognizing the value of post-secondary education, by taking challenging and advanced courses and setting their sights on college acceptance. “Many high schools produce students who may pass state exit exams and meet graduation standards, but are still unprepared academically for college.”23 The goal is to encourage students to increase their qualifications, work harder, and value their academic success. Researchers continue to show that differences exist in education reform among low-income and first-generation students in regards to their opportunity to complete a rigorous high school curriculum that will prepare them academically for college. This drives a significant achievement gap between students from upper and middle class families and families living below the poverty line, particularly students of color. Educators and policymakers must work equally as hard to deliver on the promise that if students achieve academic success, they will have equal access to the opportunities as their more advantaged counterparts.

Applying to college is a complex process and most students need individualized support from teachers, counselors, and most importantly their parents. Assistance is especially critical for first-generation students, who predominantly rely on schools for

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support in the college admissions process. Low-income students struggle with the college process and encounter hurdles that divert them from the bigger picture of obtaining a post-secondary degree. A review of recent research indicates, “Improved teaching and learning practices account for only about 40-60% of the gap, while class size accounts for an additional 8%. Family and community issues are estimated to account for the significant remainder of the achievement gap.” When academic standards are raised, children will raise their academic sights. The U.S. continues to call for accountability from teachers, counselors, and parents in their efforts to reinforce, motivate, and encourage students academically.

This thesis will analyze school counseling programs in urban and suburban secondary schools, and the possible effects on student achievement in preparation for post-secondary education, utilizing the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), *The National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* as a template for counselors. It will review historical literature to analyze the standards of education from past to present. It will compare the resources and programs of urban schools with suburban schools. Specifically the comparison will be between Baltimore City and Baltimore County public schools in terms of the availability of resources, funding,

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economic status, social class, and ethnicity. Both school systems have similar mission statements:

The mission of Baltimore City Public Schools, in concert with students, families, and the broader community, is to prepare all students to be responsible citizens and afford them the opportunity to acquire the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to make informed decisions that lead to meaningful and productive lives.\textsuperscript{25}

The mission of Baltimore County Public Schools is dedicated to providing a quality, comprehensive educational program designed to address the needs of a diverse student population. Building on current successes, the system’s \textit{Blueprint for Progress} – its road map for the future outlines the indicators of progress that will lead to increased achievement by all students. Today’s children are the only future the human race has. We must teach them well. They deserve the best.\textsuperscript{26}

What follows is further discussion, explanation and results of a study aimed at examining whether school counselors in Baltimore City and Baltimore County are implementing the elements of \textit{The ASCA National Model}. The focal point will be to utilize history, background and data to conduct my analysis of how the role of urban and suburban counselors have changed over time from past to present.


CHAPTER 1

ASCA MODEL

The introduction of national education standards to improve curricula, raise achievement, and serve as a measure for the assessment of outcomes has changed the image and functioning of kindergarten through twelfth grade schools throughout the United States. The foundational work for this thesis is developed by Designing an Ideal, The American School Counselor Association (ASCA), The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Program is founded by an international nonprofit organization based in Alexandria, Virginia.\textsuperscript{1} The ASCA model is designed to fit the changing needs of counselors through social and educational movements from desegregation to standardized testing while remaining vital and forward thinking in their efforts to help local and state programs build, implement, and evaluate their school counseling programs.

During the 1950’s the federal government established the Guidance and Personnel Services Section in the Division of State and Local School Systems. In 1952, the ASCA model expanded the role of school counselors beyond the limits of vocational guidance. The model emphasized the need for school counselor’s to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development in order for them to achieve success and lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. In 1954, ASCA published The School Counselor, a professional journal designed to help define the functions of school

counselors in comprehensive school counseling programs. Despite the journal’s efforts, two questions continue to surface from parents, teachers, and local tax payers, “What do school counselors do? How are students different as a result of what school counselors do?” The question remains, do Administrators and school counselors respond adequately to these questions?

In 1957, the launch of the space satellite Sputnik set into motion a fear and sense of panic among many American citizens. In the time it took to launch the Russian satellite, the American educational landscape began to change. There was at once a feeling of immediate need to put into place social and educational reform that would quickly bring Americans back to the forefront of science and technology. One direct implication was the effect the launch had on the rapid development and redefinition of school counseling at the middle and high school levels.

In direct response, the National Defense Act of 1958 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 spurred a huge growth in vocational guidance by allocating funding to enhance the knowledge and skills of counselors. Decades later, President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan adopted a Blueprint for Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) around three major goals:

- Raise standards
- Reward excellence and growth

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2 Ibid.

• Increase local control and flexibility while maintaining the focus on equity and closing achievement gaps

These changes will support the efforts to meet the president’s goal that by 2020, all students will graduate ready to succeed in college and the workplace.\(^4\)

Baker notes, “The school counseling, ‘boom’ begin to wane during the 1970’s, due in part to this role identity crisis and the lack of ability on the part of school counselors to appropriately show the positive effects of their work in the schools.”\(^5\) In an effort to unify the profession, comprehensive guidance and counseling programs emerged in the 1970’s and 1980’s. According to Beesley, “The 1970’s and the 1980’s were dark times for the profession of school counseling as enrollment declined and staff reductions caused counselors to find themselves at risk of being eliminated.”\(^6\) In the late 1970’s, began the “services approach” to guidance, “That is, school guidance counselors were encouraged to base guidance programs on clearly stated goals and objectives.”\(^7\) Counselors gained strength as they began to focus on the personal development of students. At that time, Gysbers began to shift the view of school counselors as solitary

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professionals into a more strategic and systemic counseling program for all students. Gysbers’ vision is for every school district in the United States to fully implement a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, to include classroom guidance activities and structured group experiences.

School counseling in the U.S. went unnoticed as a factor in educational reform efforts until the 1990’s.

Paisley and Borders recognized the emergence of a focus on developmentally appropriate programs to address this abundance of issues as being at the heart of school counseling reform. They report that delivery of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program is frequently cited as the foundation for the role of the school counselor.  

The outcry in the 1980’s to promote accountability and evaluation led the developmental guidance movement to reorganize school counseling around a comprehensive guidance program. In return, ASCA provided relevant insight for counselors regarding proactive and preventative measures in building a solid comprehensive guidance and counseling program. With little evidence of systemic effectiveness for school counselors in the 1990’s counselors believed the profession could become irrelevant as the standards-based educational movement gained strength. School counselors of the 1990’s were to some degree given the task of designing, developing and delivering programs that were, according to Brown, “Designed to facilitate human growth and learning and at the same time foster resiliency with a preventive, proactive focus while providing a support

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system.” Gysbers outlined the five axioms upon which school counseling programs rest as follows:

- Primarily, he reported, guidance is a program; second, school counseling programs are developmental and comprehensive; third, school counseling programs focus on individual competencies rather than just on deficiencies; fourth, school counseling programs are built on a team approach; finally, school counseling programs mandate articulation; that is, effective linkages between developmental levels, K-12, exist so that program continuity is assured.

Responding to the ever-changing role of the school counselor and the historical problems recognized by major contributors to the field, the ASCA and its parent organization, the American Counseling Association (ACA), reintroduced the *Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Act* which was eventually signed into law in 1995:

This legislation required funding for schools that proposed promising and innovative approaches to the expansion of their school counseling programs. Additionally, this legislation called for student-counselor ratios not to exceed 250:1 and for 85% of the counselor’s time to be spent providing direct services to students, with no more than 15% of their time devoted to administrative task.

In 1996, the National Education Trust, a Washington based, not-for-profit organization, supported in part by the Dewitt-Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, began a five-year, national initiative for *Transforming School Counseling Initiative* (TSCI) to

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promote high academic achievement and enhance career development opportunities for all students at all levels. This is an attempt to prepare school counselors with the necessary tools to assist minority and low-income students to achieve academic success. The TSCI believes:

Proficiency was necessary in the following areas: teaming and collaboration, leadership, assessment and the use of data to effect change, advocacy, and counseling and coordination in order to equip today’s school counselors with the necessary tools of to become leaders of educational reform within their respective programs as well as advocates for students in their pursuit of academic achievement.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1997, Campbell and Dahir set out to expand the TSCI initiative by consulting widely with school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to develop the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) \textit{National Standards Model for School Counseling}. According to Dahir, “The history of school counseling has depicted a profession in search of an identity.”\textsuperscript{13}

Also, in 1997, the ASCA conducted a survey to learn the perspectives of over two thousand elementary, middle/junior high, and high school counselors in order to develop the professional identity of a school counseling program in conjunction with the educational mission and philosophy of the schools. The counselors focused on issues of equity, gaps, and student access from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The counselors supported national standards and agreed they should accomplish the following tasks:

\textsuperscript{12} Sue Musheno and Mary Talbert, “The Transformed School Counselor in Action,” \textit{Theory Into Practice} 41, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 186-191.

\textsuperscript{13} Carol A. Dahir, “Supporting a Nation of Learners: The Role of School Counseling in Educational Reform,” \textit{Journal of Counseling and Development} 82, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 344-346.
• Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of every school.

• Ensure equitable access to the school counseling program for all students provided by a state-credentialed school counselor.

• Identify the knowledge and skills all students might acquire as a result of the K-12 school counseling program.

• Ensure the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic fashion to all students.\(^\text{14}\)

As a result of the survey, ASCA began to develop a model of standards which counselors around the world could implement as their guide.

Educational goals became the paramount as C.A. Dahir, expressed the importance of the role of counselors when he wrote the, *The ASCA National Model* to identify a focal point for practice, a professional mission, and provide a center for aspiration and momentum for school counselors with three core domains: Academic, Career, Personal/Social; nine standards, and specific competencies and indicators for K-12 students.\(^\text{15}\)

The ASCA model became the standard for school districts across the nation, as a common language reflecting national trends and elements to enable counselors to join together as a profession with *one vision and one voice*. “The model is meant to be a guide rather than an exact prototype or mold. It is intended to be flexible and to accommodate choice because of differences in community demographics and needs; state and local mandates and political issues influence programs and plans.”\(^\text{16}\) The old adage that


\(^{15}\) Dahir, “Nation of Learners,” 345.

knowledge is power begs two questions in today’s world, “What kind of knowledge makes us powerful? And over what domain does knowledge provide power?” The knowledge that makes school counselors powerful is the kind that relates directly to how school counseling programs are being measured in achieving specific goals through the following questions:

- Are we effectively helping students achieve through our programs or individual interventions?
- Conversely, are we effectively identifying the barriers to overcome for all or some students?
- How can we understand our population and thus design effective programs or interventions? And, once implemented, what difference did these make?
- If we have this knowledge, over what are we gaining power? This question is critical to the school counselor acceptance of accountability practices.

In order to answer these questions schools must include measurement, data collection, decision making and evaluation when conducting needs assessments.

Also in 1997 ASCA published, “Sharing the Vision: National Standards for School Counseling Program as a conscious effort to participate in the national reform agenda. Sharing the Vision implemented a platform for counselors to individualize efficient and effective counseling programs to fit the needs of individual school districts.” In 1998, ASCA revised its model to give educational systems an opportunity

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18 Ibid.

to implement school counseling programs designed to ensure all students success in
school through academic, career, and personal/social development experiences. ASCA
summarizes the standards as follows:

**Academic Development** – test-taking skills, organization, learning styles, and goal
setting

Standard A – Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to
effective learning in school and across the life span.

Standard B – Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential
to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options including college.

Standard C – Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of
work and to life at home and in their community.

**Career Development** – multiple intelligences and personal strengths

Standard A – Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in
relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Standard B – Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with
success and satisfaction.

Standard C – Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities,
education, training, and the world of work.

**Personal/Social Development** – bully prevention, friendship, and problem solving

Standard A – Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills
to help them understand and respect self and others.

Standard B – Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to
achieve goals.

Standard C – Students will understand safety and survival skills. See Appendix 1

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., 33.
These standards highlight the importance of the role of school counselors, but are not meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, they represent the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that counselors should help students obtain by participating in a school counseling program.

From past to present major attempts have been made to guide counselors in the direction of a national comprehensive model that will meet the needs of all schools. In 1999, ASCA outlined the academic, career and personal/social developmental standards under which students should learn. In June 2001, ASCA held a summit meeting in Tucson, Arizona, with a task force of approximately fifteen professional school counselors and counselor educators to expand its efforts in developing a framework for a more comprehensive model. The results reflected a comprehensive approach to four interrelated components:

**Foundation** – Like any solid structure, a school counseling program is built on a strong foundation. Based on the school’s goals for student achievement, what every student should know and be able to do determine from the school counseling program.

**Delivery System** – Based on the core beliefs, philosophies and missions identified in the foundation, the delivery system describes the activities, interactions and methods necessary to deliver the program.

**Management System** – Intertwined with the delivery system is the management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure the program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school’s needs.

**Accountability** – School counselors and administrators are increasingly challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms.

To evaluate the program and to hold it accountable, school counselors must collect and use data that link the program to student achievement.²¹

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The meeting marked the beginning of the movement toward a national model to provide a framework to assist counselors. See Appendix 2

In its second edition, framers of the ASCA model continue to make the necessary changes for counselors to embrace and define their role within the educational system. Some schools are delivering individual student planning, responsive services and support systems while others focus on the national competency standards that embrace the whole child: academic, career, and personal/social domains. The ASCA model vision for counselors places emphasis on key strategies to incorporate parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, as they focus on equality, access, and support services for all students. The primary purpose is to implement and coordinate objectives, strategies, and activities in order to promote and demonstrate the ideal interaction

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between counselor and students. ASCA’s goal is to have all professional school counselors and school administrators utilize the model to assure the development and potential of all students.

The ideal and perceived roles of school counselors differ in meaning among researchers. Dr. Norm Gysbers, Robert Myrick, C.A. Dahir, R.M. House and R.L. Hayes all support the ASCA model, but they do not have the full support of some of their colleagues. Mr. Myrick believes it is important for parents, boards, and the entire school system to understand that conditions often influence the direction and development of student services, and that challenges and demands can change the role of counselors. In reality, school counseling is a young profession, and can experiment with a variety of directions and methods to find a clear identity and purpose. Just as there are parents with different values, needs and home situations influencing children’s growth and development, so are there diverse school districts and administrators who have their own ideas of what counselors should do. “The ASCA model was created and molded by counselors through task groups, conferences and committees as a significant professional effort and undertaking. The model captures the profession’s vision of what counselors can do, and outlines the fundamental components that characterize an effective and unique guidance program.”

According to House and Hayes, “In order to promote student achievement school counselors must provide a well-articulated developmental

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counseling program with a focus on equity, access, and support services that involves the collaboration of school leadership and student advocacy.\(^\text{24}\)

Two other scholars have a different approach to the counselor’s roles, by implying that the focus of the ASCA model needs revising. S.B. Baker and Curly Johnson recommend modifying the model by incorporating data-driven customer results to enhance developmental needs as well as provide intervention. Baker predicts that the twenty-first century school counselor will be more effective when he or she is working to provide proactive programs that meet and enhance developmental needs, as well as react to the demand for intervention when required. According to Baker, the national standards for counselors should be designed as follows:

- Shift the focus from counselors to counseling programs.
- Create a framework for a national school counseling model.
- Establish school counseling as an integral part of the academic mission of schools.
- Promote equal access to school counseling services for all students.
- Emphasize the key components of developmental school counseling.
- Identify the knowledge and skills that all students should have access in order to have a comprehensive school counseling program.
- Provide for the systematic delivery of a school counseling program.\(^\text{25}\)


Johnson believes, “Building the global community of the future is not the work of tomorrow. We are each called to build it today – to build it now.”

While in agreement with the other scholars, Dr. Chris Sink says there are some positives and negatives in the model. Dr. Sink believes the wording of the ASCA model suggest that the authors intended school counselors to be collaborators and/or catalysts in the academic process. He believes the framers made no intent to establish a link between the efforts of school counselors and student achievement. He suggests that future revisions of the ASCA model should be more explicit about the relationship among counselors’ activities, student outcomes, and data in order to show these casual links as common factors. Sink acknowledges that the model is a start for counselors, however he believes it would be wise for ASCA to avoid building casual assumptions into future models. Although these scholars have different opinions on the approach of the ASCA model they each agree it gives voice to the role of counselors within the educational system.

The emphasis of school counseling has grown because the needs of students, families, and educators have gone beyond the traditional counseling model. Aligning school counseling programs with national standards will require a re-examination of priorities, time, resources, and outcomes. This thesis is an examination of whether counselors are implementing the elements of the National Model within their schools. As of 2010, over 307 schools incorporated the ASCA model into their school mission in

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order to bring about change, advocacy, leadership, and collaboration. Baltimore City and Baltimore County school systems, which are the empirical bases of this study, are among these schools.

Figure 2: National Model – State Participation

The ASCA National Model
Adopted by 307 Schools in 30 States
between 2004 - 2010

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CHAPTER 2
SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The development of school counseling started at the turn of the twentieth century, although some have traced the foundation of counseling and guidance principles to ancient Greek and Roman philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle. In the United States, the development of guidance and counseling began in the U.S. as a vocational guidance movement in the 1890’s with the social reform movement in response to the Industrial Revolution. The literature that traces the evolution of school counseling continues to be a discussion that has been studied through a multitude of past researchers from the 1900’s and beyond.

Since the inception of the profession of school counseling, the role has been redefined and modernized, oftentimes to meet the needs of a changing society or in response to societal events. The role, position, and duties of school counselors have historically been muddied by the many influences that have shaped the very profession itself over the last century.¹

“School counseling is a profession that focuses on the relations and interactions between students and their school environment to reduce the effects of environmental and institutional barriers that impede student academic success.”²

The ideal and perceived roles of school counselors differ in meaning among researchers: Frank Parsons, John Dewey, E.G. Williamson, Norm Gysbers, Chari Campbell, Carol Dahir, and Michael Brown. In 1908 the social and political reformer


Frank Parsons, often referred to as the “Father of Vocational Guidance”, established the Bureau of Vocational Guidance, to assist young people in making the transition from school to work. In 1913, Parsons founded the National Vocational Guidance Association to help professionalize and increase the number of guidance counselors. These counselors were often teachers appointed to assume the extra responsibilities of the position in lieu of their regular teaching duties. “By 1918, more than 900 high schools had some form of a vocational guidance system.”

The vocational guidance structure was defined by Gysbers as the services model:

That is, school counselors’ activities were organized around six major services: orientation, assessment, information, counseling, placement and follow-up. These vocational counselors that functioned under the services model were viewed as a mechanism by which schools could assist in better preparing students for the work world. A primary role of school was to prepare students to go to work, and vocational counselors could assist in the sorting of students into the appropriate work paths.

The model requires school counselors to work closely with parents, teachers, administrators, and community members to successfully help all students.

From the 1920’s to the 1930’s, school counseling and guidance expanded due to the rise of progressive education within schools. The movement sparked an emphasis on personal, social, and moral development. In 1920, John Dewey focused on the cognitive developmental movement and how people move through hierarchical stages of development with appropriate types of stimulating experiences. He emphasized the schools role

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in promoting students cognitive, personal, social, and moral development. John Dewey, one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century with his influence in psychology, education and philosophy, advocated an experimental rather than an authoritarian approach to learning. His work resulted in schools incorporating guidance strategies into their curriculum to support student development.

In the 1930’s, E. G. Williamson expanded Frank Parsons’ vocational guidance tenets by creating the first guidance and counseling theory and better defined a process standard called *The Trait and Factor Theory*:

- Every person has a unique pattern of traits made up of their interests, values, abilities and personality characteristics. These traits can be objectively identified and profiled to represent an individual’s potential.
- Every occupation is made up of factors required for the successful performance of that occupation.\(^5\)

Within this approach, school counselors were to provide information while gathering facts to influence and motivate students. In 1937, Williamsons defined the actual process in terms of how the guidance is conducted and when counseling begins. He developed this concept in six steps:

- **Analysis** – acquiring a comprehensive understanding, through appropriate assessment techniques, of how the client is and what he or she is likely to be.
- **Synthesis** – ordering and arranging the various parts of the client into a total picture by assessing information on strengths and weaknesses across the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of the client’s life.
- **Diagnosis** – descriptively identifying the problem, discovering its causes,

checking the logic and the client’s reactions, and proposing a program of action based on the objective and subjective data presented.

- **Prognosis** – forecasting on the basis of available choices; diagnosis relates to past and present conditions, whereas prognosis attempts prediction of the future.

- **Counseling** – learning to deal in a generalized way with totality of life; guided learning through personal assistance by a variety of techniques that help the client apply learning gained in counseling to all kinds of problem situations.

- **Follow-up** – reinforcing, reevaluating, and checking the client’s progress in applying what has been learned in counseling to daily life.\(^6\)

Parsons belief spectrum over two precise standards for guidance is:

- Clear understanding of self, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations, and other qualities.

- Knowledge of requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work.

With the availability of computerized assessment, the ability of the counselor to collect and analyze information has grown dramatically. Structured interviews, questionnaires, rating scales, and tests can be combined to measure symptom profiles, disabilities, and risk factors.\(^7\)

The Great Depression of the 1930’s led to the restriction of funds for counseling programs. This caused the role of counselors to expand beyond vocational concerns to focusing on the social, personal, and educational aspects of students’ lives. Many in the

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\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid.
counseling field adopted Carl Rogers’ method to place emphasis on “non-directive” (later called “client-centered”) counseling.

Rogers published Counseling and Psychotherapy in 1942 and Client-Centered Therapy in 1951. These two works defined a new counseling theory in complete contrast to previous theories in psychology and counseling. This new theory minimized counselor advice-giving and stressed the creation of conditions that left the client more in control of the counseling content.8

The Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik further sparked a fear that other countries were outperforming the U.S. in math and science. In 1958 the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) provided aid to education in the United States at all levels, public and private for advancement in the areas of science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages.

In the late 1950’s the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) advanced the professional identity of the school counselor. By the 1960’s, a movement developed to promote accountability and evaluation as well as require counselors to state their objectives in measurable terms, and to determine how they would improve education. In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, Gysbers began to shift the perception of school counselors as solitary professionals, redirecting the approach of the profession. “This led to the developmental guidance movement of the 1980’s that sought to reorganize school counseling around a Comprehensive School Guidance Curriculum Program (CSCP) for all grade levels.”9


In 1988, Boyer states the following in his description of the school counselor:

Today, in most high schools, counselors are not only expected to advise students about college, they are also asked to police for drugs, keep records of dropouts, reduce teenage pregnancy, check traffic in the halls, smooth out the tempers of irate parents, and give aid and comfort to battered and neglected children. School counselors are expected to do what our communities, our homes, and our churches have not been able to accomplish, and if they cannot, we condemn them for failing to fulfill our high-minded expectations.¹⁰

Transitioning from a profession primarily focused on vocational guidance to that of a comprehensive developmental program presented a challenge within the education system. To address the issues at the heart of the school counseling reform in the early 1990’s Paisley and Borders recognized a need to develop appropriate programs.

On May 4, 1994, President Clinton signed into law the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, which reinforced the importance of career guidance and counseling services to support students transitioning from school-to-work. Under the Act, venture capital grants were provided to states and local communities to undertake systemic reform to increase the likelihood that youth will successfully transition from school to career or to post-secondary education. The rationale for this law includes a finding by Congress that, “Three-fourths of high school students in the U.S. enter the workforce without baccalaureate degrees; many lack the academic and entry-level occupational skills necessary to succeed in the changing U.S. workplace, which is changing in response to heightened international competition and new technologies.”¹¹


¹¹ Kathleen Paris, A Leadership Model for Planning and Implementing Change for School-to-Work Transition (Madison: Center on Education and Work, 1994), quoted in North Central Regional
In order to compete in the twenty-first century, the developments of new models are needed in order to be responsive to a multicultural, technologically sophisticated, and rapidly changing global society. The rapid economic, social, and technological change on a global scale has necessitated significant reform in school counselor preparation and practice. As schools drive changes in curriculum, improve instruction and learning, and ensure students gain a quality education it becomes essential to recognize the role of counselors. Curriculum is one of the most important decisions for students entering high school as they choose courses to take in lieu of the traditional core academic areas. Studies have found that students who do not consult with a counselor to create their schedule are more likely to choose a non-academic college bound curricula, because they are not aware of the consequences. Research data show the following:

White public high school students receive guidance counseling assistance in making a curricular track choice, while only 20 percent of Black students and 16 percent of Mexican American students receive counselor help in making this choice. Students, who may need guidance most, since they come from homes where knowledge of the consequences of curriculum choices is limited, are least likely to receive such guidance in their high schools. Lee and Ekstrom found that approximately half of all public high school students received no guidance counselor assistance in planning their high school program.12

In today’s every changing economy it is important that all students are granted the opportunity to experience a rigorous academic program in order to prepare them with the necessary knowledge to compete nationally and internationally.


12 Ekstrom, Goertz, and Rock, American Youth, 57-66.
Counselors are professionals who try to make a significant impact on the lives of children and families. They strive to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education at all levels, from elementary school to post-secondary education by providing academic, career, college readiness, and personal/social competencies. Counselors try to help students understand and manage social and behavioral problems regardless of race, color, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. They want students to have successful school experiences that ultimately will increase their potential and positively affect their quality of life. In order to evaluate students, counselors use a number of methodologies: interviews, counseling sessions, and interest and aptitude assessment tests. They provide these attributes to students within their school through leadership, advocacy, team and collaboration, counseling and coordination and assessment and use of data:

- **Leadership**
  
  - Promote, plan, and implement prevention programs; career and college readiness activities; course selection and placement activities; social and personal management activities; and decision making activities.
  
  - Provide data on student outcomes, showing achievement gaps, and provide leadership for schools to view data through an equity lens.
  
  - Arrange one-on-one school mentoring to provide students additional support for academic success.
  
  - Play a leadership role in defining and carrying out guidance and counseling functions.

- **Advocacy**
  
  - Make data available to help the whole school look at student outcomes.
  
  - Use data to affect change, calling on resources from school and community.
o Advocate for student experiences to broaden students’ career awareness.

o Advocate for students’ placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students.

- **Collaboration**

  o Work with problem solving teams to ensure responsiveness to equity and cultural diversity issues as well as learning styles.

  o Collaborate with other helping agents (peer helpers, teachers, principals, community agencies, businesses).

  o Collaborate with school and community teams to focus on rewards, incentives, and supports for student achievement.

  o Collaborate with others to develop staff training on team responses to students’ academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs.

- **Counseling and Coordination**

  o Hold brief counseling sessions with individual students, groups, and families.

  o Coordinate school and community resources for students, families, and staff to improve student achievement.

  o Be liaison between students and staff, setting high aspirations for all students and developing plans/supports for achieving these aspirations.

  o Coordinate staff training initiatives to address student needs on a school wide basis.

- **Assessment and Use of Data**

  o Assess and interpret student needs, recognizing differences in culture, languages, values, and backgrounds.

  o Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes from counseling programs, activities, interventions, and experiences.

  o Assess barriers that impede learning, inclusion, and academic success for students.
Interpret student data for use in whole school planning for change. Counselors serve as advocates, creating the opportunity for students to define, nurture, and accomplish their academic aspirations and career goals.

Many school administrators have limited opportunities to learn how the counselor’s role has been re-conceptualized in recent years by The Education Trust, The ASCA Model, and College Board to reflect a stronger leadership role within schools. Over the years, the role counselors have played in improving educational outcomes has often been derailed by duties which lie outside the definition of counseling. In order to clarify the misconception that counselors are “assistant administrators” there is a need to clearly define the inappropriate and appropriate responsibilities of the secondary school counselor. The ASCA National Model provides the following:

Inappropriate (non-counseling) activities:

- Performing disciplinary actions
- Teaching classes when teachers are absent
- Clerical record keeping
- Assisting with duties in the principal’s office

Appropriate (counseling) responsibilities:

- Registering and scheduling new students
- Designing individual student academic programs
- Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests

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• Counseling students with disciplinary problems
• Collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons
• Ensuring student records are maintained in accordance with state and federal regulations\textsuperscript{14}

“School counselors’ time should be protected; duties need to be limited to program delivery and direct counseling services, and non-counseling activities should be reassigned whenever possible.”\textsuperscript{15}

The school counseling profession faces many challenges. School counselors are often left unprepared to serve as effective advocates for all students, particularly low-income students and students of color. The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 reports:

Approximately 27\% of high school graduates in 1992 were first-generation students, or students whose parents did not attend college. Of these students, half were from low-income families and, compared to students with college-graduate parents, were more likely to be Hispanic or African-American.\textsuperscript{16}

Urban schools counselors are often left without the necessary resources to provide the same quality preparation for post-secondary education as suburban schools.

Even the best schools in low-income neighborhoods face significant obstacles in creating and maintaining a strong college culture. Low expectations also exacerbate challenges in schools with severely low college-going rates. If

\textsuperscript{14} American School Counselor Association, \textit{ASCA National Model}, 9.


teachers, administrators, families or the community have low expectations of the school and/or its students, then its culture is probably not based on high performance. This challenge is connected to isolated college services, but is broader in scope. Low support for preparing students for college is manifested in several ways:

- No clearly stated or widely publicized college going mission – which makes devising an action plan for increasing college-going difficult.

- Lack of relationships with community colleges and four-year institutions – denies opportunities for college-level work to be done on campus.

- Academic programs without a college emphasis – limit learning opportunities for students.

- Weak college emphasis among counseling staff – increase the likelihood that students will not be appropriately counseled to take classes that meet college entry requirements.

- Limited space and/or funds for college activities – deprive students of opportunities to receive adequate college guidance and support.

Counselors must take action within schools and provide leadership that engages all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and administrators) in their efforts to achieve student success.

With accountability at the forefront today, counselors are under scrutiny to provide students with the necessary support, even when overburdened with high caseloads and non-guidance responsibilities. A study conducted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling shows, “Nearly half of public schools

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have raised the caseloads of high school counselors by an average of 53 students.”\textsuperscript{18} The American School Counselor Association recommends, “An ideal counselor to student ratio of 250:1 and for 85% of the counselor’s time to be spent providing direct services to students, with no more than 15% of their time devoted to administrative tasks.”\textsuperscript{19}


The following chart serves as a guide for determining the time needed for the following areas: Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services and System Support.

Figure 3: School Counselor Time

ASCA developed a standard that the ratio of students to counselor should not be more than 250:1. In 2008, only four states were in compliance with the ASCA student to counselor ratio (Louisiana, New Hampshire, Vermont and Wyoming), six states had more than the ratio by less than one hundred (Arkansas, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Montana.

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20 Ibid., 55.
and Virginia), twenty-two states had more than the ratio by one hundred to two hundred, sixteen states had more than the ratio by more than two hundred and three states had more than the ratio by three hundred fifty.

Figure 4: Students to Counselor Ratio by State$^{21}$

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Figure 4: cont.

Students to Counselor Ratio By State
2007 - 2008

Missouri: 337
Montana: 310
Nebraska: 369
Nevada: 484
New Hampshire: 243
New Jersey: 495
New Mexico: 404
New York: 463
North Carolina: 379
North Dakota: 366
Ohio: 493
Oklahoma: 391
Oregon: 485
Pennsylvania: 380
Rhode Island: 360
South Carolina: 407
South Dakota: 390
Tennessee: 357
Texas: 430
Utah: 772
Vermont: 220
Virginia: 300
Washington: 500
West Virginia: 405
Wisconsin: 454
Wyoming: 203

ASCA Recommends Ratio: 250:1
Statistics indicate that the vast majority of states do not meet the recommended goal. In 2001 to 2002, *The National Center for Education Statistics* (NCES) reported data on the racial/ethnic background as follows:

47.4 million of the 47.7 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools within the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the population of white non-Hispanic students made up the majority of students 60.3%, followed by black 17.2%, Hispanic 17.1%, Asian/Pacific Islander 4.2%, and American Indian/Alaska native students made up 1.2% of the public school population.\(^{22}\)

Data show that about 49,500 guidance counselors in public high schools in 2002 were as follows:

- An average student to counselor ratio of 315:1
- 90% of the counselors were employed full time
- 94% of the counselors were certified
- 20% of counseling time was spent on scheduling courses
- 43% of counselors indicated more than 20% of their time was spent on post-secondary education admissions
- Counselors spent most of their time with student attendance, discipline, and other school and personal problems
- One-third of public high schools reported more than 20% of their staff's time was spent on the following responsibilities:
  - academic testing, occupational choice and career planning, and other guidance activities
  - job placement and employability skill development

o non-guidance activities such as hall or lunch duty, substitute teaching, and bus duty

Although statistics show counselors are continuously stretched thin they continue to question who is accountable. Accountability is not a new phenomenon; it has been a concern almost from the very beginning of the institutionalization of guidance and counseling. The U.S. continues to fall short when it comes to meeting the standards of other countries. The movement toward greater accountability for preparing students for post-secondary education exerts the responsibility to measure the outcome of teachers, counselors, administrators, schools and the community.

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CHAPTER 3

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

An achievement gap separating black from white students has long been documented.

Prior to World War II, approximately 90 percent of African Americans lived in poverty out of common view in rural communities, chiefly in the South. As Southern states improved black schools in an effort to slow the outward migration blacks moved from the rural South to the urban North. The education African American children in the South received was markedly inferior in quality in comparison to white schools.¹

The former presidents of Harvard and Princeton made this gap the subject of their empirical study of higher education, and today the Secretary of Education Arne Duncan continues to focus on the same topic. In October 2010, Sharon Lewis states:

With so many of our citizens lacking access to the fruits of the richest nation on earth, our aspirations as a truly just nation are called into question. And our ability to maintain our success and leadership is jeopardized by having so much talent go to waste. This report is a call to action for America to do better.²

In November 2010, the New York Times reports, “An achievement gap separating black from white students has long been documented – a social divide extremely vexing to policy makers and the target of one blast of school reform after another.”³


In the twenty-first century we continue to fall behind other countries in educating the children of our future. The educational system in the U.S. continues to fall short of that mission as they fail to adequately prepare large numbers of students, particularly those in urban school districts. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan states he believes two obstacles stand in the way of taking success to the scale:

- First obstacle is the belief that poverty is destiny. I’ve had too many people tell me that poor children can’t really be expected to learn, that we have to eradicate poverty before we can educate students. I couldn’t disagree more. The only surefire way to end poverty is by providing a quality education. As President Obama has said, a good school is the best anti-poverty program of all.

- Second obstacle is the trap of the blame game. We all know sometimes the educational system serves the interest of adults better than those of children. So often I see adults blaming each other for the shortcomings of schools. The colleges blame the high schools when students aren’t ready. The high schools blame the elementary schools. The elementary schools blame the preschool programs, and the preschool programs blame the parents. When educators refuse to get out of their silos, when parents refuse to acknowledge that their schools and their children can be either part of the problem or its remedy, finger-pointing takes hold – but solutions do not.  

It is time for the educational system, parents, students and the community to take their role in creating change for all students.

The status of urban public education has become a topic of much concern in recent years because problems continue to be deeply rooted, pervasive, and long-standing. According to Duval, “Urban schools educate many of the country’s most culturally and ethnically diverse children—some 37 percent African-American, 32 percent Hispanic, and 22 percent Asian American. Children educated daily in the great city

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schools account for about 13.1 percent of the nation’s public school enrollment.”

According to the Census Bureau, an urbanized area tends to have the following characteristics:

- Inequities in the educational system
- Large, complex educational systems
- High concentration of people of color
- High concentration of recent immigrants
- High rates of reported crimes

With these problems, “Urban education is often a bleak landscape, but it is not without hope.”

The book, *Education and American Youth* argues as follows, “In large city public school systems, poor and minority children are regularly shortchanged in matters that are mediated through money: school facilities, teachers and other instructional personnel, curriculum, counseling, and more. On a per-student basis, less is spent on them than on others.”

Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) is governed by a city-state partnership with ten Board of School Commissioners (including a student member with partial voting

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rights) jointly appointed by the mayor of Baltimore and Maryland’s governor. City Schools, CEO Andrés A. Alonso, reports to the Board. They set and oversee policy and implementation of regulations, as well as approve all major appointments. Baltimore City public schools budget for the 2010 school year of $1,265 billion is allocated as follows:

- 66 percent from the state, 17 percent from Baltimore City; 12 percent from the federal government, plus another 3 percent in federal stimulus funds; and 2 percent from investment income, tuition, etc.
- 53 percent covers salaries and wages; 15 percent covers employee fringe benefits; 14 percent covers contracted services, the balance covers utilities, equipment, materials, debt service and other expenses and charges.\(^9\)

Over the years Baltimore City Public Schools have been at the forefront of controversy for their highs and lows:

- Third-oldest public high school in the United States: Baltimore City College, 1839
- First all-girl public high school in the United States: Western High School, 1844
- Second-oldest historically African American public high school in the United States: Frederick Douglass High School, 1883
- Racial integration came to City Schools: Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, 1952 two years before Brown v. Board of Education\(^10\)

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10 Ibid.
Baltimore City schools had almost 83,000 students during the 2009-2010 school year with fifty-one percent being high school students.

Figure 5: Baltimore City Student Enrollment

When Mr. Alonso took position in BCPS he made a commitment to put children first because he believes, “Every child is worthy, capable and deserving of a rigorous education.” Mr. Alonso states, “This is a special time for City Schools. It is the

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beginning of a new school year and a new chapter in the lives of each of our students.”

He called for a new chapter to embrace the changes within BCPS:

- Student demographics is becoming more diversified with more students enrolling, attending and remaining in school:
  - 87.8 percent African American, 7.8 percent white, 3.1 percent Latino, 0.9 percent Asian or Pacific Islander; 0.3 percent American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 83.6 percent low income (based on free or reduced price meal eligibility)
  - 3.2 percent English language learners

- More students are making progress in academic achievement

- More schools are excelling:
  - Five city schools made *U.S. News* and *World Report's* annual America’s Best High Schools list in 2009:
    - Baltimore City College and Baltimore Polytechnic Institute both won silver medals
    - Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Western High School and Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School won bronze

- Broader school options are available to students and families

- More communities are rallying around schools like never before

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14 Ibid.
Alonso emphasizes, “It is also a time of great urgency when the critical work of not just continuing our momentum, but building on it in a sustainable way, really begins.”\textsuperscript{15}

From 2006 through 2010, Governor Martin O’Malley, worked to improve the infrastructure of old schools and construct new schools within the city. With his initiative Maryland invested one billion dollars in the construction of public schools. Governor O’Malley states: “Throughout our state, we’re taking students out of the temporary learning shacks of yesteryear, and replacing them with state-of-the-art classrooms like those found at the new Dunbar High School. This building should serve as a source of pride for the students of Dunbar, and for the people of Baltimore who helped build it.”\textsuperscript{16}

Despite the progress at Dunbar, there are still a number of BCPS that remain unchanged, despite numerous efforts of reforms and programs. State Superintendent of Schools, Nancy Grasmick states, “Continued across-the-board improvement in achievement has resulted in better schools in every neighborhood and a better future for Maryland.”\textsuperscript{17}

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) released the 2008-2009 high school performance data reflecting Baltimore City Public Schools’ aggressive efforts to keep high school students from dropping out and instead prepare them with the necessary resources and tools to graduate. The following results show that BCPS are

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
taking strives toward progress by making the following improvements:

High school dropout rates are down nearly 60 percent; diplomas up 10 percent. For the third straight year in 2009-10, reduced dropouts by more than half in the last three years. 1,481 fewer students dropped out of school than in 2006-07, when 2,579 students dropped out—a three-year reduction of 57 percent. City Schools’ 2009-10 dropout rates are 4.1 percent, down from 6.2 percent in 2008-09 and 9.4 percent in 2006-07, a three-year decline of 56 percent.

Figure 6: Baltimore City Dropouts and Diplomas

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Baltimore City Schools’ official graduation rate for 2008-2009, 62.7 percent, represents a slight increase from 62.6 percent in 2007-2008 and remains the school system’s highest graduation rate since the state began recording in 1996. In 2009, city schools have seen an increase of 20.1 percent in comparison to 1996.

Figure 7: Baltimore City Dropout/Graduation Rate\(^{19}\)
In 2005 students in Maryland were required to meet the High School Assessment (HSA) in order to graduate, 253 students received diplomas and 475 fewer students dropped out of school; nearly 1,000 fewer students have dropped out in the last two years.

Figure 8: Baltimore City High School Assessments\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[scale=0.7]{high_school_assessments.png}
\caption{Baltimore City Public Schools \hspace{1cm} Comprehensive School Year Performance (Highest Scores) \hspace{1cm} Number of HSAs Passed}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
• The school system worked one-on-one with students to determine which HSA requirement best suites them:
  o HSA tutoring and classes
  o Passing the individual HSA tests in the four subject areas
  o Earning a combined score of 1602 across the four tests

• Students who took HSA tests passed 5 percent more tests in 2008-2009 than in 2007-2008: they passed 7 percent more Algebra tests, nearly 12 percent more English tests and 23 percent more Biology tests, and students passed 15 percent fewer Government tests.

Figure 9: Baltimore City HSA Subject Assessments

Ibid.
The data show how many students have passed the state High School Assessment (HSA) in Baltimore City, the size of the Class of 2009 and the percentage of seniors who met graduation requirements.

Figure 10: Baltimore City HSA Results by School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Number meeting requirements</th>
<th>Class of 2009</th>
<th>Percent meeting requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy for College and Career Exploration High School</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts High School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore School For The Arts High School</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald F. Lewis High School</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Student access to and participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses in BCPS has increased sharply in the last three years. The number of schools offering AP courses has increased from 13 in 2007 to 17 in 2010; the overall number of AP courses offered in the district increased from 52 in 2007 to 83 in 2009; the number of students enrolled in AP courses has increased from 1,188 in 2006-07 to 2,487 in 2009-10.

Figure 11: Baltimore City Advance Placement Courses

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The number of students in BCPS enrolled in AP increased from 1,188 in 2007 to 1,583 in 2009. The total number of exams taken increased in 2009 to 1,382. The number of exam scores with a 3 or higher increased in 2009 to 321.

Figure 12: Baltimore City Advance Placement Enrollment/Exams

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24 Ibid.
Data were released on Baltimore city schools Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – student achievement standards required under the No Child Left Behind Act:

- Three city schools exited “school improvement” status in 2008-2009
- In 2009, 18 schools made AYP and 20 did not
- Three of the schools that did not make AYP have since been closed as part of City Schools’ Expanding Great Options initiative

Figure 13: Baltimore City Adequate Yearly Progress

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Andres A. Alonso, the chief executive of the Baltimore City Public Schools states:

The improvements had little to do with changes at the margins, like lengthening the school day or adding mentors. Rather, Mr. Alonso cited aggressively closing failing schools, knocking on the doors of dropouts’ homes to lure them back and creating real-time alerts “almost like an electrical charge” when a student misses several days of school.\(^{27}\)

The increase in dropout over the years sparked a growing debate in 1985 causing U.S. Congress to enact a *Dropout Prevention and Re-entry Act*. This act authorized federal funding for schools with high percentages of dropouts. It is important for schools to intervene early on when student’s first exhibit signs of dropping out such as: low self-esteem, poor grades, attendance problems, and/or lack of family support. The book, *Education and American Youth* states, “High school attrition is related to background, achievement and attitudes, and individual behaviors. Dropout occurs more often among Hispanics than among Blacks, and more often among Blacks than Whites.”\(^{28}\) BCPS have shown that it is possible to turn a student’s life around by granting a second chance.

Today perhaps more than at any time in history, urban schools are facing immense problems in responding to the needs and concerns of students. The disparity in achievement between racial/ethnic groups, particularly black and white students, has not narrowed over time.

Between 1970 and 1980, the percentage of minority public school children increased from 21 to 27 percent. One-third of the children entering school in the late 1980’s will be nonwhite. In addition, nearly one-quarter of these new students will come from families with incomes below the poverty line and nearly one-half


of them will be raised by a single parent or come from families who are poor, minority and/or are not proficient in English.\textsuperscript{29}

As BCPS continue to build a momentum of progress they must work to provide more school options as they strive to overcome the barriers faced by low-income and minority students:

- **Achievement gap:** Urban youth are less likely to receive a post-secondary degree and are more likely to dropout of high school compared to suburban youth. Urban youth often enter college or the workforce unprepared to succeed at competent levels.

- **Concentrated poverty:** Urban students are more than twice as likely to attend high-poverty schools, become a victim of crime, become pregnant, dropout of school, lack medical care, live in a household headed by a single mother and/or have a parent who never finished high school.

- **The teaching challenge:** Urban school districts face major challenges filling teacher vacancies. More likely to hire unlicensed or unqualified teachers.

- **The school culture:** Urban students attend bigger schools and face a number of barriers:
  - Absenteeism and tardiness
  - Lack of parental involvement
  - Lack of learning culture: physical and academic

- **Access to resources:** Public resources for funding urban schools often face major challenges:
  - Urban districts spend less per student than non-urban districts
  - Inadequate school facilities
  - Lack of current books and supplies

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 8.
- Outdated technology
- Less likely to offer rigorous academics

- **Politics and governance:** Ever-growing influence of key political stakeholders in the educational process. Mayors, city council members, school board members, union officials and in some cases, state officials can be counted among these major stakeholders. On average, chief executives of urban school systems serve fewer than three years.³⁰

These barriers have a substantial impact on student’s academic, career and personal/social development.

As schools face challenges in meeting the needs of a diverse student population, it is important to have collaboration between the parents and school.

Many theories have been proposed to explain the problem of academic underachievement among African-American students. Historically, the most popular explanations have focused on home background, motivation, and socioeconomic status, too often ignoring the role of the school. Although issues related to students’ backgrounds can and do contribute to low achievement for some children, a growing body of recent literature clearly indicates that factors such as teacher expectations, assessment and instruction, and the structure and organization of schools must also be considered in order to improve the academic achievement of African-American students.³¹

There are a number of factors that influence the education of students: their family background, race, socioeconomic status and environment. Parents must hold schools accountable to providing quality instruction and ensuring their students’ needs are met.

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Despite considerable progress there continues to be a large gap in achievement between children from different social classes and different racial or ethnic groups.

Urban school counselors face significant challenges as they continue to be overlooked. “Students across the country, including Baltimore City, have needs inside and out of school that go far beyond the domain of career, education and counseling.”

Baltimore City Public Schools recently adopted The ASCA Model, *A Comprehensive Developmental Counseling and Guidance Program* which is a planned, systematic program of counseling, consulting, appraising information and placement services for all students. The mission of the Comprehensive Developmental Counseling and Guidance Program in Baltimore City is to help students:

- Demonstrate personal and academic growth
- Make appropriate educational and career decisions
- Experience positive and productive interpersonal relations

The goal of all school counseling services is to establish and maintain high performance for both students and staff according to the standards outlined in the ASCA model. The common beliefs of a School Counseling Program are as follows:

- Professional school counselors promote, support and facilitate change through prevention, intervention, and education within the community.
- Counselors encourage a positive and inviting school climate that fosters effective interpersonal relationships.

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33 Ibid.
• Counseling and guidance programs are designed to meet the specific physical, mental, and emotional needs of all students while promoting academic and personal excellence.

• Collaboration and teamwork are essential to an effective, comprehensive counseling and guidance program.

• School counselors assist students in the decision making process so that the choices and actions promote satisfying life experiences.

• A function of school counseling and guidance services is to recognize and support the rights of all students to become self-directing individuals who accept responsibility for their decisions.

• Developing and enhancing good study habits, appropriate behaviors, academic growth, decision making, and career planning are all vital elements of a comprehensive guidance program.\footnote{Ibid.}

Given the personal and structural challenges that often confront young people in urban schools, counselors must move beyond traditional counseling practices when promoting a positive attitude toward academic, career, and personal-social development.

It is important for BCPS counselors to commit themselves as they prepare to understand and confront the complexities that prohibit day-to-day student development. Counselors must be sensitive to the economic and social realities of many urban families and meet them where they are in respect to things such as language proficiency and cultural customs. In order to do so, they must possess the awareness, knowledge, and skills to intervene appropriately as they enter the lives of an increasingly culturally diverse student population. Counselors must become social agents of change as they widen the scope of practice by coming to the forefront to help guide all students through the challenges they face. They must “think outside the box” and take risks in their efforts...
to address the complex issues that confront them and the students with whom they work. In their efforts to advocate for change they must commit to ensure all students, regardless of race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, become empowered to proactively address challenges that impede their overall opportunity to achieve academic success.

In order to promote educational success, BCPS counselors must exert leadership within their school and community. In order to do so they must develop new educational policies and procedures to promote student awareness and development:

- How does a student get to see his/her school counselor? When the counselors offer walk-in hours or allot time for individual appointments.
- How does a student get ready for college? Visit your school counseling and guidance office to conduct college searches, career searches, financial aid information as well as other resources that are available.
- What help is available to help students pay for college? Sources of financial aid and scholarship information are available in the school counseling and guidance office.
- How does a student make a schedule change? Meet to discuss course selections.
- What can a student do if he or she is not doing well in a class? Teachers are available at various times outside of the school day to assist students such as before school, during lunch and after school.\(^\text{35}\)

Counselors play a unique role in supporting students as they are often their only source of information as they explore options, make choices and prepare for post-secondary education and career goals. “Counselors cannot assume that all college-bound youth are the same, and the evidence is clear that students in urban schools require specific skills,

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\(^{35}\) Ibid.
Counselors have a vital role in helping students choose the right courses, stay on track academically, and take the necessary steps to prepare for their future. In an era where emphasis is being placed on schools to become agents of change, more attention needs to be directed toward counselors to implement programs to promote and support the college aspirations of all students. It is important for counselors to help urban school students and parents overcome their distrust that college is not for them because of the challenges they face within their school, home and community.

In today’s ever changing economy a high school diploma alone is no longer enough. Schools can no longer provide students with information that is insufficient or with assessments that have no meaning. Instead, it is time for schools to develop a strong culture of evidence that achievement is possible. “Most high school assessments used for graduation measure knowledge and skills students learn early in high school, or even in middle school.” The results must be used to reflect a continuum of whether students are approaching, meeting or exceeding college and career readiness it must not be viewed as a fixed state where students either pass or fail. States need to develop comprehensive and coherent assessment systems that value and provide signals of college and career readiness.

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readiness and reflect the following five core principles:

- Proficiency on the state assessment should mean a student is prepared for college and the workplace.
- High school test results should open doors for students to higher education and good jobs.
- Tests should assess the full range of college and career ready standards. Some of the essential skills that college faculty and employers value in high school graduates are difficult to measure via pencil and paper tests, requiring the addition of performance assessments in state assessment systems.
- Testing should support good teaching and become a tool for instructional improvement.
- Testing should be streamlined; more testing is not the goal, smarter testing is.\(^{38}\)

It is time for our educational system to prevent the floor from becoming the ceiling, and instead provide incentives for students to strive for more. In the book, *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* states:

> Historically and traditionally, education has been held in high esteem by African-Americans. This faith in the importance of education rests in the belief that knowledge is power and that education is an important vehicle for upward mobility. Despite the importance of education in the African-American community, a significant portion of African-Americans do not complete high school and many do not pursue higher education.\(^{39}\)

The history of blacks struggling to attend college dates back to the 1950’s when very few if any attending selective colleges and universities. “To provide greater access to higher

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

education, many colleges and universities lowered entrance standards and in return school districts reduced their high school graduation course work requirements."  

In 1959, Mount Holyoke College opened the doors for black students to attend college enrolling ten students. In 1963, Wellesley College introduced a junior-year program for black students attending colleges supported by the United Negro College Fund. To expand the quest to open the doors of more colleges and universities Dartmouth, Princeton, and Yale established special summer enrichment programs to prepare promising disadvantaged students for possible admission to selective colleges.  

However, the academic requirements were too demanding and the tuition and fees were more than most African American families could afford. Reflecting back from the 1950’s to the present day, African American students are still facing the same barriers. The book, *Encyclopedia of African-American Education*, states as follows:

> A 1991 analysis of trends in racial/ethnic enrollment in higher education indicated that approximately 1,335,000 African-American students were enrolled in American institutions of higher education. However, of that number, just 758,000 (57 percent) were enrolled in four-year institutions, while 578,000 (43 percent) were enrolled in two-year institutions.  

Despite these barriers today a higher percentage of black students are graduating from colleges and professional schools with the help of financial aid, grants and the support of their parents.

Transition is often overlooked in the post-secondary planning process, which can be challenging for first-generation college students. Although first generation parents do

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41 Bowen and Bok, *The Shape of the River*, 4-9.

not have a college degree they still have the power to influence their child to excel in school. The National Commission on Excellence in Education recommends:

In 1983, that all high school students be required to lay the foundation in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their four years of high school to fulfill their graduation requirements: 4 years of English, 3 years of Math, 3 years of Science, 3 years of Social Studies, and 2 years of Foreign Language.

Often students fulfill these requirements without knowing they still fall short of the curriculum required by many Colleges and Universities. “Colleges and Universities have been using the College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) since the 1920’s as one measure of high school students’ preparedness for post-secondary education.” The continuous decline in SAT scores is of great concern. Although, low-income students aspire to achieve higher education; they often are unaware of what the college admissions process involves such as college prep courses, SAT/ACT Exams, college visits, financial aid and application assistance.

Pre-college outreach programs are designed to provide underserved students with a range of services including, but not limited to, academic support, mentoring, college planning, financial aid information, and opportunities as a support system for students to prepare and succeed in higher education. Some of the many pre-college programs today are Upward Bound, Gear-up and College Summit:

- **Upward Bound:** Is a federally funded outreach program that provides fundamental support (financial, tutoring, and mentoring programs) for high school students from low-income families to succeed in their precollege performance and


44 Ibid., 5.
ultimately in their higher education pursuits by providing services through tutoring and mentoring. Their goal is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of post-secondary education.

- **Gear-Up**: Is a grant program designed to prepare low-income students from high-poverty middle and high schools with the necessary tools to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

- **College Summit**: Over the past decade, College Summit has worked in partnership with school districts and colleges to embed a post-secondary planning structure via a three-credit College Summit class designed to raise college enrollment rates community-wide.

While evidence suggests that pre-college outreach programs can be effective it is important they do not become a replacement for schools to take responsibility for creating educational opportunities for all students.

It is a factor that race and income plays a role in the number of students enrolling in post-secondary education. When students from low-income backgrounds overcome the barriers they face in their quest to enroll in higher education, they are left with the burden of paying the rising cost of college tuition. The National Center for Education Statistics states, “In 2008-2009 academic year, undergraduate expenses tuition, room and board averaged approximately $12,283 at public institutions and $31,233 at private institutions.”

In order for students from low-income backgrounds to have an opportunity to make their educational goals a reality, need-based financial aid is essential. However, the reality remains financial aid alone is not enough to ensure equal access to higher education for all students.

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It is important for schools to use their educational tools to empower students with the importance of striving for higher education as early as elementary school. “The U.S. Department of Education recommends that students begin planning for college as early as sixth grade.”\textsuperscript{46} If our education system is to double the number of students graduating from high school it will require the involvement of the entire education system, schools, programs and community leaders. Words can be uttered inspirationally, but actions make a lasting impact.

In 1954, a unanimous Supreme Court handed down its celebrated decision in \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}, putting an end to de jure school segregation in the South. As events unfolded, the early effects of Brown proved to be limited. Although the prohibition against segregation was quickly extended these rulings were not widely enforced.\textsuperscript{47}

Historic patterns of inequality in educational attainment by race and income still persist today despite public investment in equalizing educational opportunities for traditionally underserved students. It is known that school districts with high percentages of minority student enrollment typically receive an uneven distribution of resources compared to districts with high levels of white students. Secretary of Education, Roderick Paige, states, \textit{Brown v Board of Education} set out to accomplish equality within education for all children especially those of color, however the barriers still exist. In a perfect world, all children would have access to the essential (academic, career and personal/social development) resources necessary to prepare them for success. After decades of trying to


\textsuperscript{47} Bowen and Bok, \textit{The Shape of the River}, 3.
decrease school segregation, the population of minority students in all American public schools is still twice as high today.

There are a number of general problems urban high schools have in preparing their students for post-secondary education. As the schools continue to diversify there is a need for the school system to adjust by introducing alternative schools, more career based electives, extra-curricular activities and more experience-based curricula to meet the needs and demands of all high school students. Data from four Baltimore City high schools provides more insight into their programs: Reginald F. Lewis High School, Academy for College and Career Exploration, Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts and Baltimore School for the Arts.

The mission of Reginald F. Lewis High School of Business and Law is to create a professional learning environment for 549 students in which staff, parents, community partners and other stakeholders collaborate to provide students with an academic rigorous experience.
The student body at Reginald High School is predominantly African American with less than two percent white and an even smaller percentage of Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students.

Figure 14: Student Enrollment: Reginald F. Lewis High School

According to the graph, the enrollment distribution by race/ethnicity for Reginald F. Lewis High School in 2010 is as follows:

- African American: 97.8%
- White: 1.5%
- Hispanic: 0.5%
- American Indian: 0%
- Asian: 0.2%

The experience of teachers at Reginald High vary sixty-one percent have been with the school for over ten years, twenty-nine percent for five to ten years, and over nine percent for five years or less. Out of the one hundred teachers over sixty-two percent of them are highly qualified.

Figure 15: Instructional Experience: Reginald F. Lewis High School

Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at Reginald High sixty-eight percent have a Masters and thirty-two percent have a Bachelors Degree.

Figure 16: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: Reginald F. Lewis High School

Education of Instructional Staff
Reginald F. Lewis High School
2010

Bachelors, 32.3%
Masters, 67.7%
Doctorate, 0%

Reginald High is dedicated to developing leaders, stimulating creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. Some of the programs they offer their students:

- **NFTE**: Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship a business program designed to prepare low-income students to become successful business owners.

- **CLIA**: Community Law in Action a law program designed to prepare students for higher learning in law programs or related fields.

- **AVID**: Advancement Via Individual Achievement is a class designed to prepare students for college, as well as the rigor of honors and advanced placement courses at the high school level.

Among the 549 students at Reginald High they have two counselors to service the students. The counselors are divided by grade level; one counselor services ninth and eleventh grade and the second counselor services tenth and twelfth grade students. The

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50 Ibid.
students to counselor ratio at Reginald high school averages 275:1. The students graduate from Reginald High with a competitive advantage as they master the concepts to open their own businesses, serve in corporate America, and compete in today’s global economy.

The motto of Academy for College and Career Exploration High School (ACCE) is “Where Learning Comes to Life”. ACCE is a college and career focused school with 416 students. The school is designed to help students develop; a love of learning, a constructive direction for their lives and the confidence to believe they have the ability to succeed.

The student body at ACCE High School is predominantly African American with less than five percent white and an even smaller percentage of Asian and American Indian students.

Figure 17: Student Enrollment: ACCE High School\(^\text{51}\)

\(^{51}\)Ibid.
ACCE model is to Dream, Learn, Experience, and succeed along side a caring staff of advocates, mentors, and enthusiastic teachers dedicated to ensuring students success.

The experience of teachers at ACCE vary over twenty-five percent have been with the school for over ten years, twenty-eight percent for five to ten years, and over forty-six percent for five years or less. Out of the one hundred teachers over fifty-nine percent of them are highly qualified.

Figure 18: Instructional Experience: ACCE High School\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Instructional_Experience_Graph.png}
\caption{Instructional Staff Experience in Years}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at ACCE High over fifty-three percent have Masters and forty-seven percent have a Bachelors Degree.

Figure 19: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: ACCE High School\textsuperscript{53}

The goal of ACCE School is to prepare leaders, independent thinkers, problem solvers and decision-makers as their students strive towards excellence in academics, social skills, computer literacy and community service. ACCE offers an educational experience that will look and feel different from traditional Baltimore City high schools in the following:

- A school year-round program with two semesters from September to June that includes: time for credit recovery, internships, community service, and enrichment as well as a 4-6 week summer program that offers paid work experience through Youth Works.
- They offer small class sizes (average of 22 students).
- In their quest to challenge their students they offer a new research-based rigorous curriculum that will hone students’ abilities to be successful in high school and

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
beyond through three phases that involve progressively more intensive academics and career exploration:

- **Prep phase** – students develop a strong foundation in reading, writing, mathematics and computer literacy.

- **Intermediate phase** – introduces more content areas including higher math, social studies, sciences, foreign languages, and a 16 week one day per week internship in a career interest area.

- **Advanced phase** – students take advanced courses and earn college credits by participating in college-level coursework with a longer school day, from 9:00 a.m. - 4:40 p.m., allowing maximum time for co-curricular activities such as; art, drama, debate and music, and career development experiences including field trips to colleges and workplaces.

- ACCE offers their students opportunities to explore post-secondary education and career readiness through several partnerships:
  - The Johns Hopkins University
  - Baltimore City Community College
  - Local Businesses
  - Non-profits
  - Baltimore City Government Agencies

Among the 416 students at ACCE High they have one counselor to service the students. The students to counselor ratio at ACCE high school averages 400:1. ACCE high school is designed to prepare every student with a transition plan leading them to post-secondary education, skill training and/or meaningful work.

The mission of Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts High School is to provide the best educational experience for 639 students as they promote a safe and
nurturing learning environment that involves the students, families, and the community as contributing factors to their vision of excellence.

The student body at Augusta High School is predominantly African American with less than five percent white and an even smaller percentage of Hispanic and Asian students.

Figure 20: Student Enrollment: Augusta Fells High School

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The experience of teachers at Augusta High vary over forty-three percent have been with the school for over ten years, over sixteen percent for five to ten years, and over forty percent for five years or less. Out of the one hundred teachers over sixty-one percent of them are highly qualified.

Figure 21: Instructional Experience: Augusta Fells High School\textsuperscript{55}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{instructional_staff_experience.png}
\caption{Instructional Staff Experience in Years}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at Augusta High over five percent have a Doctorate; twenty-seven percent have a Masters and over sixty-seven percent a Bachelors Degree.

Figure 22: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: Augusta Fells High School

Among the 639 students at Augusta High they have two counselors to service the students. The counselors are divided by grade level; one counselor services tenth and eleventh grade and the second counselor services ninth and twelfth grade students. The students to counselor ratio at Augusta high school averages 366:1. Augusta high school is designed to prepare every student with a transition plan leading them directly to post-secondary education, skill training and/or meaningful work. The school is determined that all students will graduate with the skills they need to succeed as twenty-first century learners, leaders, and citizens.

Baltimore School for the Arts is a four-year high school with a student body of 350 students. The school is filled with students that possess energy, ideas, and talents. “The Baltimore School for the Arts is one of the most successful public arts school in the

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
state of Maryland and one of the five best arts high schools in America.” Their mission is unique as it is designed to provide young people who aspire to have a career in the arts with intensive, pre-professional training in an intellectually challenging environment where rigorous training in a specific arts discipline combined with a college preparatory program that includes honors and advanced placement level courses. City Schools covers about 75% of the school’s operating budget the other 25%, more than a million dollars a year, is raised by the Board, Director and Foundation through private sources including corporations, foundations and individuals. Students are selected for admission through yearly auditions based solely on an audition/portfolio designed to identify students with the potential for a career in the arts. Of the 1,400 or so 8th and 9th graders who audition every year, about 100 are accepted for enrollment. Students at the school pursue one of four disciplines - the visual arts, music (vocal or instrumental), theatre (acting or theatre production), and dance:

- **Visual Arts** – curriculum is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in basic skills and techniques through a wide variety of media and techniques, the dynamics of composition, gallery and studio visits, slide lectures and a guest critic and master class program as a means with which to think and talk about art.

- **Music Department** – is a community of 130 diverse students from across the region brought together by a common desire to discover their potential in studying many different instruments and voice through the sound of music. The music courses are designed to focus on the student’s individual development via: weekly individual lessons in your major area of study, music literacy classes, performance ensembles, repertoire classes, music history classes, and guest artists that bring the professional music world inside the school walls.

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• **Theatre Department** – offers two areas of concentration: acting and theatre production. The acting program consists of sequential course work that begins with self-exploration and improvisation of learning the craft of acting before moving on to scene study, rehearsal and performance. The theatre production program consists of class work and practical work on stage productions.

• **Dance Department** – offers a rigorous, physically demanding program modeled on real world expectations for today’s young dancers. A comprehensive curriculum of classes in traditional ballet and modern technique prepares students for advanced college-level dance programs, as well as for future work with professional dance companies both modern and ballet and theatrical, television or film productions.

The academic program at Baltimore School for the Arts is a college preparatory program that includes honors and advanced placement level courses. An equal emphasis is placed on academics and arts and students are required to meet the standards in both to remain in school.

Baltimore Arts consists of a distinguished faculty of fifteen certified teachers, a counselor, a librarian, and a special educator. The students to counselor ratio at Baltimore School for the Arts average 350:1. The academic faculty is supervised by the Academic Department Head and the Academic Dean. The arts faculty is composed of distinguished professional actors, dancers, musicians and visual artists who teach at the school on a part-time basis and maintain careers in the arts, providing a critical link between BSA students and the professional arts world. There are 6 full-time and 68 part-time arts faculty members supervised by 4 arts department heads, one in each discipline. More than 50% of Baltimore Arts leadership and faculty have been with the school for ten to twenty years emphasizing professionalism as they communicate their knowledge and share their joy for learning and teaching. Students along with their teachers, work
together to develop a rich understanding of experiences that will prepare them for a life of inquiry and learning far beyond their brief time at BSA. After graduation, 95-99% of BSA students gain admission to leading conservatories, art schools, liberal arts colleges and professional companies.

These four schools serve as a model for what the future of education has to offer in BCPS through designated programs intended to promote and encourage a positive learning environment for all students. When analyzing the data of the four schools there are similarities and differences as follows: two schools (Baltimore School for the Arts and Academy for College and Career Exploration) have a student population of less than 350 while the other two schools (Reginald F. Lewis High School and Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts) are above 350. All four schools have a population of less than fifty teachers. With urban public schools becoming more diversified the enrollment varies among the four schools as follows: they are predominantly African American, with a small percentage of white students (with the exception of Baltimore School for the Arts having a larger percentage of white students) and an even smaller percentage of Hispanic, American Indian and Asian students. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, Neil E. Duke states, “Our progress proves what is possible and the kind of urgency that is imperative in urban education reform.”

Baltimore City public schools must continue to build on their progress. The excitement comes amid a stretch of solid gains for city schools: more students enrolling,

attending and remaining in school, more students are making progress towards academic achievement, schools have excelled, and more options are available to students and families as well as increased support from the community. Baltimore City schools have shown a decrease in the following areas: dropout rate nearly 60 percent; an increase in the following areas: diplomas up by 10 percent, graduation rate up by 62.7 percent, number of AP courses offered, schools meeting AYP, and students passing the HSA. State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick states, “It is important to celebrate Baltimore City’s progress and I know efforts will continue to be made by Dr. Alonso so that our students can compete nationally and internationally.”

Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Washington, D.C. based Council of Great City Schools states, “The improvements are a tribute to the school system’s outstanding leadership, teachers and staff. Baltimore City schools now join the ranks of big cities all over the country that are making substantial progress in improving academic performance for our urban students.”

Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) states, “Baltimore’s impressive results are proof positive that when parents, students, educators and school administrators work hard and work collaboratively there is no limit to what students can achieve.” The results reflect Baltimore City Public Schools’ aggressive efforts to keep high school students in school and help them graduate. City Schools, CEO Andres Alonso states, “We will not continue to send kids into their future

\[59\] Ibid.
\[60\] Ibid.
\[61\] Ibid.
un-credited and unprepared. We will not replicate the failures of the past. Staying in school changes the course of a student’s life, so our progress represents the difference in the future of our students.”\(^6^2\)

CHAPTER 4

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Baltimore County Public Schools is managed by the Board of Education and Superintendent Dr. Joe A. Hairston. “The Board of Education of Baltimore County is established by the authority of the laws of the State of Maryland as the official body with authority to develop a program of education in the county.”\(^1\) Each year the Board approves a budget based upon the goals and policies (consisting of annual expenses, capital outlay, and debt incurred for previous school construction) designed to finance county programs.

Figure 23: Baltimore County Per Pupil Spending \(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown By Expenditure</th>
<th>This District</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and staff support</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditures</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total per pupil expenditures $11,307 $11,724

Over the years, Dr. Hairston has worked to secure funding for the largest school renovations and major maintenance programs in Baltimore County’s history. The system

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was granted a five-year, half-billion dollar grant to make improvements on majority of the county schools. Dr. Hairston expressed his goals for his school system as follows:

In Baltimore County, forty years ago a high school diploma would be enough to qualify you for a job at Bethlehem Steel, Martin Aircraft, or some other factory. In Baltimore County, and throughout the nation, that is no longer the case. The “old” way of forging steel at Bethlehem Steel has been replaced with a high-tech process. Martin Aircraft is now Lockheed Martin. Young people need to be well-educated to secure their futures and ours. We are moving from a manufacturing economy into a higher skill, high-wage economy requiring a minimum of a two-year college education or better.3

The question remains whether or not the educational system is preparing all students to enhance their talents and exceed their potential. The educational system must take action as it works to better understand all students’ expectations, strengths, qualities, values and motivations. A sense of urgency to improve public education is necessary if the schools within the U.S. are to produce future leaders, productive citizens and multi-faceted workers. Dr. Hairston emphasizes the diversity of the county when he says:

To take a closer look at Baltimore County geographically it wraps around, but is a distinct jurisdiction from, Baltimore City, Maryland. It is a county of diversity-racially, economically, socially, and geographically. Like much of the rest of the nation, many of the communities in Baltimore County are fairly segregated, leading many of our schools to be likewise either predominantly white and wealthy or African-American and middle class or mixed race but low income.4

Baltimore County is ranked as the 25th largest school system in the nation with the

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4 Ibid.
following data:

- More than 107,000 students
- 68 schools, programs, and centers
- 17,000 employees, including 8,000 teachers
- Student enrollment has increased 24% since 1990
- Minority enrollment is approximately 44%:
  - Increase of 184% since 1990
- Increasing number of Hispanic students
- English Language Learner (ELL) enrollment has increased 183% since 1990
- Substantive increase in students who are eligible for free and reduced meals.\(^5\)

Over the past ten years, the county collectively took responsibility as a team to embrace change within the community, students, and school in order to drive student performance to a higher level. Its charge is to embrace all students’ futures by taking responsibility as it promotes values, makes the right decisions, and takes action to continue to move Baltimore County schools towards greatness.

\(^5\) Ibid.
Baltimore County is dedicated to providing a quality, comprehensive educational program designed to address the needs of a diverse student population.

Figure 24: Baltimore County Student Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>This District</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although some might predict that increased diversity would create lower performance among students in Baltimore County, data show the school system experienced the opposite. Baltimore County high schools offers all students an equal opportunity to explore and prepare for careers in growing industries through innovative coursework, partnership with industry professionals, internships, job shadowing and state-of-the-art technology within the classroom. The beliefs of Baltimore County Board of Education are as follows:

- We believe that all students will learn and achieve.
- We believe that improved student achievement requires families and communities to be partners in the educational process.
- We believe that increased student achievement requires families to be responsible and accountable for their children’s education.
- We believe that all schools will demonstrate adequate yearly progress.

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• We believe in respecting the dignity and worth of every individual.

• We believe that a quality education requires:
  • An effective, qualified teacher in every classroom
  • An effective, qualified principal focused on instruction in every school
  • A challenging system wide curriculum
  • A results-oriented, data-driven focus based on continuous growth
  • An assessment program focused on the measurement of student growth
  • Shared accountability among teachers, principals, and central office personnel
  • Early intervention for young children

• We believe that every employee must model ethical behavior, exhibit a strong work ethic, and perform at high levels.

• We believe that all Baltimore County Public Schools’ departments and offices must demonstrate continuous improvement.7

It is up to the school, staff, parents and community to encourage students to celebrate their achievement because the future and advancement of this country remains in the hands of generations to come.

Dr. Hairston dedicates his time as superintendent of Baltimore County schools by providing a safe and positive learning environment where students feel secure, nurtured, and, most importantly, cared for within a stimulating environment that will motivate them emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially to achieve academic success. Dr. Hairston has been honored a number of times throughout his tenure in education for his

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determination and focus to enhance the demographics, encourage the social and economic trends and embrace the changing variables that impact the students and community of Baltimore County. He designed a program *Blueprint for Progress*, which he says is the foundation for Baltimore County schools achievement:

This seminal document corresponds with, yet predates, *No Child Left Behind Act*, America 2000, and the National Education and Maryland State Bridge to Excellence Goals. What I often say is that the *Blueprint* describes the kind of education every responsible parent wants for his or her child. What the *Blueprint* does for Baltimore County is create a point of focus, a common language, a common goal and this goal is ever-increasing academic rigor and academic achievement for all students.8

The Baltimore County *Blue Print for Progress* Master Plan defines the action plan for continued improvement of achievement ensuring all students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life. Building on current successes, the *Blueprint* outlines a clear vision, mission and policy as they provide a clear direction for education within Baltimore County:

- The vision of Baltimore County Public Schools’ is that graduates will have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to reach their potential as responsible, productive citizens in a global economy and multicultural society.

- The mission of Baltimore County Public Schools’ is to provide a quality education that develops the content knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable all students to reach their maximum potential as responsible, life-long learners and productive citizens.

- The *Blueprint for Progress* establishes clear standards and expectations for the delivery of quality instruction and support services, individual commitment and

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accountability, and continuous improvement for the Baltimore County Public Schools.\footnote{Baltimore County Public Schools, “Board of Education,” http://www.bcps.org/board/.

Dr. Hairston states, “The most important principle is \textit{all means all}. When we say \textit{all}, we have to mean \textit{all} children. It cannot be about how rich, how black, how white, how Hispanic. . . . It cannot be about the kind of house they live in, or how much education their parents have, or what they ate for breakfast. All must mean all.”\footnote{Hairston, “AVID/College Board,” http://www.bcps.org/offices/super/pdf/Remarks_AVID-College-Board-Conference.pdf.}

Dr. Hairston began his work by focusing on the “big picture” by implementing several initiatives in accordance with the Baltimore County \textit{Blueprint} Master Plan:

- Increase academic rigor for all county students
- Recruit, train, and retain highly-qualified staff
- Increase college enrollment among graduating seniors
- Expand community involvement
- Eliminate the minority achievement gap
- Revamp budget development
- Use computer-based programs to track and improve student, school, and system progress
- Increase teacher and student access to computers and the Internet\footnote{Baltimore County Public Schools, “Board of Education,” http://www.bcps.org/board/.

The ten year performance trends show Baltimore County is accomplishing what all
school systems aspire to accomplish steady progress in raising student achievement:

- All students who entered 9th grade in or after 2005 are required to take and pass the High School Assessment (HSA) in order to graduate, including students in special education, English language learners (ELL’s), and students with 504 plans. (Students who entered 9th grade in or before 2004 are required only to take the HSA).

- Increases in HSA state-mandated test in Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, English, and Government administered to measure student achievement in each of these subjects. There is a required passing score for each subject area: English-396, Algebra/Data Analysis-412, Biology-400, and Government-394.

- Beginning with the class of 2009, students are required to pass the high school assessments to receive a high school diploma.

- There are three ways to fulfill the HSA Requirements:
  - Students can earn a passing score on all four exams.
  - Students can use the combined-score option, which requires earning a total score of at least 1602. The combined-score option allows students to offset lower performance on one exam with higher performance on another.
  - Students can successfully complete the Bridge Plan for Academic validation for those assessments on which the student has not achieved the passing score. The Bridge Plan cannot be used as part of the combined-score option.12

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Figure 25: Baltimore County (2009-2010) HSA Results\textsuperscript{13}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Passing Rate 2010</th>
<th>Passing Rate 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 2</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The state average for Algebra was 84\% in 2010.

The state average for English 2 was 80\% in 2010.

The state average for Biology was 81\% in 2010.

- In September 2008, for the first time, all 7,736 seniors knew they had to pass the High School Assessments in order to graduate:
  - By June 16, 2009 out of the 7,731 students all but five passed.

The data show how many students have passed the state High School Assessment (HSA) in Baltimore County, the size of the Class of 2009 and the percentage of seniors who have met the graduation requirements.

Figure 26: Baltimore County HSA Results by School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Number meeting requirements</th>
<th>Class of 2009</th>
<th>Percent meeting requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catonsville High School</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake High School</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundalk High School</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Technical High School</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Baltimore County Board of Education has described the results of its Advanced Placement program:

- Increases in Advanced Placement (AP) represent a cooperative effort between secondary schools and colleges and universities. It is a program of introductory college-level courses for students who are willing and able to apply themselves to college-level studies during their high school years. Students who successfully complete AP courses and exams may be exempt from introductory courses by many colleges and universities:
  - AP is one of Baltimore County schools major success stories. The steady upward rise in students participating in AP courses reflects increased academic rigor, expectations, and student aspirations:
    - As recently as 1992-1993, our AP participation was about 2%, now it is more than 10%.
    - Typically increased participation lowers pass rates, but not in Baltimore County. Our pass rate, which is more than 70 percent, remains above the state pass rate and above the global AP pass rate of 60%.

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The Baltimore County Board of Education describes the results of students attending college:

- Increasing percentages of students are going to college against higher standards through a continuum of college readiness services with a partnership with College Board:
  
  - According to *Education Week* Baltimore County is among the nation’s largest school district with the sixth highest graduation rate.

  - According to the 2004 *Schott Foundation* Baltimore County has the third highest graduation rate for African American males; five points higher than that for white males in the country as a whole.

  - The percentage of students who enrolled in college immediately after graduating from high school increased from 54% in 2002 to 61% in 2009.
The percentage of students from Baltimore County enrolling in college immediately following high school graduation has increased over the span of five years from 54% for the graduating class of 2002 to 61% for the class of 2009.

Figure 27: Baltimore County College Enrollment Following Graduation\(^{15}\)

- A more detailed analysis of the 2009 graduates reveals that 27% of the graduates attended 2-year institutions and 34% percent attended 4-year institutions (totaling 61%) and 39% of 2009 graduates did not attend college immediately out of high school. In addition, 12% of the 2008 graduates attended a private college and 15% percent enrolled in institutions outside of the state of Maryland.

\(^{15}\) Baltimore County Public Schools, “Board of Education,” http://www.bcps.org/board/.
• Nine county high schools had immediate college enrollment rates of 70% or above and nineteen high schools had second year college retention rates of above 70%.

The college attendance rate increased for African American students by 8.5 percentage points from 49.1% in 2004 to 57.6% in 2008. For Hispanic students the college attendance rate increased by 10.8 percentage points from 41.3% in 2004 to 52.1% in 2008.

Figure 28: Baltimore County Percentage of Graduates by Race: 16

16 Ibid.
Baltimore County public schools continue to promote student achievement:

- Eleven schools have been named National *No Child Left Behind Act* Blue Ribbon Schools.
- Fifteen schools have been recognized as Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence.
- Baltimore County school system has been recognized as one of the “Best Communities for Music Education in America” in 2004, and 2006 – 2010.
- Baltimore County has garnered national and international attention for their use of technology and for their high quality of arts instruction.
- The *Washington Post* named ten Baltimore County high schools among the top five percent in the nation.
- In 2009, Baltimore County high schools were named among the nation’s best by *Newsweek Magazine*.
- Half the traditional and magnet high schools in Baltimore County are on *Newsweek’s* 2010 list of top high schools in America.¹⁷

State Superintendent of Schools, Nancy Grasmick states, “Continued across-the-board improvement in achievement has resulted in better schools in every neighborhood and a better future for Maryland.”¹⁸

In 2002, Baltimore County received a $500,000 annual minority achievement grant to adopt Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) a program designed to place underachieving students and students from low-income families in all high schools on a college bound track. The AVID program is aligned with the goals, performance

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indicators, and strategies of Baltimore County schools *Blueprint for Progress*. The program is designed to enhance and raise the level of expectation for all students. AVID provides structure, format and a platform for the following:

- Schools with numerous academic challenges and at-risk students.
- Today the program is in fifteen high schools with enrollment of 768 students.
- Enhance teachers through professional development by offering online professional development courses, in cooperation with the University of Virginia, at no cost to all professional staff.
- Challenge students to take on increasingly rigorous coursework.
- Introduce all students to a world of greater opportunity and possibility.

Data show AVID schools:

- Improves attendance
- Increases participation in AP courses:
  - 54% of AVID seniors are taking at least one AP course an increase from 36 to 107
  - The average number of Advanced Placement courses offered in high schools increased to sixteen.
- Increases PSAT participation
- Increases HSA pass rates (Algebra, Biology, Government, and English)
- Increase college preparation:
  - 98% of AVID seniors applied to college
  - students earned higher SAT scores – 1700 and above
In 2010 graduates reported $86.4 million in scholarships: including $9 million for AVID students an increase from $3 million last year.\textsuperscript{19}

Dr. Hairston states: “Here we are at the start of a new school year and at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, with yet another opportunity to build on our successful past, dream bigger dreams, and accomplish even larger achievements.”\textsuperscript{20}

As the educational system continues its efforts to enhance student learning, parental involvement has become the center of attention. Research shows that parents have a strong influence on the success of their child’s life, and that it is beneficial to inform parents on the importance of their role. Parents play an influential role in building a foundation for their children as well as agents of change, and as transmitters of values, beliefs and ideas. Baltimore schools foster student achievement through a partnership that requires the support of families and communities in order to successfully complete the education process. Baltimore County encourages parents as follows:

- Keep open lines of communication with their teens by maintaining family time to discuss things and share common activities.
- Enforce consistent rules that help adolescents learn the relationship of independence and responsibility.
- Show that education is important by encouraging homework and reading, knowing the student's teachers, and supporting post-secondary education planning.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

Baltimore County is dedicated to building a relationship with parents that foster communication and reinforcement through:

- Providing parent mentoring programs during times of transition from middle to high school.

- Continue parent/guardian outreach through the Parent mobile and through collaborative initiatives with the Baltimore County Public Library:
  
  o This nationally award-winning vehicle serves as an educational resource center that travels to schools, community events, neighborhoods, and businesses. Parent Services Representatives assist parents and community members in accessing information about Baltimore County Public Schools in order to support student achievement in our homes, schools, and communities.

- In home communication through school website.

- Increase parent/guardian attendance at school-based events and activities such as:
  
  o back-to-school nights
  
  o school improvement team meetings \(^2^2\)

It is the goal of Baltimore County schools to highlight the positive things students do and not just involve parents when something negative occurs. This has fostered a positive relationship between the parents, teachers, students and schools in Baltimore County.

Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan states, “Beyond a clear mission and laser-like focus, great schools have one other ingredient: great teachers. I believe that great teachers and educators are absolutely the unsung heroes of our nation. They see gifts and

\(^2^2\) Ibid.
talents in students they might not have even known they had.”

“Baltimore County schools percentage of core subject teachers considered ‘highly qualified’ grew from 83.5 percent in 2003-04 to 96.9 percent in 2007-08. Throughout Baltimore County, there are 8,850 teachers willing and ready to innovate new and creative ways to educate all students.”

In an era where emphasis is being placed on schools to become agents of change, more attention is directed at counselors to implement programs to promote and support the college aspirations of all students. Counselors must become social agents of change as they widen the scope of practice by coming to the forefront to help guide all students through the challenges they face. In their efforts to advocate for change, counselors must continue to “think outside the box”. It is important for counselors to exert leadership within their school and community and develop new educational policies and procedures to promote student development.

Baltimore County Public Schools adopted The ASCA Model, *A Comprehensive Developmental Counseling and Guidance Program* which is a planned, systematic program of counseling, consulting, appraising information and placement services for all students. School counselors are expected to develop an annual needs-based school

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23 Arne Duncan, “Prepared for Success,”

counselor program for each school which is designed to realize three state goals for school counseling programs:

- Academic success
- Decision-making and Career Development
- Intrapersonal Self Management and Interpersonal Relationship Skills

The Office of School Counseling is guided by three state and national goals for school counselors to address the needs of students for academic, career, decision making, and social/emotional success. School counseling services are realized through the major role functions of counseling, consultation, and coordination of programs and initiatives:

- **Counseling**
  - Individual counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance.

- **Consultation**
  - School counselors participate in a variety of school teams to develop intervention plans to assist students, groups of students, or the entire school community.
  - School counselors consult with teachers and parents to develop strategies to assist them in understanding student behavior.

- **Coordination**
  - Using the Essential School Counseling Program, school counselors are expected to assess student’s needs, develop and deliver an organized program of services, and assess the impact of their program of services on student competencies.

These three state goals define the parameters of the services provided to all students by
school counselors in Baltimore County Public Schools. Additionally the Office of School Counseling:

- Supports all school counselors to develop a school counseling program plan that addresses the developmental, as well as remedial, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students.

- Creates and oversees the systemic implementation of school counseling programs based on the Revised Essential Guidance Program (2006), *The National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (American School Counseling Association, 1999), and the *Blueprint for Progress*.

- Represents the developmental, social, and emotional needs of students in system wide committees and statewide initiatives.

- Collaborates with other offices within the Department of Student Support Services and Curriculum and Instruction to address the goals of the *Blueprint for Progress*, so that all students will maximize their educational potential:
  - Attain support for student success (manuals, and guides)
  - Find resources for student needs (brochures)
  - Request Transcripts and Verification
  - Find Parent Resources related to the needs of children
  - Find links to Student Support Services
  - Find resources for seeking approval for courses taken by students for credit outside of Baltimore County schools

Baltimore County counselor’s goals are aligned with the ASCA Model as they promote a positive attitude toward academic, career, and personal-social development.

A counselor completes the circle as an essential component of a student’s academic and social-emotional development. In addition, to promoting a healthy and

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positive school climate, school counselors help to establish goals and standards that foster a positive atmosphere for cultural differences. It is the goal of Baltimore County counselor’s to serve all students, not just those identified as at risk. Counselors play a key role in implementing school-wide initiatives to support students with:

- Peer mediation programs
- Referrals to outside resources
- Character education
- Values program
- Student recognition programs
- Child abuse prevention
- Staff development on conflict resolution
- Trade or technical schools
- Apprenticeship programs
- College preparation programs to highlight:
  - scholarships
  - financial aid
  - college nights
  - entrance exams
- Job Search Skills
  - career fairs
  - resume writing
Counselors are the main source for students as they explore options, choose the right courses, stay on track academically and take the necessary steps to prepare for post-secondary and career goals.

As Baltimore County students transition from elementary, middle, and high school preparing for their future, they are prepared with the necessary resources and tools to successfully navigate the transition in their educational development. The growth of a child is an intriguing stage of development filled with many physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes. From one stage of development to the next comes with the challenge to adapt to the increase demands of academic success. Baltimore County continues to educate their students on the importance of making a contribution to their community, school, neighborhood, city and the world as they solidify their self-perception of opportunity and growth; in their efforts to excel academically, socially and emotionally.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education states:

In 1983, all high school students are required to lay the foundation in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their four years of high school to fulfill their graduation requirements: 4 years of English, 3 years of Math, 3 years of Science, 3 years of Social Studies, and 2 years of Foreign Language.²⁷

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²⁷ Ekstrom, Goertz, and Rock, American Youth, 60.
The graduation requirements for students in Baltimore County Public Schools are:

- **English** – 4 (organized instruction in listening and speaking, reading and literature, and written composition and use of language)
- **Fine Arts** – 1 (visual arts, music, theater, and/or dance)
- **Mathematics** – 3 (including (1) credit in algebra and (1) credit in geometry)
- **Physical Education** – 1 (fitness foundations/fitness mastery)
- **Health Education** – 0.5
- **Science** – 3 (including (1) credit in biology; earth, life and/or physical sciences in which laboratory experiences are an integral component)
- **Social Studies** – 3.5 (including (1) credit in United States history; (1) credit in world history; (1) credit in local, state, and national government; and (0.5) credit in economics)
- **Technology education** – 1 ((1) credit that includes the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities)

In addition to meeting these specific credit requirements, a student shall complete at least one of the following program sequences:

- (4) credits in a state-approved specified sequence of courses in a career and technology completer program
- (2) credits in advanced technology courses or any elective
- (2) credits in World Languages
- Equaling a total of 21 credits

Some students meet the minimum high school requirements while others go beyond and prepare for post-secondary education by taking Advance Placement and Honors courses, preparing for the ACT/SAT exam while striving to maintain academic success. “Colleges

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and Universities have been using the College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) since the 1920’s as one measure of high school students’ preparedness for post-secondary education.”

The steady pace of rising SAT scores among Baltimore County students shows their continuous efforts to prepare students with the necessary tools, resources and experiences in their efforts for college preparation.

Figure 29: Baltimore County SAT Score Report

Ekstrom, Goertz, and Rock, American Youth, 5.

Young people must be educated in order to secure their futures and ours. President Clinton states, “In the world of the future, knowledge will matter most. At this point in time, we cannot afford to only truly educate some of our students.” The world continues to move towards a high skill, high-wage economy where all jobs will require technological, communication, and analytical skills. It is important for our educational system to instill in students the importance of becoming future thinkers, creators, scientists, lawyers, and entrepreneurs as they prepare to compete on a global scale. A high school diploma alone is no longer enough all students must be equipped to successfully move on to post-secondary education.

The goal of Baltimore County high schools is for all students to graduate ready and equipped to think, research, and reason as they prepare for the future. It is the county’s goal for students to take with them into the future the lessons, examples, and ideas shared throughout their journey. Baltimore County high schools are aiming to provide a rigorous academic program within all their classrooms through state of the art technology, innovative coursework, internships, and job shadowing and world-of-work experience. Data from four Baltimore County high schools provides more insight into their programs: Dundalk High School, Eastern Technical High School, Chesapeake High School, and Catonsville High School.

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The mission of Dundalk High School is to offer a full array of academic and career programs designed with rigor and diversity in order to prepare 1,240 students with the necessary skill sets to evolve within a career environment.

The student body at Dundalk High School is predominantly white, twenty-six percent African American, eight percent Hispanic, and an even smaller percentage of Asian and American Indian students.

Figure 30: Student Enrollment: Dundalk High School\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure30.png}
\caption{Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity\hspace{0.5cm} Dundalk High School\hspace{0.5cm} 2009-2010}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{32} Baltimore County Public Schools, “Board of Education,” http://www.bcps.org/board/.
The experience of teachers at Dundalk High vary over ten percent have been with the school for over twenty-one years, forty-two percent six to twenty years and fifty-eight percent for five years or less.

Figure 31: Instructional Experience: Dundalk High School

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Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at Dundalk High sixty percent have a Masters and forty percent have a Bachelors Degree.

Figure 32: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: Dundalk High School

Dundalk Counselors address the academic and developmental needs of all students, by collaborating with students, parents, school staff and the community in an effort to prepare students for successful careers after graduation. The counselors design, implement, and maintain guidance programs aligned with the educational mission and philosophies of the school. Their goal is to help every student develop competencies in academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning with students in individual, small group and classroom settings. Among the 1,240 students at Dundalk High they have four counselors to service the students. The counselors are divided by grade level and alphabet. The students to counselor ratio at Dundalk high school averages 300:1. Dundalk offers over 100 courses and twelve completer programs

34 Ibid.
for students to choose from such as: Advanced Placement, Honors and Gifted and Talented program, award-winning programs in Broadcast Communications and Business and Finance, AVID program, career completers in Teacher Education, Criminal Justice and a parallel enrollment with Community College Baltimore County Dundalk for college credit. New programs include Homeland Security (part of Criminal Justice) and Advance Path. Dundalk also offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including athletics, clubs, and leadership opportunities.

The mission of Eastern Technical High School is to provide a first-rate education to 1,283 students as they poise them for success in college and the workplace through a rigorous standard of academic achievement measured by local, state, and national criteria.

The student body at Eastern High School is predominantly white, nineteen percent African American, and an even smaller percentage of Hispanic and Asian students.

Figure 33: Student Enrollment: Eastern Technical High School

![Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity](image)

35 Ibid.
Eastern Technical has 125 employees consisting of four administrators, 85 teachers and 3 guidance counselors. The experience of teachers at Eastern High vary eleven percent have been with the school for over twenty-one years, fifty-three percent six to twenty years and fourteen percent for five years or less.

Figure 34: Instructional Experience: Eastern Technical High School\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at Eastern Technical High eighty-one percent have a Masters and nineteen percent have a Bachelors Degree.

Figure 35: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: Eastern Technical High School

Among the 1,283 students at Eastern High they have four counselors to service the students. The counselors are divided among the ten career major programs: Allied Health, Automotive Technology, Business Management and Finance, Construction Management, Culinary Arts, Engineering Careers, Information Technology, Interactive Media Production, Law Related Careers and the Teacher Academy of Maryland providing a needs-based, comprehensive, planned school counseling program consistent with the Essential Guidance Program, school improvement plan, and the Baltimore County Blueprint for Progress. The school counselor provides services that facilitate skills in personal and academic achievement, educational/career decision making, and interpersonal relationships. The students to counselor ratio at Eastern Technical High

\[37\] Ibid.

119
School averages 300:1. The school has been ranked for the last five years by *Newsweek Magazine* as being in the top five percent of all high schools nationwide.

Chesapeake High School is a comprehensive magnet school with a population of 1,071 students located in the southeast area of Baltimore County.

The student body at Chesapeake High School consists of a diverse population with fifty-two percent African American, forty-one percent white, five percent Hispanic and one percent Asian and American Indian.

Figure 36: Student Enrollment: Chesapeake High School\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{enrollment.png}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
The experience of teachers at Chesapeake High vary over seven percent have been with the school for over twenty-one years, over twenty-eight percent six to twenty years and over fifty percent for five years or less.

Figure 37: Instructional Experience: Chesapeake High School

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39 Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at Chesapeake High one percent has a Doctorate; fifty-seven percent have a Masters and forty-two percent have a Bachelors and Degree.

Figure 38: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: Chesapeake High School

Among the 1,071 students at Chesapeake High they have three counselors to service the students. The counselors are each assigned a grade level and a percentage of ninth grade students. The students to counselor ratio at Chesapeake high averages 300:1. In 2006, CHS became the first Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Academy (STEM) in the state of Maryland. Chesapeake offers four major magnet pathways:

- Science, Engineering and Mathematics
- Arts, Multimedia and Communications
- Leadership and Humanities
- Business and Information Technology

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40 Ibid.
Their partnership with Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman launched one of the nations first Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) through a collaborative effort between Baltimore County schools, Breakaway Games, Training Port Strategies and Johns Hopkins University combining a unique classroom and laboratory experience that signifies great strides in their use of technology within education.

The mission of Catonsville High School is to provide programs that will prepare 1,735 students for college, business, or the work industry.

The student body at Catonsville High School consists of a diverse population with fifty-nine percent white, thirty-one percent African American, seven percent Asian and three percent Hispanic.

Figure 39: Student Enrollment: Catonsville High School

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity
Catonsville High School
2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 Ibid.
The experience of teachers at Catonsville High vary twenty-six percent have been with the school for over twenty-one years, over forty-seven percent six to twenty years and thirty-seven percent for five years or less.

Figure 40: Instructional Experience: Catonsville High School\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Instructional Staff Experience in Years \hfill \textit{Catonsville High School} \hfill \textit{2009-2010}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Out of all the teachers at Catonsville High over seventy-eight percent have a Masters and twenty-two percent have a Bachelors Degree.

Figure 41: Educational Level of Instructional Staff: Catonsville High School\textsuperscript{43}

The counselors at Catonsville High School are committed to delivering a program of guidance and counseling services to all students based upon the goals of school success, mastering decision-making and career development skills, and demonstrating intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies through (individual and group counseling, classroom guidance) a combination of direct counseling interventions, and consultation services to staff and parents. Among the 1,735 students at Catonsville High they have four full-time and two part-time counselors to service the students. The counselors are divided as follows; one counselor for ninth grade and the remaining three counselors are divided between tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students by alphabet. The students to counselor ratio at Catonsville High School averages 350:1. Catonsville High has been

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
cited for the seventh year by *Newsweek Magazine* for ranking in the top 1500 high schools nationwide. Catonsville continues its tradition of excellence as it plays a pivotal role in the vitality of a proud and supportive community offering over 200 courses, internships and a work/study program. The curriculum includes 18 Advanced Placement courses, a Gifted and Talented and Honors program and a special education program. The school exemplifies high scores in the following areas: SAT Exam, Advanced Placement exams, High School Assessment, as well as additional measures from National Merit Finalists and Commended Scholars. The school is ranked among the top scorers in Baltimore County, in the region, and the state.

When analyzing the data of the four schools there are similarities and differences as follows: all four schools Dundalk High School, Eastern Technical High School, Chesapeake High School, and Catonsville High School have a student population of more than 1,000 students. The students to teacher ratio in all four schools are above thirteen to one. All four schools have a population between eighty to one hundred twenty teachers. The enrollment of the four schools is as follows: predominantly of white-non-Hispanic students (with the exception of Chesapeake high where African American students are the majority percentage), below thirty-nine percent African American students and below seven percent of Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students. The one common goal of all four schools is to educate and prepare all students for the future.

The core goal of Baltimore County schools is to continuously push their students to aim higher. Although their schools have an increasing number of students taking Advance Placement courses and the SAT exam they still face difficulties as a school
district with keeping students from dropping out. There are in fact across the board students who go through the motions of school without motivation and the eagerness to achieve. However, the county’s innovative classroom instruction, one-on-one plans, and student intervention play a role as they strive to ensure all students know they have an opportunity to succeed. The background of these four schools proves their cohesive mission to focus on preparing students to graduate and take their place in today’s society.

Dr. Hairston states as a high school principal, I used to tell my students and staff:

Whatever will happen in the next moment, the next day, or in years to come – whether it is good or bad – we all make a contribution to it based on our attitudes, our judgment, and our behavior. Part of the answer depends on whether or not we are prepared for it. If we are aware of change as it happens, if we participate in managing change, and we ready ourselves and our students to be leaders of the future, then it will not be radically different. It will be, as most change is, part of the ongoing evolution of our world and our lives – and we will help drive it.44

Baltimore County Public Schools is headed in a direction of change that will reach out to the multitudes and set a standard of excellence as they educate all students on the importance of staying on track as they prepare for the future. Dr. Hairston states:

After all, good is never good enough, Horace Mann warned us; we cannot simply be content. The past is gone. Both good and bad. What we did. What we didn’t do. Our achievements. Our challenges. What we have done is part of the history of public education in Baltimore County. We have collectively taken the responsibility to embrace change, to embrace this community, and our students, and to drive performance to higher levels. We have shown the world, our community, and especially our children that it can be done.45


Over the past ten years, Baltimore County has laid the groundwork for continued progress to achieve, look ahead, position and anticipate what is to come as they continue to build on their progress. They have shown significant achievement in the following areas: eleven schools named No Child Left Behind Act Blue Ribbon Schools, an upward rise of sixteen AP classes being offered in schools and an increase from 2% to 10% in students participating in AP courses, adoption of the AVID program in fifteen high schools, 7,731 out of 7,736 students passed the HSA, 40% of all the county high schools ranked among the top five percent in the nation with the sixth highest graduation rate, a reported increase of $86.4 million in scholarships for 2009 and most importantly 85% of graduates immediately pursuing post-secondary education. Dr. Hairston states, “Our charge now is to embrace THEIR future as we take individual responsibility, through our values, our decisions, and our actions, to continue moving this school system toward greatness. Our destiny and the destinies of our students are in our hands.”\footnote{Ibid.}
CHAPTER 5
COMPARISON OF THE TWO SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Schools today are still faced with the daunting conditions of being unequally divided by the very streets that separate them into categories. Many communities throughout the United States are fairly segregated, leaving schools to be either predominantly white or predominantly African-American. Duvall reports, “Urban schools educate many of the country’s most culturally and ethnically diverse children.”

Maryland is home to the best public schools in America, not just because Education Week magazine said so, but because test scores are up in every county, in every grade, in every subject and across every demographic line. Students from every demographic, in every corner of our state, and of all ages, are testing higher today than they did five years ago. This tremendous achievement is not only a testament to their abilities, but to the dedication of the families, teachers, principals and school staff that made it happen.

In 2009-2010, Baltimore City Public Schools had more than 83,000 students. Mr. Alonso states, “This is a special time for City Schools. It is the beginning of a new school year and a new chapter in the lives of each of our students.” The excitement comes amid a stretch of solid gains for city schools: more students enrolling, attending and remaining in school, more students are making progress towards academic achievement, students are passing the HSA, schools have excelled; with three city schools improving their educational programs and test scores enough to exit school improvement, eighteen

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1 Duvall, Great City Schools, 125.


schools making AYP, more AP courses and exams available to students, as well as more support from parents and the community. The following schools; Reginald F. Lewis High School, Academy for College and Career Exploration, Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts and Baltimore School for the Arts are examples of change within urban schools in Baltimore city as they promote and encourage all students to posses the energy, ideas, and talents to become leaders, problem solvers and decision-makers as they prepare to serve in corporate America, open their own businesses, and compete in today’s economy. Alonso emphasizes, “It is a time of great urgency when the critical work of not just continuing our momentum, but building on it in a sustainable way, really begins.”

Similarly, Baltimore County is a county of diversity: racially, economically, socially, and geographically. In 2009-2010, Baltimore County Public Schools had more than 107,000 students. Baltimore County’s Blueprint for Progress offers all students a high-quality education as they prepare them for success in college, careers, and life; through innovative coursework, partnership with industry professionals, internships, and job shadowing and state-of-the-art technology within the classroom. Over the past ten years, Baltimore County has been recognized by Maryland as the national No Child Left Behind Act blue ribbon school of excellence; as well as recognized by Education Week for having the sixth highest graduation rate, and the third highest graduation rate for

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
African American males; with sixty-one percent of graduates immediately pursuing higher education upon graduation. Dr. Hairston states:

We have collectively taken the responsibility to embrace change, to embrace this community, and our students, and to drive performance to higher levels. We have shown the world, our community, and especially our children that it can be done. Our charge now is to embrace THEIR future as we take individual responsibility, through our values, our decisions, and our actions, to continue moving this school system toward greatness. Our destiny and the destinies of our students are in our hands.⁵

The four county schools used for this study are examples of the many accomplishments within Baltimore County, through the collective efforts of the schools, students, parents and community.

In comparing Baltimore City to Baltimore County public schools, research data show:

- On average the ratio of students to counselor is 375 to one for Baltimore city schools and 300 to one for Baltimore county schools:
  - Minority students are less likely to receive guidance counselor assistance in making a curriculum track choice than are white students. The analysis of the 1982 High School and Beyond data shows that about 23 percent of white public high school students receive guidance counselor assistance in making a curricular track choice, while only 20 percent of black students and 16 percent of Mexican American students receive counselor help in making this choice.⁶
  - The student-to-counselor ratios across the nation show that for 27,000 public secondary schools in the U.S. there are 97,000 guidance counselors.
  - This represents 1.7 percent of all school personnel. In 2005, Counseling and College Counseling in America’s High Schools reported that thirty-

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⁶ Ekstrom, Goertz, and Rock, American Youth, 59.
eight minutes per year is the estimated amount of time the average student receives from a school counselor on college advising.\(^7\)

- Baltimore recorded a staggering gap in suburban versus urban performance: more than 80 percent of students in suburban districts graduated, but only 62 percent within the city did.\(^8\)

- Over the last five years, the graduation rate in Baltimore county schools is higher than Baltimore city schools by 20 percent.

- The large achievement gap reflected in disparate test scores, graduation rates, and college-going rates for African American and Latino students in comparison to their white and Asian peers has not decreased significantly in more than a decade. Recent statistics suggest that, among those who enter the 9th grade, only 56% of African American students and 55% of Latino students now graduate with a high school diploma four years later, and only 12 to 14% graduate having met the requirements to attend a state university.\(^9\)

- According to the *Pathways to College Network* only 28 percent of low-income students have access to honors classes, compared with 49 percent of middle-income students and 65 percent of high-income students:
  
  - Of all high school graduates, students from high-income backgrounds enroll in college at rates 25 percentage points higher than those from low-income backgrounds. Only 22 percent of low-income students who enroll in college eventually receive their Bachelors Degree, compared with 78 percent of high-income students.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) Baltimore City Public Schools, “By the Numbers,” https://www.baltimorecityschools.org.


Over the last five years, graduation rates in Baltimore city schools were lower than Baltimore county schools. Over the last three years Baltimore city schools have made improvements to increase their graduation rate.

Figure 42: Graduation Rates Across Maryland\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lcccccc}
\hline
\hline
Baltimore City & 54.3 & 59.0 & 60.6 & 60.1 & 62.7 \\
Baltimore County & 86.1 & 84.8 & 82.5 & 83.3 & 82.2 \\
Prince George's County & 86.7 & 86.8 & 86.9 & 84.9 & 83.1 \\
Maryland & 84.3 & 84.8 & 85.4 & 85.2 & 85.1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Over the last five years, dropout rates in Baltimore city schools were higher than Baltimore county schools by an average of 6%. Over the last three years Baltimore city schools have made improvements to decrease their dropout rate.

Figure 43: Dropout Rates Across Maryland

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In comparing the total student enrollment of four Baltimore city and four Baltimore county schools data show: Baltimore city four schools have less than 800 students and Baltimore county four schools have a population of over 1,000 students.

Figure 44: Total Student Population: Baltimore City/Baltimore County

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135
In comparing the total student enrollment by race/ethnicity for four Baltimore city and four Baltimore county schools data show: an uneven percentage of Hispanics, Asian Pacific and American Indian; Baltimore city schools were predominately African-American and Baltimore county schools were predominately white.

Figure 45: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity: Baltimore City/Baltimore County.

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14 Ibid.
Figure 45: cont.

2009 Enrollment by: Race/Ethnicity
Asian/Pacific Islander

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Baltimore City Public Schools</th>
<th>Baltimore County Public Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy for College and Career Exploration</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dundalk High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Technical High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chesapeake High</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catonsville High</td>
<td>96</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 45: cont.
Figure 45: cont.

2009 Enrollment by: Race/Ethnicity
Black, Non-Hispanic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore School for the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reginald F. Lewis High School</td>
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<td>Academy for College and Career Exploration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts</td>
<td>579</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dundalk High</td>
<td>301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Technical High School</td>
<td>195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chesapeake High</td>
<td>338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catonsville High</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baltimore City Public Schools | Baltimore County Public Schools
Figure 45: cont.

2009 Enrollment by: Race/Ethnicity
White, Non-Hispanic

Baltimore City Public Schools
Baltimore County Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore School for the Arts</td>
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<td>Reginald F. Lewis High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academy for College and Career Exploration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundalk High</td>
<td>917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Technical High School</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake High</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catonsville High</td>
<td>1137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In comparing the student to teacher ratio for four Baltimore city and four Baltimore county schools data show: Baltimore city schools are above 13:1 and Baltimore county schools are below 15:9.

Figure 46: Student to Teacher Ratio: Baltimore City/Baltimore County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Baltimore City Public Schools</th>
<th>Baltimore County Public Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore School for the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reginald F. Lewis High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academy for College and Career Exploration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts</td>
<td>19.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundalk High School</td>
<td>13.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Technical High School</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake High School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catonsville High School</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that barriers exist between urban and suburban schools:

- **Urban schools** – lack student motivation to succeed academically, low teacher expectation, high student to counselor ratios, lack of parental involvement, high dropout rates, low test scores, high absenteeism rate and, most importantly, less funding than suburban schools.

- **Suburban schools** – students are motivated to attend school and succeed academically; teachers promote high expectations, tenure among teachers and administrators, high parental involvement, high test scores, after school programs, counselor involvement, promote college awareness, as well as the resources to promote student achievement.

The educational system has come a long way from segregating schools, but what they missed in the process was providing equal education for all despite their economic disadvantages.
CONCLUSION

“Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work – it must teach life.”

1 Secretary of Education Duncan states:

Many years ago, Martin Luther King wrote in his famous letter from the Birmingham jail that “human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through tireless effort and persistent work.” Our children get only one chance at an education. Let us recommit to that tireless effort and that persistent work. Dr. King had it right: We cannot wait. 2

The Education Trust states, “Without a rigorous high school preparation, young adults are likely to be relegated to the sidelines of our economy, our democracy, and our society.”

Despite the efforts of the educational system to break down barriers, high schools are facing immense problems in responding to the needs and concerns of students from different social classes and racial or ethnic groups in closing the achievement gap. Until all schools are considered equal there will remain a gap in student achievement. To close the gap, the educational system must overcome the strong force of tradition with the commitment and perseverance to educate all students. W.E.B. Du Bois’ states, “We are not providing the children of the new majorities with a fair start, which will equip them


with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be.”

There is still significant progress to be made in order to prepare all students for post-secondary education. One may assume the amount of attention paid to the role and function of the school counselors would have led to greater clarity and focus for the profession. The goal is not to discard the past work, but utilize the lessons learned to build a future that holds much promise. With the ASCA National Model in place, there is a new energy and excitement around the role school counselors plays in the development of students. The success of counseling programs within high schools will require the collaboration of students, parents, administrators, teachers, personnel and support staff working together for one common goal and that is to provide the necessary services to all students.

Ravitch recalls a statement by John Dewey, “What the best and wisest parents want for their children is what the community should want for all its children. Not the promise of good education someday, maybe, but the reality of good education today.”

Urban schools face barriers that do not exist in suburban schools in terms of the availability of resources, economic status, social class, and ethnicity causing differences in the outcome of academic achievement. “The Education Trust took its first look at the difference in school funding between the highest and lowest poverty school districts in 2001. That report found a gap of more than $1,000 per student nationwide, and similar

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4 Williams, *Education Opposing Viewpoints*, 49.

gaps between white and minority students.” Research indicates that the availability of resources makes a difference in students’ educational outcome.

The book, Education and American Youth, argues as follows:

Educational policies should be directed toward improving schools and toward equalizing access to educational opportunities for all students. Policies should be developed to strengthen the home educational support system, parental interest in the school and in the student’s educational progress as well as help students gain the understanding that they can influence their future through their own educational efforts.

Despite the barriers every school district has one common goal and that is to educate and prepare all students for the future. President Barack Obama states before the nation in his speech on the importance of education as follows:

The story of America isn’t about people who quit when things got tough. It’s about people who kept going, who tried harder, and who loved their country too much to do anything less than their best. It’s the story of students who sat where you sit 250 years ago, and went on to wage a revolution and they founded this nation young people; students who sat where you sit 75 years ago who overcame a depression and won a world war; who fought for civil rights and put a man on the moon; students who sat where you sit 20 years ago who founded Google, Twitter and Facebook and changed the way we communicate with each other.

Education is the key for the U.S. to return to a place of prominence, long-term prosperity, economic growth and international competitiveness.

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7 Ekstrom, Goertz, and Rock, American Youth, 141-143.

Appendix 1

ASCA National Standards

**Academic Development**

**Standard A:** Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the span.

**Improve Academic Self-concept**
- Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners
- Display a positive interest in learning
- Take pride in work and achievement
- Accept mistakes as essential to the learning process
- Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning

**Acquire Skills for Improving Learning**
- Apply time-management and task-management skills
- Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning
- Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed
- Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance

**Achieve School Success**
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other students
- Develop a broad range of interests and abilities
- Demonstrate dependability, productivity and initiative
- Share knowledge

**Standard B:** Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.

**Improve Learning**
- Demonstrate the motivation to achieve individual potential
- Learn and apply critical-thinking skills
- Apply the study skills necessary for academic success at each level
- Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family and peers
- Organize and apply academic information from a variety of sources
- Use knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance
- Become a self-directed and independent learner

**Plan to Achieve**
- Establish challenging academic goals in elementary, middle/junior high and high school
• Use assessment results in educational planning
• Develop and implement annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement
• Apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting
• Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to assess progress toward educational goals
• Understand the relationship between classroom performance and success in school
• Identify post-secondary options consistent with interests, achievement, aptitude and abilities

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Relate School to Life Experiences
• Demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time and family life
• Seek co-curricular and community experiences to enhance the school experience
• Understand the relationship between learning and work
• Demonstrate an understanding of the value of life long learning as essential to seeking, obtaining and maintaining life goals
• Understand that school success is the preparation to make the transition from student to community member
• Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities

Career Development
Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Develop Career Awareness
• Develop skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information
• Learn about the variety of traditional and non-traditional occupations
• Develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests and motivations
• Learn how to interact and work cooperatively in teams
• Learn to make decisions
• Learn how to set goals
• Understand the importance of planning
• Pursue and develop competency in areas of interest
• Develop hobbies and vocational interests
• Balance between work and leisure time

Develop Employment Readiness
• Acquire employability skills such as working on a team, problem-solving and
organizational skills

- Apply job readiness skills to seek employment opportunities
- Demonstrate knowledge about the changing workplace
- Learn about the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees
- Learn to respect individual uniqueness in the workplace
- Learn how to write a resume
- Develop a positive attitude toward work and learning
- Understand the importance of responsibility, dependability, punctuality, integrity and effort in the workplace
- Utilize time and task management skills

**Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.**

**Acquire Career Information**

- Apply decision-making skills to career planning, course selection and career transition
- Identify personal skills, interests and abilities and relate them to current career choice
- Demonstrate knowledge of the career planning process
- Know the various ways in which occupations can be classified
- Use research and information resources to obtain career information
- Learn to use the Internet to access career planning information
- Describe traditional and non-traditional career choices and how they relate to career choice
- Understand how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training

**Identify Career Goals**

- Demonstrate awareness of the education and training needed to achieve career goals
- Assess and modify their educational plan to support career
- Use employability and job readiness skills in internship, mentoring, shadowing and/or other work experience
- Select course work that is related to career interests
- Maintain a career planning portfolio

**Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.**

**Acquire Knowledge to Achieve Career Goals**

- Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success
- Explain how work can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction
- Identify personal preferences and interests influencing career choice and success
• Understand that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and acquiring new skills
• Describe the effect of work on lifestyle
• Understand the importance of equity and access in career choice
• Understand that work is an important and satisfying means of personal expression

Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals
• Demonstrate how interests, abilities and achievement relate to achieving personal, social, educational and career goals
• Learn how to use conflict management skills with peers and adults
• Learn to work cooperatively with others as a team member
• Apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning situations such as internships, shadowing and/or mentoring experiences

Personal/Social
Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Acquire Self-knowledge
• Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person
• Identify values, attitudes and beliefs
• Learn the goal setting process
• Understand change is a part of growth
• Identify and express feelings
• Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior
• Recognize personal boundaries, rights and privacy needs
• Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it
• Demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups
• Identify personal strengths and assets
• Identify and discuss changing personal and social roles
• Identify and recognize changing family roles

Acquire Interpersonal Skills
• Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities
• Respect alternative points of view
• Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences
• Recognize, accept and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity
• Recognize and respect differences in various family configurations
• Use effective communications skills
• Know that communication involves speaking, listening and non-verbal behavior
• Learn how to make and keep friends
Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Self-knowledge Application
- Use a decision-making and problem-solving model
- Understand consequences of decisions and choices
- Identify alternative solutions to a problem
- Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems
- Demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions
- Know how to apply conflict resolution skills
- Demonstrate a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences
- Know when peer pressure is influencing a decision
- Identify long and short term goals
- Identify alternative ways of achieving goals
- Use persistence and perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills
- Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Acquire Personal Safety Skills
- Demonstrate knowledge of personal information (i.e., telephone number, home address and emergency contact)
- Learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety and the protection of rights of the individual
- Learn about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact
- Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy
- Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and adult professional help
- Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help
- Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices
- Learn about the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse
- Learn how to cope with peer pressure
- Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict
- Learn coping skills for managing life events

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Appendix 2

Elements of the National Model

**Foundation** – Like any solid structure, a school counseling program is built on a strong foundation. Based on the school’s goals for student achievement, what every student should know and should be able to do determine how every student will benefit from the school counseling program.

- **Beliefs and Philosophy** – The philosophy is a set of principles guiding program development, implementation and evaluation.
- **Mission** – A mission statement describes the program’s purpose and goals. A school counseling program mission statement aligns with and is a subset of the school and district’s mission.

**Delivery System** – Based on the core beliefs, philosophies and missions identified in the foundation, the delivery system describes the activities, interactions and methods necessary to deliver the program.

- **The Guidance Curriculum** – counselors provide structured, competency-based activities in a classroom or in group situations, using the time to focus on areas such as self knowledge, attitudes, social skills, and educational and career exploration and planning.
  - Recommended time for guidance curriculum 35 – 40%
- **Individual Student Planning** – counselors help students establish personal goals and plans for the future. Student progress is evaluated and the transition from school to work is given attention.
  - Recommended time for individual student planning 5 – 10%
- **Responsive Services** – counselors meet the immediate needs, concerns, and interests of students confronting personal or educational challenges.
  - Recommended time for responsive services 30 – 40%
- **System Support** – counselors work to sustain and enhance the implementation of comprehensive counseling and guidance programs, attending to the systemic aspect of the school and learning environment. Partnerships are formed and student data is analyzed, evaluated, and interpreted.
  - Recommended time for system support 10 – 15%

**Management System** – Intertwined with the delivery system is the management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure the program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school’s needs.

- **Agreements** – Management agreements ensure effective implementation of the delivery system to meet students’ needs.
- **Advisory Council** – An advisory council is a group of people appointed to review counseling program results and to make recommendations.
• **Use of Data** – A comprehensive school counseling program is data driven. The use of data to effect change within the school system is integral to ensuring every student receives the benefits of the school counseling program.

• **Action Plan** – For every desired competency and result, there must be a plan outlining how the desired result will be achieved.

• **Use of Time** – ASCA model recommends that school counselors spend 80 percent of their time in direct service with students and provide a guide to school counselors and administrators for determining the amount of time their program should devote to each of the four components of the delivery system.

• **Use of Calendars** – Once school counselors determine the amount of time necessary in each area of the delivery system, they should develop and publish master and weekly calendars to keep students, parents, teachers and administrators informed.

**Accountability** – School counselors and administrators are increasingly challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms. To evaluate the program and to hold it accountable, school counselors must collect and use data that link the program to student achievement.

• **Results Report** – Results reports, which include process, perception and results data, ensure programs are carried out, analyzed for effectiveness and modified as needed.

• **School Counselor Performance Standards** – The school counselor’s performance evaluation contains basic standards of practice expected of school counselors implementing a school counseling program.

• **Program Audit** – The primary purpose for collecting information is to guide future action within the program and to improve future results for students.²

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