An Examination of the Alignment of the Proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System with the Views and Perceptions of School Administrators and Counselors on the Roles of School Counselors in Northwest Ohio

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ABSTRACT

The Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) developed a system to evaluate school counselors in Ohio. The evaluation is comparable to the systems currently in place for Ohio teachers and administrators. The Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System uses the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) national standards to which many school systems do not adhere. Assigning counselors duties that do not utilize their skills or adhere to the ASCA national model could pose a challenge to those counselors when they are evaluated using the proposed system created from the ASCA national model. This study examines: 1) the difficulties inherent in developing a system for school counselors that is objective, similar or equivalent to that of the teachers, principals and superintendents, and 2) the degree to which school counselor roles and responsibilities reflect the tool and therefore by default, the ASCA National Model proposed to which most schools do not adhere.

Keywords: school counselors, Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System, counselor evaluation, evaluations, administrators, principals, teachers.
This work is dedicated to the persons in my life who have supported me the most, believed in me, inspired me and allowed me to chase my dreams into making them a reality. Thank you to my mom, dad, husband and son.

To my Mom and Dad who have always been a constant support and pushed me further than I ever knew I could go, I want to say thank you for always believing in me, even when I had my doubts. I love you both more than words can express and could never repay for all you have done and sacrificed for me to chase after me dreams.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale &amp; Significance of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Bias</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brief History of School Counseling</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Call for Accountability</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods Used for Location of Literature</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Views of the Role of the School Counselor</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perceptions of the Role of the School Counselor</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Perceptions of the Role of the School Counselor</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Perceptions of the Role of the School Counselor</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCA National Model and State Implementation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Evaluation</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Survey Instrument: Section 1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reported Assigned Student Load with Difference from ASCA Recommendations</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appropriate School Counseling Activity Responses from School Counselors</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Inappropriate School Counseling Activity Responses from School Counselors</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ohio School Counselor Evaluation Rubric: Standards 1-6, Ratings of Ineffective or Accomplished</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Administrator and School Counselor Views of the Stakeholders of the School</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Some believe the field of public education should run much like a business. If education were to be compared to a business, it would be a business in which the owners are the taxpayers and the board of trustees would be comprised of the law makers and the school board. The schools must follow and implement laws passed from the government and agendas agreed upon in school board meetings. These laws can have a profound impact on the ways in which school systems provide education to students. Like any business, the owners want the best product for their money, and in the business world, objective metrics and discrete data are used to determine improvements that need to be made to improve the product. Part of the improvement process in the “business of school” in Ohio calls for a stronger evaluation process for school district personnel to ensure that school systems are meeting the legislative expectations. According to the Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System (2009), “Ohio has made important educational advances, with a focus on standards and accountability, which have moved Ohio’s kindergarten through grade 12 system forward in important ways” (p. 4). This push for stronger evaluations from lawmakers and taxpayers led the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to implement processes to make schools more accountable and in order to do so, developed a system that was used for the first time in the 2013-2014 school year to evaluate teachers, principals and superintendents. Examples of the accountability are 1) Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), 2) Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES), and 3) Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System (OSES).

The evaluations have several components for each evaluated personnel. The Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) includes pre-conferences, post-conferences, both formal and
informal walk-throughs, links to student growth and a professional growth plan. The student growth measure, which is a key aspect of the new evaluation system, ties teacher performance to student achievement on the Ohio standardized tests. The Ohio Department of Education (2014) stated that:

For subjects where traditional assessments are not an option (such as art or music) districts or schools should establish a process to create locally determined measures, including student learning objectives, to measure student progress or if Value-Added data is not available, districts or schools can use other assessments provided by national testing vendors and approved for use in Ohio (“Student Growth Measures for Teachers, Type of Student Growth Measures,” para. 2 & 3).

This student growth measure provides a component tying teacher and principal evaluation ratings to student achievement. Tying student performance to the evaluation is a key component of the new evaluation strategies and is reflective of a “business model” of sorts. Teachers and principals do play an integral role in the direct education of students so tying student growth, similar to measuring business output, to teachers and principals does not seem too far out of line. However, it gets a bit more complicated when discussing tying student growth to school counselors. School counselors do not directly teach core subjects to students or lead curriculum in the schools in the way that teachers and principals do. This is problematic when discussing tying any type of student growth measure to school counselors as part of their evaluation system. The walk-throughs, observations and conferences make up fifty percent of the evaluation, while student growth with the assessment encompasses the other fifty percent of the teachers’ ratings.

Similarly, the Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) includes two components. The first, principal performance rating, is determined by a professional growth plan, two 30 minute
observations and walkthroughs. Superintendents hold a post-conference with the principal after the observations. The second component for the principal evaluation is student academic growth, evaluated in the same manner as the teachers. Each category is worth fifty percent of the evaluation. Principals do not need to write Student Learning Objectives (SLO) because they do not deliver instruction.

In contrast to the teachers’ and principals’ evaluations, the Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System (OSES) is a four-step system that includes developing a job description, setting annual district objectives, evaluating the progress of district objectives and completing a summary of the progress of district objectives. Superintendent evaluation does not contain a student growth measure. According to the ODE website, “the Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System was developed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of each Ohio district” (ODE, 2009). The school board is responsible for the evaluation of the superintendent according to the OSES process.

While the systems of evaluation for school principals, teachers and superintendents are arguably well-defined, for other members of the school district team, the evaluation process is either not defined in legislations and/or is also more difficult to fairly establish. School counselors represent one group in Ohio whose evaluation procedure has not been formally established. Traditionally, school counselors have been evaluated by their administrators, using an evaluation tool created by their local education associations (LEA). The evaluation tool may or may not be based off of the job description of the school counselor, if the LEA has created one. In an attempt to create a system to evaluate school counselors, the Ohio School Counselor Association website stated that:
The Ohio School Counselor Association has spent over a year working to develop a standards-based evaluation system for school counselors in the wake of state-wide changes in teacher evaluations. That work has culminated in the introduction of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES). While not recognized by the Ohio Department of Education, the OSCES is modeled after the new state teacher evaluation system. It is our hope that these resources will allow school counselors to advocate for appropriate and relevant evaluations (Ohio School Counselor Association 2013, “Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System,” para. 1).

The system was designed and written by a team of five current school counselors. An evaluation consultation team was comprised of four school counselors and one counseling program professor. The team designed OSCES with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model as a guiding point. The OSCES guide states “the student-to-counselor ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association is 250:1” (OSCES, 2013). Adhering to the national model, the guide also states that counselors should be given time to develop and plan counseling programs as well as a budget to support counseling program goals. There is no student growth measure tied to OSCES. OSCES requires school counselors to set annual program goals, complete a self-assessment, have a pre-observation conference with the administrator, hold a formal observation with the administrator followed by a post-observation conference, then complete a summary evaluation conference to reflect on the results of the observations and conferences where it would be determined if a growth plan is needed. ASCA worked with ODE to develop and adopt OSCES as the model system for Ohio School Counselors.
Rationale & Significance of the Study

Ohio’s call for more accountability through the use of evaluation has led to systems being put in place for schools to monitor their teachers, principals and superintendents. Standards for Ohio school counselors to operate within were adopted and posted to the ODE website in November 2015. OSCA, with the help of representatives from ODE, developed the evaluation system that was piloted in January 2016. The evaluation tool was based on the ASCA national model. The proposed evaluation system was piloted as the research was being conducted for this study. When the pilot was completed, ODE adopted the tool to be used for the evaluation of school counselors in May 2016.

School districts that currently do not adhere to the national model could have more difficulty properly evaluating their school counselors using a tool that was created with the model in mind. The problem is that the reality of many school counselors’ roles and expectations set forth by their LEA’s still do not reflect the tenets of the ASCA model, and thus, may not align with the OSCA evaluation instrument which is based largely on those ASCA standards. The concern about OSCES would include whether or not the evaluation adequately reflects the actual role of the school counselors according to principals and school counselors, or whether or not it more adequately reflects the opinion of the roles of school counselors according to ASCA. This study attempts to explore the degree to which current job expectations of Ohio school counselors aligns with the proposed evaluation plan.

Up to this point, the job of the school counselor in Ohio has been left up to LEA’s to define job descriptions, if they created a description at all. Some responsibilities of a school counselor may include, but are not limited to, monitoring attendance, restrooms, lunch, and recess; giving morning/afternoon announcements; coordinating tests; scheduling; managing
scholarships; counseling individuals and groups; and leading classroom counseling activities. School counselors often find that roles such as attendance monitor or test coordinator take time away from their duties as counselors with in a school system. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) conducted research that indicated high school counselors were least likely to work in the way they preferred, whereas elementary counselors were more likely to preform appropriate, preferred tasks. The findings of this research may indicate that elementary counselors are likely to adhere more closely to the ASCA national model compared to high school counselors due to the differences in responsibilities.

Some principals have been trained on the ASCA national model. Studies suggest that principal support for school counselors is key in successful counseling services. Studer, Diambra, Breckner and Heidel (2011) found that study participants noted program transformation was facilitated when principals and other decision-makers supported their efforts. Assigning a counselor duties that do not utilize their skills or adhere to the ASCA national model could pose a challenge to those counselors when they are evaluated using a system that was designed around the ASCA national model. Thus, the question that this study will address will be whether the OSCA proposed evaluation system that was created from the ASCA national model will be an appropriate tool for the evaluation of Ohio school counselors based on a number of factors including the role that school counselors play in the school system according to principals and school counselors, as well as the degree to which school counselor contributions are quantified.

With accountability for educators being a significant part of legislation in the United States and the current adoption of Common Core standards across many states, it is no surprise that there now exists a way in which to evaluate educators on the jobs that they are doing in their
districts and states. Having a system in place that adequately reflects a person’s ability to do a job without bias is extremely important, when considering that these evaluations will be used to determine whether or not an educator will keep his or her job. Superintendents, principals, teachers, school counselors, as well as tax-payers, would have a vested interest in whether or not an evaluation system set up to monitor the work of a school counselor is a true reflection of the job a counselor performs. Districts may or may not want to change the roles or duties of their school counselors based on the new adopted standards and the proposed evaluation system. Administrators could use the standards to revise job descriptions for school counselors or develop job descriptions if there currently are none in place. In addition, standards could assist in redirecting duties to the correct placement, allowing school counselors to perform duties more aligned to the evaluation system. A school counselor evaluation that mirrors the evaluations already in place for principals and teachers would provide a system in which more school employees would now be held accountable. This research will help to determine whether or not the system would be worth the tax payer dollars for the ODE to implement or if it would be more beneficial to design one that is not based upon the ASCA national model.

**Purpose of Study**

Although evaluation systems for Ohio teachers, principals and superintendents are in place for the 2013-2014, the evaluation of Ohio school counselors is taking place for the first time in the 2016-2017 school year. This lack of a formal state evaluation system up to this point has left school counselor evaluations to continue to fall under agreements between local education agencies (LEA’s) and unions. Without state evaluations systems in place, at a time when the rest of the education profession is becoming centralized and standardized on state and national levels, each district could decide how and when staff were observed and how they could
be discharged for not meeting performance standards set for by the district. The new system for teachers takes that power away from districts and puts a large weight on the evaluation with student performance. On the other hand, counselors comprise a group within the school system that do not have direct control over classroom instruction. Hence, grouping counselors with teachers with the same evaluation from the state would create an unfair system for counselors when half of teachers’ evaluations depend upon student performance correlated to classroom instruction.

OSCA included counselors in the process when they designed an evaluation system for school counselors for the purpose of recommending the system for ODE to adopt as the method to hold counselors accountable. Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) responded similarly by writing the evaluation plan for superintendents that was adopted by the ODE in 2009. OSCA used the ASCA national model as a guide for design of an evaluation tool for school counselors. However, the ASCA national model could be problematic as a basis for the evaluation system, if school districts are not using the national model to establish and maintain roles for their school counselors.

The ASCA national model is very descriptive on what counselors’ jobs should be, what the proper ratio of students to counselors should be, and how counselors should design and implement counseling programs. To achieve maximum effectiveness, the ASCA National Model recommends that a student to school counselor ratio should be 250:1 and that 80 percent or more of a professional school counselor’s time should be spent providing direct and indirect services to students (ASCA, 2012). Thus, school counselors’ work load will need to be examined in this study to compare actual measures to the model recommendations. The model also states that
districts need to provide for counselors to have planning time, as well as no other assigned duties outside the realm of counseling (i.e., restroom duty, recess duty, lunch monitoring).

Another problem using the ASCA model for designing an evaluation tool could exist with the way in which a counselors’ job is conducted. Principals and teachers were surveyed by Camadan and Kahveci (2013) and the researchers found, “it is understood that directing and orientation service has an essential role in counseling services” (1389). When a school counselor cannot conduct services such as directing or orientation due to other responsibilities they are assigned, problems could arise when conducting an evaluation based on that criteria. Most of the school counselor duties consist of aiding in the function of the school for administrators, teachers and students, without the involvement of the administrators and teachers. The OSCA system provides for the counselors to be evaluated on such criteria that often cannot be observed directly by the administration when the services are conducted.

The purpose of this study is to examine the OSCA designed school counselor evaluation system to determine if OSCA has designed a tool that actually reflects and/or matches the roles of the Ohio school counselors or if it reflects only positions of school counselors whose districts adhere to the ASCA national model. The research will examine the role of the school counselor and the reality of what school counselors are doing in Ohio at each level (i.e., elementary, middle and high school). The research will examine school counselors’ attitudes and/or perspectives on the proposed evaluation and their roles. The research will also examine administrators’ attitudes and/or perspectives on the proposed evaluation and the roles of school counselors. It will be important to determine how the role of the school counselor is perceived by the administrators and the school counselor, as this will provide data on the relevance of the current proposed model to the current active role school counselors play in the education system. The research will
provide data that can be used to determine if the proposed system is a non-biased tool that can be
used to hold school counselors accountable to school districts, the state, and the tax-payers. The
research will look at school districts that have job descriptions for school counselors and how
those descriptions adhere to the ASCA national model.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study involves the use of the American School Counselor
Association’s (2012) Use of Time: Appropriate and Inappropriate School Counseling Activities
and the Ohio School Counselor Association (2013) proposed standards for evaluation of school
counselors. The appropriate and inappropriate school counseling activities were adapted from
states that school counselors’ duties are focused on the overall delivery of the comprehensive
school counseling program, direct and indirect student services, and program management and
school support.

ASCA’s chart comparing appropriate activities for school counselors and those that are
inappropriate was adapted from Campbell, C.A. & Dahir, C.A. (1997) and consists of fourteen
activities that are appropriate for school counselors to perform. The American School Counselor
Association (2012) suggested that school counselors should perform: 1) individual student
academic program planning; 2) interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests; 3)
providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent; 4) providing counseling to students
who have disciplinary problems; 5) providing counseling to students as to appropriate school
dress; 6) collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum lessons; 7)
analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement; 8) interpreting student records; 9)
providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management; 10) ensuring student
records are maintained as per state and federal regulations; 11) helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems; 12) providing individual and small-group counseling services to students; 13) advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards; and 14) analyzing disaggregated data.

The American School Counselor Association (2012) chart adapted from Campbell, C.A. & Dahir, C.A. (1997) also included fourteen activities that are considered inappropriate for school counselors to perform. The American School Counselor Association (2012) suggested that school counselors should not perform the following activities: 1) coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students; 2) coordinating cognitive, aptitude, and achievement testing programs; 3) signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent; 4) performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences; 5) sending students home who are not appropriately dressed; 6) teaching classes when teachers are absent; 7) computing grade-point averages; 8) maintaining student records; 9) supervising classrooms or common areas; 10) keeping clerical records; 11) assisting with duties in the principal’s office; 12) providing therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders; 13) coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards; and 14) serving as a data entry clerk.

The responses from the present study will be compared to Campbell, C.A. & Dahir, C.A. (1997) list of inappropriate and appropriate activities for school counselors to perform, as well as comparing responses using the Ohio School Counselor Association (2013) proposed rubric and standards. The proposed rubric will serve as the guide for this research. The adopted rubric will not be published before the research is conducted and analyzed. The proposed rubric for the Ohio
School Counselor Evaluation System was created by a team of individuals and published in 2013. The standards for school counselors in Ohio were created and established in November 2015. There is a total of six standards. School counselors receive the following rankings in each of the standards on the rubric: ineffective, developing, skilled, accomplished. Responses from the research will be compared to the categories on the rubric to evaluate the potential rankings of the counselors who participated in this study and the school counselors whose administrators participated in this study.

**Research Questions**

1. How do school counselors and principals perceive the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) standards as currently being met in the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor?

2. To what degree does the OSCES reflect the role of the school counselor according to the views of the counselor’s role from principals and school counselors?

3. What do principals and counselor view as the role of the school counselor?

4. How does the role of the school counselor as viewed by the principals and counselors relate to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (on which the OSCES standards are based)?

5. Does the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) evaluation system accurately evaluate all school counselors or just those that are able to adhere to the ASCA national model?

**Definition of Terms**

In order to provide clarity to the research, the following definitions will aid in understanding the content:
**Academic Growth.** Academic Growth is a measurement of student achievement based on state test scores from previous to current school years.

**American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model.** The ASCA national model is a framework for school counseling programs that reflects a comprehensive approach to design, implementation and evaluation of a school counseling program that improves student success.

**Pre-Conference.** A meeting in which an evaluator and teacher discuss what the evaluator will observe during the classroom visitation. Important information is shared about the characteristics of the learners and learning environment. Specific information is also shared about the objectives of the lesson and the assessment of student learning. The conference will also give the teacher an opportunity to identify areas in which he or she would like focused feedback from the evaluator during the classroom observation. The communication takes place during a formal meeting and a record of the date(s) are kept (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

**Professional Growth Plan.** Professional Growth Plans help teachers focus on areas of professional development that will enable them to improve their practice (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

**Post-Conference.** A meeting to provide reflection and feedback on the observed lesson and to identify strategies and resources for the teacher to incorporate into lessons to increase effectiveness. Following the lesson, the teacher reflects on the lesson and how well the student learning outcomes were met. Professional conversations between the evaluator and the teacher during the post-conference will provide the teacher with feedback on the observed lesson and may identify additional strategies and resources (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).
Student Learning Objective (SLO). A Student Learning Objective is written when a standard needs to be met and there is no state created test to measure the completion of that standard.

Walk-throughs. Walk-throughs are informal observations, less than 30 minutes. These may occur frequently and may be unannounced (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

Delimitations

The present research will not look to compare the Ohio proposed evaluation system to other state evaluation systems. The focus of this research is to determine the usefulness of the proposed system to the current job duties performed by the school counselors in Northwest Ohio. A comparison of other evaluation systems would not be relevant to the purpose of the research. The research will not include teacher interviews. Only administrator and school counselor interviews will be conducted. The administrator will be the evaluator of the school counselor in the proposed system with no involvement from teachers and is, therefore, the reason that teachers were not included in the study. This study also does not seek to develop and/or propose any particular evaluation system for school counselors. Rather, this study simply seeks to investigate the degree to which the proposed Ohio School Counselor Association Evaluation System aligns with the current realities of the school counselor profession for those participants in Northwest Ohio. Since the research will be evaluating the system in Northwest Ohio, it will be limited to just Ohio and will not be a comparative study for other states evaluation systems.

Limitations

The research results will be limited by the amount of principals and counselors that respond to the study. Additionally, the study is limited geographically to Northwest Ohio. Thus
the geographic limitation will not allow for the collecting of a broad range of perspectives from professionals across other region of the state.

**Researcher Bias**

The nature of the research process in general, and especially the particular nature of qualitative research, imply certain degrees of personal bias and perspective because research, after all, is a human endeavor regardless of the safeguards in place to limit bias. In this particular case, the researcher is a school counselor. The proposed evaluation tool, if put into effect, will directly affect the position of the researcher. School counselors play an integral part in the success of students. When schools lack counselor evaluation systems, tracking school counselor contributions is difficult. According to Stone and Dahir (2004), school systems, state departments of education, and organizations that have an interest in the work of school counselors continue to seek evidence that school counseling programs are accountable, promote student achievement, and address an advocacy agenda for equity in educational opportunities. The Ohio School Counseling Association developed the counselor evaluation system to provide schools with counselor accountability in regards to student achievement and advocacy. As a school counselor who has read the ASCA national model and is aware of the difficult reality that exists to adhere to the model within a school system that does not adhere to the model, the researcher possesses bias when determining the accuracy of the evaluation system to the actual services school counselors are able to provide to the school when ASCA national model recommendations are not followed.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are evaluation systems in Ohio for schools to monitor their teachers, principals and superintendents. When this research began, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) had neither adopted a plan for school counselors to be evaluated nor adopted standards for counselors to operate within. The Ohio School Counselor Association was working with the Ohio Department of Education to develop both a set of standards as well as an evaluation system for school counselors in Ohio. The standards for Ohio school counselors were published by the ODE November 2015. The proposed counselor evaluation began to be piloted as the research for this study concluded.

In an effort to be proactive and advocate for the role of the professional school counselor as prescribed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model, the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) had developed a system for ODE to use, if they chose to, that was based on the ASCA national model. At this time, school districts in Ohio are not required to adhere to the national model, and Ohio is not a state that has established their own school counseling standards. With the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System based on the ASCA national model that Ohio schools are not required to adhere to, the evaluation may not adequately reflect the true role of the school counselor according to principals and school counselors. Instead, it may more accurately reflect the opinion of the role of a school counselor according to ASCA.

This study will provide useful information for the ODE, OSCA, school administrators, school counselors, and teachers, as well as other stakeholders, by examining the alignment of the proposed school counselor evaluation system with the current realities of the role of the school counselor in Ohio’s schools. This examination may lead to a discussion on the validity of the
proposed evaluation system as it relates to the role of the school counselor. The research may also help guide administrators and counselors in understanding current areas of strength and weakness for practicing school counselors. Understanding areas of strength and weakness could allow them to develop school counseling programs that will align to the evaluation system that will be adopted.

The literature review presents research relevant to the role of the school counselor, ASCA national model, as well as state model implementation and counselor evaluations based on implemented models. The review encompasses available research relevant to those categories. It is indicative of the research that has already been completed relative to school counseling.

The school counseling profession has evolved over the past century. Many historical events of the times influenced the roles of school counselors were asked to fulfill. Before the review of literature is discussed, a brief history of school counseling, the events that have impacted the role of the school counselor and the evolution of that role will be discussed.

A Brief History of School Counseling

The industrial revolution of the 1800’s sparked great change in the United States. Prior to the industrial revolution, the United States economy was driven by agriculture. Factories were employing men, women and children, working long hours with little pay. Children were not attending school so that they could work in the factories. States began implementing laws to help protect children from factory work but federal laws did not happen so quickly. Federal child labor laws were put in place in many states but it wasn’t until 1938 that the Fair Labor Standards Act set a Federal minimum age for employment and hours worked.

State employment and education laws varied across the country. Massachusetts was the first U.S. state to enact compulsory education laws in 1852. Mississippi was the last state to
enact compulsory education laws in 1917. Compulsory education laws required children to attend a public or state-accredited private school for a certain period of time. These laws forced parents to send their children to school between certain age ranges that varied by state laws. Passing these laws created a need for individuals to guide students through gaining a better knowledge of themselves as well as their future vocation.

As the movement for compulsory education spread throughout the nation, so did the apparent need for professionals to serve as vocational guidance counselors. School counseling, or vocational guidance, became a way to help students get started with navigating through the processes of finding their vocations and transitioning from classrooms to job sites beginning around the late 1890’s and into the 20th century. By the 1930’s, Congress passed the George-Dean Act that created the Vocational division of the U.S. office of Education. This Act would help keep the focus of guidance counseling on vocational needs where it would remain through World War II.

Carl Rogers published *Counseling and Psychotherapy: New Concepts in Practice*, in 1942. Schmidt (2003) credits Rogers with having the greatest effect of any individual on the development of the counseling profession as well as modern counseling approaches. Rogers’ ideas came to light during a time when the world was in the midst of World War II and many individuals were questioning the ideas and treatment of people by other individuals. The effects of World War II would have a lasting impact on the United States and create a lasting impact on the counseling profession.

As World War II came to a close, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) emerged as the powerful nations of the world. Most of Europe was focused on rebuilding. After losing the war, Germany was torn apart by the leading nations that could not
agree on the establishment of a new government in Germany. The United States favored the creation of a democracy while the U.S.S.R. preferred the establishment of a communist state. The two nations could not agree so the country was divided into East and West Germany, one a democracy, the other communist. This type of disagreement continued through much of the second half of the 20th century.

In 1957, the U.S.S.R. successfully launched Sputnik I, winning the race to space between the United States and the U.S.S.R. American people feared if that the Soviets could launch a rocket into space, they could also potentially launch a missile that could reach the United States. The launching of Sputnik I also led to a fear of lagging behind the USSR in the areas of math and science. Thus, in 1958, the U.S. government passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which amongst other things, established NDEA funds for persons wanting to enter into the field of counseling. The focus of the counseling still remained on vocational training and readiness.

Change continued in the United States and the field of counseling into the 1960’s. In 1965, President Johnson passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA increased government funding for public education. The act provided funding to schools to assist their socioeconomically-challenged students in an effort to close the achievement gap (Standerfer, 2006), as well as allotted funds for guidance and counseling programs (Erford, 2003).

By the 1980’s, vocation was still at the forefront of school counseling. Progress was being made to establish standards for colleges that trained school counselors. The standards provided consistency to counselor preparation. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) was established in 1981 and still serves as the
nationally recognized standard for rigorous school counseling programs giving accredited colleges distinction of being a CACREP school. CACREP established standards for length of time pre-service counselors spent on practicums and internships, as well as the minimum required academic course work hours required to obtain a school counseling degree.

Through the 1990’s to present day, school counseling has continued to evolve and now includes a large push for accountability. To help guide the effort of school counselors, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) created the ASCA National Model in 2003 (ASCA, 2012). The model serves as a guide for school counselor to establish a program within their schools to better serve students for academic-career-and personal/social-domains. Presently, some states have adopted the model or created their own for school counselors to use, as well as be evaluated by, while many states have not. States are being required by the Federal Government to evaluate teachers and principals, which is now bringing into the light the need to establish ways to adequately evaluate school counselors. For states that have adopted models, the evaluation process is moving forward. For the states that have not, it has left many questions about how to evaluate school counseling programs that have been operating under different premise throughout a state.

The Call for Accountability

The federal legislature, under President George W. Bush, created the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that was signed into law in 2001. NCLB set the ground work for the establishment of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System through the policies’ many requirements. The NCLB Act expanded the federal role in public education through annual state standardized testing, annual academic progress, report cards, and teacher qualifications. States were required to test students from third through eighth grades and again in high school. Schools were expected
to make academic progress on their report cards, and if that progress was not achieved, schools could face sanctions from the state that could involve closing schools. The portion of NCLB that discussed teacher qualifications was most relevant in the creation of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. The Act stated that teachers would need to meet state-determined “high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation.” (NCLB, 2001) According to the U.S. Department of Education, 2004, the evaluation:

“program gives States and LEAs flexibility to select the strategies that best meet their particular needs for improved teaching that will help them raise student achievement in the core academic subjects. In return for this flexibility, LEAs are required to demonstrate annual progress in ensuring that all teachers teaching in core academic subjects within the State are highly qualified” (2004).

Over time, Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, threatened to pull NCLB waiver funding from states that had not met the requirements of the waivers by still having underperforming schools and teachers unless the states went to the Common Core Curriculum standards and also created a state adopted teacher evaluation system. Feeling the pressure of losing funding, Ohio’s legislature began the process of following the necessary steps to continue to receive waiver-funding from the federal government. Ohio Revised Code 3319.111 was created in response to mandates from the Federal Government. NCLB was signed into law in 2001 and called for higher standards for educators, as well as students.

Over a decade later, NCLB was considered a failure by many in the education field. Schools across the country were struggling to pull themselves out of low rankings. To aid in this struggle, in 2011, the Obama administration devised a plan to give conditional waivers to states having this trouble. The Obama administration approved requests for waivers from No Child
Left Behind (NCLB), in exchange for state-developed plans to prepare all students for college and career, focus aid on the neediest students, and support effective teaching and leadership. The college and career ready portion was satisfied by Ohio adopting the Common Core Curriculum, and the supporting effective teaching and leadership pushed Ohio to develop the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System, as well as the Ohio Principal Evaluation System and the Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System. All three of the evaluation systems are tied to student performance on statewide tests.

Methods Used for Locating Relevant Literature

Research for relevant literature pertaining to school counselors' roles, as well as evaluation systems, was conducted using as many sources possible. One Search and Ohio Link were used to locate research. Key words and phrases used included: roles of the school counselor, history of the role of the school counselor, teacher perceptions of the role of the school counselor, principal perceptions of the role of the school counselor, student perception of the role of the school counselor, school counselors views of the role of the school counselor, school counselor evaluation, school counselor evaluation systems, stakeholders views of the role of the school counselor, ASCA National Model implementation, and Counseling State Model implementation. Annotated bibliographies were completed from the research found. From the annotations, the research was then placed into three different categories: 1) Teachers, Students and Principals views of the role of the School Counselor, 2) ASCA National Model and State Model Implementation, and 3) Counselor Evaluation.

Stakeholder Views of the Role of School Counselor

School counselors across different districts and school buildings often share many of the same daily tasks within a school. Some common daily tasks may be counseling students,
classroom guidance and conducting groups. However, for as many similar roles that school counselor perform within a school system, school counselors perform in almost as many different roles. Some counselors may perform tasks such as scheduling, developing the master schedule, serving as the building test administrator, or serving in other roles such as lunchroom monitor or restroom monitor. The role of the school counselor is different depending on the point of view of the group being asked.

**Teacher perceptions of the role of the school counselor.** Camadan and Kahveci (2013) conducted a qualitative study using metaphor analysis, employing the rational screening method with open-ended responses. They were working to identify the views of school administrators and teachers toward school counselors. Two hundred and nine teachers and 181 principals, all from the elementary level, participated in the study. The study found teachers view the role of the school counselor as guiding, developing, problem solving, being a friend, discovering, being effective, leading and also protecting (Camadan and Kahveci, 2013). The teachers held the belief that the most important role of the school counselor was guiding. Teachers viewed the least important role of the counselor to be a leading and protecting. The results of the study also concluded that no significant difference existed when analyzing results from teachers and administrators or when the data was divided just based on gender.

Clark and Amatea (2004) conducted a qualitative study using grounded theory. The purpose of the study was to determine what classroom teachers perceive to be the counseling and guidance needs of their school and how the needs might be addressed by the school counselor, what types of services teachers perceived school counselors engaged in, what activities they preferred counselors to engage in and, what teachers reported as helpful strategies counselors used to deliver such services. Teachers who were viewed as having significant experience
working with school counselors were chosen to participate in the study. Twenty-three teachers from diverse school districts in the Southeastern United States participated in the study. Teachers in the study included eleven with two to nine years of experience, seven with ten to nineteen years of experience, and five teachers with twenty or more years of experience.

Collaboration is an important component between teachers and counselors. Clark and Amatea designed the research using focused qualitative interviews. The data was first analyzed using the constant comparative method based on the analysis of the differences and similarities between the data. As a second step, a theoretical scheme was developed through the process of relating conceptual categories to each other. Collaboration, communication and teamwork were the main themes that resulted from the study. The ASCA National Model has a common theme of collaboration between teachers and the counselor (Clark and Amatea, 2004). When looking at teacher perceptions and expectations of school counselors, teachers, as well as other stakeholders, said that collaboration, communication and teamwork were most important (Clark and Amatea, 2004, Perkins, et al 2010).

Clark and Amatea (2004) found in their study on teacher perceptions and expectations of school counselors that 56.5% of teachers expected school counselors to provide communication and collaboration between teachers, counselors and administrators while 78.2% expected communication just between the teachers and the counselor. Seven out of 23 (30.4%) teachers concluded that school counselors were responsible for establishing a positive learning environment. Eight out of 23 (34.8%) participates believed the role of the school counselor was to perform small group and classroom guidance while 7 out of 23 (30.4%) viewed the role of the school counselor was to perform individual counseling (Clark and Amatea, 2004).
Knowledge of students' special needs was viewed important by 12 out of 23 participants in the study (Clark and Amatea, 2004).

The ASCA National Model was created as a framework for school counselors. Reiner, et al. (2009) conducted a study on teacher perceptions of the professional school counselor role. The research design was quantitative with the use of surveys and the total design method developed by Dillman (1978). Research questions being answered by the study were to what extent teachers agree that school counselors should engage in appropriate responsibilities and inappropriate activities as defined by ASCA, and to what extent do teachers believe that school counselors are engaging in appropriate responsibilities and inappropriate activities as defined by ASCA. Teachers who had knowledge of the ASCA National Model agreed with the ASCA recommendations for appropriate responsibilities for school counselors but also responded that counselors rarely, or never, are able to do their appropriate responsibilities as outlined by ASCA due to other tasks assigned to them (Reiner, et al., 2009). The study was limited to high school teachers to minimize confounding results by building level role responsibility differences.

Results of this study showed that high school counselor roles, perceived by teachers, are less aligned with ASCA National Model recommendations due to the amount of inappropriate tasks they are assigned to perform.

Joy et al. (2011) conducted a qualitative study using surveys to determine what preservice teachers opinions were of the school counselor responsibilities to perform within a school. The researchers invited 172 undergraduate students to participate in the study. One-hundred twenty undergraduate students were in attendance the day the survey was given, while only 90 completed the survey. Two open-ended survey questions were asked with no prompting. The researchers used units of analysis to group responses and then used open coding to assign labels.
Those with similar labels were grouped together. Joy et al. (2011) found that 61% of the undergraduate participants believed the role of the school counselor was to serve as the academic and career counselor while 37% felt it was the role of the school counselor to conduct assessments. Eleven percent of the student participants felt it was the responsibility of the counselor to consult with outside agencies, as needed (Joy et al., 2011).

**Student perceptions of the role of the school counselor.** Students, arguably, have the most at stake when it comes to the role the school counselor plays in their academic progress. Hughey and Gysbers (1993) conducted a mixed-methods study to determine the impact of a comprehensive guidance program in Missouri and the level of satisfaction with the program. Fourteen high schools participated in the study which included 280 students, 125 parents and 150 teachers. When students were surveyed in the ways in which they participated in the guidance counseling program at their schools, 72.9% responded it was through individual sessions, 65% through classroom participation, 49.6% through small groups, and 30% through workshops, seminars and large groups (Hughey & Gysbers, 1993). When students were asked how they gained knowledge about the guidance program at their schools, the most common response was through friends and other students, a meeting or class presentation, orientation, teachers and upon enrollment (Hughey & Gysbers, 1993). When students were asked what help they received from the school counselor, 60% of students reported receiving help in planning and exploring careers and planning for postsecondary education, 87.9% of students said they received help with planning for their high school courses, and 65% reported having assistance with making decisions (Hughey & Gysbers, 1993).

**Principal perceptions of the role of the school counselor.** The principal, of the three groups evaluating the role of the school counselor, has the most control over what jobs
counselors perform and how those jobs are allocated to the school counselor. Ultimately, this allows principals to dictate how closely the role of the school counselors in their building aligns with the ASCA National Model. Leuwerke et al. (2009) conducted a quantitative study with two groups of principals using surveys. The purpose of the study was to determine if principals’ exposure to the ASCA National Model and other information sets impacted principals’ perceptions of school counselors. One group was provided the ASCA National Model information, and one was not. The results indicated principals that were provided ASCA National Model information allocated significantly more time to delivery of guidance curriculum compared to the control group (p<.05), as well as more time to system support compared to the control group (p=.05). Principals exposed to any information sets, besides the control group, allocated significantly less time to responsive services than those in the control group (p=.01) (Leuwerke, et al, 2009). The findings indicated that principals provided with information regarding the ASCA National Model had different perceptions of the role of the school counselor compared to those that did not have knowledge of the ASCA National Model (Leuwerke, et al, 2009).

The role or function of the school counselor can differ based on the school. However, their importance to the school does not go unnoticed. Zalaquett and Chatters (2012) performed a quantitative study to determine the perceptions of middle school principals regarding the role of middle school counselors in the state of Florida. A 140 item survey questionnaire was distributed to the principals. Principals were to indicate the actual time school counselors spent on an activity as well as assign what they believed to be the priority of that activity for the school counselor. Principals surveyed responded that 85.9% of the participants said that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that the counselor made a significant difference in the academic performance of
the students he or she worked with, while 90.9% reported that counselors made a significant
difference in the behavior and mental health of those students, and 71.8% believed that school
counselors were successful in helping most, or all, of the students they worked with (Zalaqu"e"et
and Chatters, 2012). Zalaqu"e"et and Chatters (2012) found that, according to principals, 50% of
school counselors were spending 75 hours or more to administer the state testing (Florida
Comprehensive Assessment Test), and 80.1% of the principals reported that the state test
administration hindered counselors’ responses to school needs, with 71.4% indicating that it
affected the counselors performance in the category of “a lot” or “very much”. From Zalaqu"e"et
and Chatters (2012) study,

The role of the school counselor according to the principals’ views of a school counselor
ranked from greatest to least were as follows: guiding, problem solving, developing, discovering,
befriending, leading, protecting and showing ineffectiveness (Camadan and Kahvecci, 2013).
While Camadan and Kahvecci found that some principals viewed counselors to be ineffective,
another study found the majority of principals, 97.2%, believed that parents found the counselor
effective in helping them with their concerns about students (Zalaqu"e"et and Chatters, 2012). In
addition, 92.1% of administrators believed that teachers found counselors effective in helping
them with their concerns about their students, and 93.3% indicated "agree" or "strongly agree"
for the belief that school counselors contributed to a positive school environment (Zalaqu"e"et
Chatters, 2012). Zalaqu"e"et and Chatters (2012) also examined the views of administrators in
regards to duties that should or should not be assigned to the school counselor and how closely
those assigned duties tied to ASCA National Model and found the following:

The duties assigned the highest priorities were individual counseling; small-group
counseling; classroom guidance; consulting with parents; crisis counseling; consulting
with teachers; coordinating intervention services (child study teams, special education eligibility meetings, and planning of services as required by Section 504 of the American Disabilities Act [U.S. Department of Justice, 1990]); and consulting with administrators. Principals believed that counselors should spend more time on the following duties: individual counseling; small-group counseling; classroom guidance; consulting with parents; crisis counseling; consulting with teachers; coordinating community services; academic advising; and career counseling. Principals believed that school counselors should spend less time in the following duties: administrative duties, coordinating SAT, ACT, benchmarks, student registration, coordinating FCAT (the Florida State Standardized Testing) and miscellaneous duties such as lunch duty and substituting for a class (p. 95).

Other factors that are involved in the view of the role of the school counselor, aside from the perceptions of teachers, principals and students, included gender as well as years of experience in education, according to finding by Camadan and Kavecci. The variables of principals', teachers', students' and stakeholders' roles were taken away to see how gender would factor into the views of the school counselors' roles. Male participants viewed counselors' roles as the following: problem solving, developing, discovering, befriending, leading, being ineffective and then protecting, while female participants in the study responded that they viewed the counselor the following way: guiding, developing, problem solving, befriending, discovering, protecting, leading and being ineffective. Results showed no significant difference existed when analyzing results from teachers and administrators or when the data was divided just based on gender (Camadan & Kahvecci, 2013). When looking at the role that years of experience had on the views teachers had on the role of the school counselor, 93% of respondents indicated they
had experience working in the schools. From these respondents, 99% said when they had a job as a teacher, they would refer students to the counselor, as needed. Teachers said that they consulted with counselors "to gain insight and approach when dealing with troubled kids," "to ask advice in dealing with situations in the classroom," "because the guidance counselor had more training and it is good to communicate with colleagues." Sixty-one percent of the respondents felt that academic and career counseling were jobs of the counselor; 37% believed it was the job of the school counselor to conduct assessments; 27% believed that providing support to students who have been identified as "exceptional" or "struggling" academically was the job of the school counselor; 13% believed it was the job of the school counselor to interact with parents; and 11% felt it was the responsibility of the counselor to consult with outside agencies, as needed (Joy, Hesson & Harris, 2011). This study shows a lower amount of collaboration being stressed as an important role versus the other literature reviewed.

**ASCA National Model and State Implementation**

The ASCA National Model was created in 2004 by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). The model encompasses four components: foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability. The themes of the model are advocacy, systemic change, collaboration, and leadership. ASCA advocates for the school counselor and states that the purpose of the school counseling program is “to impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive, preventive manner, ensuring all students can achieve school success through academic, career, and personal/social development experiences” (ASCA, 2003). When comparing the views of principals with ASCA National Model training to those that did not have the training, the quantitative data showed minimal statistical difference of knowledge of the ASCA National Model between administrators with and without state mandated training and/or
models, while the key themes that emerged showed that there was more to be learned about implementing either the ASCA National Model or a state-mandated one (Graham et al., 2011).

The call for greater accountability nationwide is being answered with states implementing standards and evaluation systems for educators. Twenty-four states had created some type of comprehensive guidance and counseling model by March 1, 1997; while California and Georgia had just submitted counseling guidelines, 7 states had recommend for school districts to establish their own comprehensive programs. Ten states had "in progress" models, and 7 states that had minimal to no work on a model (Sink & McDonald, 1998). Sink and McDonald conducted their research before the establishment of the ASCA National Model. Zalaquett and Chatters (2012) study of middle school principals perceptions of the role of middle school counselors found that only 25.8% of the principals believed that the adoption of the ASCA National Standards would help counselors focus on their relevant job duties.

The research of Zalaquett and Chatters (2012) showed the need for a standard to be developed so that school counseling programs would become more consistent. Maryland was the only state that had a model that was mandated to individual school districts, and Missouri had a strong program but it is only strongly recommended and not mandatory for school districts (Sink and McDonald, 1998). The ASCA National Model has recommended a 250-to-1 ratio of students to school counselors (2007). In Florida, the average student-counselor ratio reported by middle school principals was 462-to-1 (Zalaquet & Chatters, 2012). With these disparities between states, an implemented comprehensive school counseling program was needed to raise job satisfaction. Reasons noted by school counselors for being happy at their jobs included having administrative support, facilitating communication between faculty and staff members, having a
clearly written and directive philosophy, serving all students in the school, and taking time for program planning and evaluation (Pyne, 2011).

Program implementation not only improves counselor job satisfaction but it has been found that implementing a more differentiated delivery system is associated with increased student engagement, fewer disciplinary problems, and higher student achievement (Carey, et al., 2012). In Missouri, schools that had more fully implemented the state guidance program standards reported having students with higher grades and students who felt more prepared for their future, as well as an overall feeling of a better school climate (Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun 1997). Even though ASCA created the National Model and some states have created their own model for which their school counseling programs should operate, research has shown that counselor involvement in implementation leads to higher levels of adherence to the program. Moderate correlation was found between the amount of involvement a school counselor has with development and implementation of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs (CGCP) and level that the counselor ascribes to the program (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). The data supports that there is a need for a greater understanding of the professional identity of the school counselor, including clearer roles and responsibilities (Graham, Desmond, & Zinsser, 2011). High school counselors had a higher level of task concerns when compared to the elementary counselors. This could be due to the assignment of more clerical duties for high school counselors. Some counselors also feel external pressures to implement statewide program standards (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Thus, implementing a CGCP can create a structure for school counselors to operate under that can create a clearer picture of roles and responsibilities.

Although research has shown the importance of establishing a CGCP, few states have yet to create and/or adopt a standard program. Only 17 states have models that could be considered
as being established; 24 states were considered in progress; and 10 were considered in beginning stages of model development (Martin, Carey and DeCoster, 2009). At the time of the study by Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, Ohio was one of the states considered to be in the beginning stage of development and had not developed and/or implemented a model (2009). Another important factor in establishing a model for a school counseling program is creating a form of evaluation. Heeding the call for accountability, many states have been quick to try to implement programs. Research results indicated that most states focused on implementing a model program and did not include evaluation as a primary focus in the model program implementation (Martin, Carey & DeCoster, 2009).

As an incentive for schools and states to align to the ASCA National Model, ASCA created the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation. According to the ASCA website, RAMP designation is (a) based on the ASCA National Model; (b) is a recognition program for individual schools, not districts or school counselors; (c) gives confidence that a program aligns with a nationally accepted and recognized model; (d) helps you evaluate your program and areas for improvement and; (e) increases counselors’ skills and knowledge and enhances the program’s efforts to contribute to student success (2014). RAMP designation does make a difference with student achievement, especially at the elementary level where research indicates that having a recognized ASCA model program (RAMP) leads to higher student achievement (Wilkerson, Perusse & Hughes, 2013). Even with research indicating the higher level of student achievement at RAMP schools, many schools did not utilize the data provided through RAMP. RAMP classification led participants to see more of an importance in data reflection, but the study also showed that even though counselors saw the importance in the data gained from RAMP, many of them did not increase in the use of that data. High schools reported
to be the more likely to use the data and elementary schools were the least likely (Young and Kaffernberger, 2011).

Counselor Evaluation

Establishing a statewide program evaluation for school counselors takes many key steps to make it successful. As with the implementation of a state model, school counselors must be involved and be supported by the administration. Martin and Carey (2012) conducted a quantitative study with cross-case analysis using triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking. The purpose of the Martin and Carey study was to determine how exemplary states approached comprehensive developmental school counseling program evaluation, the strategies and practices they used to evaluate the programs, and the lessons learned from these states about establishing program evaluation systems. Determination was made that school counselors must be supported in the capacity to evaluate their own programs, and states must communicate clear purposes and guidelines for practicing school counselors, as well as create conditions in which school counselors have incentives and opportunities for recognition when there is a presence of rigorous evaluation work (Martin and Carey, 2012). State education departments also must help by establishing evaluation strategies that are consistent with the state's policy context. The responsibility of having an effective program evaluation and accountability should be shared with the state department of education, local schools, as well as school counselors in order to have more buy in and accountability focused program evaluation (Martin & Carey, 2012). Martin and Carey also found that the need for school counselors is more evident in states that have statewide evaluation systems giving data on the work of the school counselor. In order to implement an evaluation program in states with more local control, state departments of education need to facilitate the start of the program through the power of the local school district
so that their authority is used to implement a common educational practice to evaluate school counselors (Martin & Carey, 2012).

Topdemir (2013) studied the difference in school counselors’ professional practices, attitudes, comfort-level, knowledge, and skills after they were required to implement accountability measures and projects using qualitative survey methods to determine if a difference was made. The study included 44 elementary counselors, 29 middle school counselors, and 27 high school counselors. A pre-survey, training in accountability measures, and a post-survey were used. The study found that with training and proper support for administration, school counselors became effective at conducting an accountability project and more training led to an increase in school counselors’ comfort level in analyzing data (Topdemir, 2013). School counselors analyze data in order to assess the needs of their schools and develop comprehensive school counseling programs that meet the needs of their schools.

Implementing a school counselor evaluation system can be a monumental task but studies have shown that a few key steps can have an impact on the success of evaluation, as well as benefit the school counselor. Topdemir (2012) found that when training was provided to school counselors in the study, counselors increased their knowledge and use of technology, as well as their perceived skills when implementing an accountability measure. School counselor evaluation allows for the counselors to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs as helps to establish the need for a program within schools. The need for school counselors is more evident in states that have statewide evaluation systems providing data on the work of school counselor. In addition, when states recognize exemplary programs within the state and emphasize the importance of the evaluation, tied with a reward, a greater perception that school counseling is a rigorously self-reflective profession is created (Martin and Carey, 2012).
Trevisan (2000) conducted a quantitative study using a casual comparative design on the status of program evaluation expectations in state counselor certification requirements. The study sought to determine the number of states that require program evaluation, the nature and scope of program evaluation, whether or not the requirements match the school counselor program evaluation recommended by CACREP and whether or not the program evaluation requirements are sufficiently defined to assure students receive proper training to develop and maintain comprehensive developmental counseling and guidance programs. When implementing an evaluation system, states often refer to CACREP for evaluation, as well as the ASCA national model for standards, but neither are mandatory points for evaluation. Nineteen states maintain some type of evaluation requirements for certification as a school counselor; Ohio was not one of them (Trevisan, 2000). To implement an evaluation program in states with more local control, state departments of education need to facilitate the start of the program through the power of the local school districts so that their authority is used to implement a common educational practice to evaluate school counselors (Martin and Carey, 2012). Colorado and Washington require exact program standards as defined by CACREP, while Missouri and Wisconsin have program evaluation requirements that are the closest aligned to CACREP. The other 15 states in the study, require an evaluation process that are not sufficiently defined within the certification documentation to assure students are receiving proper training to develop and evaluate CDCG programs (Trevisan, 2000).

The bigger problem is whether or not school counselors are equipped to evaluate their programs without agreed upon state standards for the counselor to use when evaluating their school counseling program. Ohio has standards for administrators and teachers which make the expectations of their evaluation systems more clear. With only 19 states requiring some form of
program evaluation skills and the lack of clarity from 15 of the 19 states in those requirements, the nation may be currently graduating school counselors who lack the ability to evaluate their own programs, as recommended by CACREP (Trevisan, 2000). This establishes a clear problem when Ohio considers adopting an evaluation system before first adopting clear program standards.

**Summary**

Research has already been done in states that have implemented the ASCA national model and/or a state model of their own for school counselors. However, Ohio does not have state standards for school counselors or an evaluation system, as mentioned in the research. Previous research also indicates for an evaluation system to be successful, states should have standards in place first for the school counselor to be evaluated on. This research proposes to determine if the proposed evaluation system from the Ohio School Counseling Association will be an accurate model of the role of the school counselor in Ohio as determined by the opinions of principals, teachers and school counselors in Ohio.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This study proposes to examine the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) designed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) to determine if OSCA has designed a practical tool that reflects the job Ohio school counselors are currently doing as assigned by their districts, or only the job of the school counselors whose districts adhere to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model. The research will provide data that can be used to determine if the proposed system is a non-biased, valid tool that is practical and can be used to hold school counselor accountable to their districts, the state and tax-payers. It will be important to determine how the role of the school counselor is perceived by administrators and school counselors. Data will be provided on the relevance of the current proposed model to the current active role school counselors play in the education system.

Currently, there is pending legislation in Ohio with HB 64-biennial budget (pp. 925-927) that, if passed, will provide evaluation guidelines for school counselors using a system developed by the state board of education that is based on the ASCA national standards. HB 64, Sec. 3319.113 outlines that by May 31, 2016:

1. The state board of education shall develop a standards-based state framework for the evaluation of school counselors that requires school counselors to demonstrate their ability to produce positive student outcomes and is aligned with the standards for school counselors adopted by the State.

2. These standards shall reflect knowledge of academic, personal and social counseling for students and effective principles to implement an effective school counseling program.
3. The standards also shall reflect Ohio-specific knowledge of career counseling for students and education options.

4. The standards shall align with the American School Counselor Association’s professional standards.

This research will be conducted in a timely manner given the impending evaluation implementation, adding to the significance of this study for school counselors and administrators. The evaluation tool to evaluate school counselors in Ohio is still being developed during the time of this study. By examining the relevance of this tool, school administrators, school counselors, the Ohio School Counselor Association and the Ohio Department of Education will have information on the relevance of the proposed tool to the actual job of the school counselors practicing in Ohio.

**Research Design**

This qualitative study will involve a minimum of 24 participants using survey research method with questionnaires. The research is a comparative study employing a survey research design that will compare the proposed school counselor evaluation system with the current reality of school counselor practice. The research was designed to collect data on the applicability of the proposed evaluation system to the role of practicing school counselors in Northwest Ohio. The participants include a minimum of 12 school counselors and 12 principals from rural and urban districts whom were purposively chosen based on personal and/or professional familiarity with the principal investigator and/or the student/secondary investigator. The qualitative survey method of at least 24 responses provides the researcher with a sample of responses from Northwest Ohio. Questionnaires were designed keeping the research questions in mind that the research intends to answer. IRB approval was obtained December 2015. A letter
was emailed to those purposively chosen based on familiarity to the researcher and proximity to Northwest Ohio. The initial email invited them to participate in the study, included consent, and a link to the questionnaire using Google Forms. Study participants recorded their responses using the survey created by the researcher in Google Forms and submitted their responses to the researcher electronically by clicking “submit” when they were finished. The researcher received alerts in Google Mail when a survey had been completed. All survey responses were available to the researcher using Google Sheets. The following data was not available to the researcher using this method: participant name, participant email, or school district of employment. Reminder emails were sent to ensure a collection minimum of 24 responses. The survey was designed to take no longer than one hour per participant. All surveys were completed by February 2016. Validity was assessed using member checking by conducting a sample of responses from administrators and school counselors in Northwest Ohio who participated in the study. Reliability was ensured using cross checking of codes for responses and survey responses entered by respondents, eliminating error that could have occurred through the researcher’s actions in transcription.

**Participants**

School counselors and school principals representing elementary, middle, and high schools in public local school districts in Northwest Ohio will be invited to participate in the study based on their personal and/or professional familiarity with the principal investigator and/or the student/secondary investigator. A convenience sample of 24 will be set as the maximum number of participants included in the study. The participants will include 12 school counselors and 12 principals from rural and urban districts whom will be purposively chosen based on personal and/or professional familiarity with the principal investigator and/or the
student/secondary investigator. The participants are required to be currently practicing administrators and counselors in public elementary, middle and high schools in the state of Ohio. There is an equal distribution of 4 from Elementary Schools, Middle Schools and High Schools that participated in the study. According to Patton (1990), qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives. Given the limitations of this study, a minimum of 24 participants were selected.

**Instrumentation & Data Sources**

The survey questions were used to examine the perceptions of selected school administrators and counselors regarding the implementation and use of the proposed school counselor evaluation system in Ohio. Surveys were conducted with a minimum of 24 school administrators and school counselors. The surveys were conducted in an average of one hour per participant.

The survey instrument was divided into three sections. As indicated in Table 3, the first section consisted of questions pertaining to the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System, as designed by the Ohio School Counselor Association, pre- and post-observation questions and six standards. Section two was designed to ask questions about the current methods in place to evaluate the school counselor. The third section of the instrument focused on questions used to determine the participants’ familiarity and opinions of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System.

Section one addressed the six standards in the proposed evaluation. Standard one had four questions on the topics of guidance curriculum implementation, responsive services, individual planning, and systems supports. Standard two was based on the current method of evaluation and had three questions relating to developing student skills for academic success, career
development and personal and social success. Standard three had four questions and addressed the topics of advocating for students, parent and community communication and outside referrals. Standard four had four questions and addressed data collection and data use in school counseling programs. Standard five included two questions on the topics of school environment and collaboration. Standard six was comprised of three questions on the topics of applying knowledge and experience to counseling programs, program reflections and professional growth.

The purpose of these questions was to determine how closely the current practices of the school counselor ties to the proposed evaluation model.

Table 1

**Survey Instrument: Section 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counselor evaluation standard addressed</th>
<th>Number of questions</th>
<th>Topic(s) addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guidance curriculum implementation, responsive services, individual planning, and system supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Developing student skills for academic success, career development and personal and social success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advocating for students, parent and community communication, and outside referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Data collection and data use in school counseling programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>School environment and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applying knowledge and experience to counseling programs, program reflections and professional growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Standards used to develop questions were derived from the Ohio School Counselor Standards adopted by the Ohio Department of Education November 2015.*
Section two addressed the current methods of evaluation in place for school counselors in their respective districts. There were four questions on the evaluation process, job description, and relationship to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. The purpose of this section was to establish the process to which the school counselor was currently being evaluated in order to have adequate data for comparison to the proposed method of evaluation.

Section three was comprised of four questions. The focus of this section was the familiarity with the proposed school counselor evaluation system. This sections also asked for opinions of the system as well as positives and negatives that they might see based on current systems of evaluation or current practices.

The questions were phrased differently for the school counselor and the administrator. The questions for the school counselor asked, “do you…” while the questions for the administrator explored the questions from the point of view, “does your school counselor…”.

The questions in this study were developed as a result of analysis of previous studies, discussions with current practitioners in the field of education and review of the literature. Each item related to the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System or was relevant to the research questions of this study.

Data Collection Procedures

School counselors and administrators will participate in the study from January 2016 to February 2016. Purposively chosen school counselors and administrators will receive an email that will explain the study and invite them to consent and participate in the research. Each school counselor and principal will give written consent to participate in the study. School counselors and administrators that choose to participate will select the link to the survey located in their email they receive. The link to the survey will take them to a questionnaire created using Google
Forms. The survey is expected to take no longer than one hour to complete. Participants complete the surveys by choosing to submit the answers once they are done. The submitted responses are automatically recorded for the researcher in Google Forms without identifying information such as participant name, email or district in which they are employed. The questionnaires will be collected from at least 24 participants. Reminder emails will be sent as needed to assist the researcher in adhering to the timeline of collecting data. Once the surveys are complete, the responses will be collected for coding and analysis according to the basic tenets of qualitative research as defined by Creswell, et al. (1998). Follow up questions will be used when clarification is needed.

**Research Questions**

1. How do school counselors and principals perceive the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) standards as currently being met in the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor?

2. To what degree does the OSCES reflect the role of the school counselor according to the views of the counselor’s role from principals and school counselors?

3. What do principals and counselors view as the role of the school counselor?

4. How does the role of the school counselor as viewed by the principals and counselors relate to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (on which the OSCES standards are based)?

5. Does the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) evaluation system accurately evaluate all school counselors or just those that are able to adhere to the ASCA national model?
Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted according to the basic tenets of qualitative research as defined by Creswell, et al. (1998). Questionnaire responses will be collected and analyzed. Multi-phased readings will then be conducted on the responses for the purpose of thematic analysis. A first reading will be conducted to get an overview of the questionnaire responses. Second and subsequent readings will then be conducted for the purpose of analyzing the text for themes. This process will be facilitated by coding phrases according to emerging themes. Applying the constant-comparative methodology of Glaser and Strauss (1967), similarly coded language units will then be compared and grouped together in subsequent readings with individual units and clusters of units continually being reassessed for fit with the emerging coding structure which itself will be open to modification throughout the process. Descriptive statistics will also be used to showcase themes that emerge from participant responses.

Assumptions

The researcher can make many assumptions in this study on survey implementation, participants and results. The survey is expected to take up to one hour. Within that one hour, participants may become bored or distracted or even be disinterested in the topic. This could lead to a lack of quality responses from the survey participants.

The researcher is making the assumption that participants will be honest in their responses to the survey questions. Participant anonymity will be protected in this study, leading them to feel safe to give honest answers to the researcher’s questions. The participants are not required to take part in the study. Participants are volunteers for the study and are not receiving any form of compensation that could also lead to honest responses to the interview questions.
The researcher is also making the assumption that the participants will have the required information and be able to answer the questions that are being asked in the survey. It is possible that some school counselors or administrators may not be aware of some of the information that is being sought in the interview questions. The researcher is making the assumption that all participants will have this ability.
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis for this study. In this section, principal and school counselor views are presented on the applicability of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System to the current role of Ohio School Counselors. The perspectives of the participants of this study are presented - first those of the school counselors followed by those of principals for each of the main themes. In addition, actual comments of participants are interspersed throughout the chapter as representation of feedback gained from participants. Data analysis was conducted according to the basic tenets of qualitative research as defined by Creswell, et al. (1998). Multi-phased readings were conducted on the interview transcripts for the purpose of thematic analysis. Themes were generated from repeated reading through analysis and meaning units were identified and grouped together to form major themes as they emerged from the narrative data. These are organized by research question. Chapter four begins with a description of the demographic characteristics of the participants in this. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the research questions that were explored in this study as well as the subsequent findings in the research.

Characteristics of the Sample

An initial email, including an invitation to participate in the study and a link to the questionnaire, was sent to 30 administrators and school counselors. A total of 28 administrators and school counselors began the questionnaire, 3 counselors reported starting the questionnaire and not having time to complete it. 25 responses (89% of those who began the survey), 13 administrators and 12 school counselors, were analyzed in this study, accounting for a response rate of 83.3% for those who were invited to participate.
Age, gender and racial/ethnic background. Of the 28 respondents, 15 were female (53.6%) and 13 were male (46.4%). Breaking it down into school counselor respondents, 9 were female (75%) and 3 were male (25%). Of the administrators that responded, 6 were female (46.2%) and 7 were male (53.8%). The entire group of respondents classified themselves as Caucasian (100%). The age of respondents ranged from 27 to 64 years old with the average age of 41.8 years old. The average age of the school counselor respondents was 41 years old, while the average age of school administrator respondents in this study was 42.7 years old.

Grade level. The sample consisted of 12 school counselors and 13 administrators. Of the school counselors, 4 school counselors (33.33%), served in a K-4 grade level building, 4 school counselors (33.33%), served in a 5-8 grade level building, 4 school counselors (33.33%), served in a 9-12 grade level building. Of the 13 administrators that responded to the survey, 4 administrators (30.8%), reported working in K-4 grade level buildings, 4 administrators (30.8%), reported working in 5-8 grade level buildings and 5 administrators (38.4%) reported working in 9-12 grade level buildings.

Student responsibility. The respondents reported an average of 350.2 students assigned to the responsibility of the school counselor. Student responsibility for the school counselor ranged from 200 to 600. School counselor reported an average of 345.5 students assigned as their responsibility. School counselors in K-4 grade levels reported an average of 286.5 students. School counselors in grade levels 5-8 reported an average of 323.5 students assigned, while school counselors in grade levels 9-12 reported an average student responsibility of 426.5. Administrators in grade levels K-4 reported their school counselors had an average of 287.5 students assigned to their responsibility. Administrators in grade levels 5-8 stated that the average students assigned to their school counselors was 329.5. High school administrators,
those in grades 9-12, reported that the average number of students assigned to their school counselors was 428.

**Research Question 1**

Research question 1 explored how school counselors and administrators perceived the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) standards as currently being met in the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions created from the 6 standards for Ohio School Counselors. Themes emerged from the data as to whether or not school counselors were currently meeting the roles and responsibilities of the newly adopted standards that the evaluation system would be using to evaluate the performance level Ohio school counselors, once the evaluation is in place.

**Standard 1: Comprehensive school counseling program and plan.** Administrators and school counselors were asked if they felt there was an environment created that supported all students. Twenty-one out of 25 (84%) respondents felt as though they did create an environment that supported all students. That question was followed by a request for a response of how they did so. Of the 21 respondents, only 7 (33.3%) administrators and school counselors felt that the school counselors supported all students through the implementation a comprehensive school counseling program.

**Standard 2: Direct services for academic, career and social/emotional development.** School counselors are expected to develop a curriculum, offer individual student planning and deliver responsive services in order to assist students in developing and applying knowledge, skills and mindsets for academic, career and social/emotional development to meet the requirements for Standard 2. When administrators and school counselors were asked about guidance curriculum, only 9 out of 25 (36%) reported that the school counselor implements
guidance curriculum. Of the 9 that reported using curriculum, 8 (88.9%) were elementary administrators or school counselors. One elementary school counselor (identified as C3) explained her curriculum implementation by saying, “We have implemented a uniform behavioral management system using our districts behavior matrix of PAWS. I have developed weekly videos to display wrong and the correct behavior in each of our school areas and I implement weekly counseling lessons using the program, Second Step.” Participants were asked in what ways responsive services were implemented to meet the needs of the students, 14 of the 25 respondents stated that this is done through the use of individual and group counseling to meet student needs. While most respondents hinted at the use of individual and group counseling, at least one other respondent hinted at another sentiment. An administrator response (A13) stated, “2 of the 3 school counselors in the building do not implement responsive services, they simply pass this off to the school social workers.” While this is not representative of the entire group of respondents, this was an important response to note when discussing and researching the roles of school counselors.

Common themes emerged in both the administrator responses and the school counselor responses when asked in what ways the school counselor assists students in skills development for academic success. Ten out of 25 (40%) responded that the school counselor uses Intervention Assistance Team (IAT), while 19 out of 25 (76%) stated that the school counselor develops individual plans for the students to help them with academic success. Career exploration was a common theme with 15 out of 25 respondents saying that the school counselor uses Career Connections and Ohio Means Jobs Online Backpack system to help students explore career development. Seven out of 9 (77.8%) of the high school administrators and counselors stated that the counselor does career exploration with individual meetings with students to discuss course
scheduling and/or college exploration. When asked how the school counselor helps students develop skills for personal and social needs, a strong majority, 23 out of 25 (92%), said it was through the use of individual counseling sessions. Group counseling also emerged as a theme in 17 out of 25 (68%) respondents. An elementary administrator (A3), replied, “I have seen my counselor do this in both personal and group counseling.”

**Standard 3: Indirect services: Partnerships and referrals.** Standard 3 explores the ways that school counselors collaborate and consult with school personnel, parents/guardians, community partners and agencies/organizations to coordinate support for all students. The general theme of collaboration with colleagues was found in 22 out of 25 (88%) of school counselors. One school counselor (C1) stated, “I collaborate with other school counselors and social workers on interventions for particular students, if the ones in place are not being successful. Another area of collaboration is with the school nurse when a situation seems to affect both physically and emotionally.” An administrator (A4) explained, “Our counselor often collaborates with the school psychologist for individual goal setting and problem solving. The counselor also collaborates to determine curriculum needs, such as with a teacher to determine an anti-bullying lesson.” When making referrals or collaborating with outside agencies, 25 out of 25 (100%) responded that referrals are made. From that, the theme emerged to whom the referrals were made: 25 out of 25 (100%) mental health agencies, 14 out of 25 (56%) Child Protective Services, and 11 out of 25 (44%) community programs.

**Standard 4: Evaluation and data.** Standard 4 expects school counselors to collaboratively engage in a cycle of continuous improvement using data to identify needs, plan and implement programs, evaluate impact and adjust, accordingly. Twelve out of 25 (48%) stated that school counselors gather data to plan for their school counseling program. Twelve out
of 12 (100%) school counselors share the data they collect with those that they consider to be the stakeholders (Figure 1). One school counselor (C12) responded, “I haven’t gathered data, no time.”

Figure 1.

*Administrators and school counselors views of the stakeholders of the school.*

**Standard 5: Leadership and advocacy.** Standard 5 analyzes the ways in which school counselors lead school efforts and advocate for policies and practices that support an equitable, safe, inclusive and positive learning environment for all students. The theme that emerged was that administrators and school counselors felt that the school counselor served as an advocate with teachers and parents. Twenty-five out of 25 (100%) stated that school counselors were advocates for the students when dealing with situations with teachers and parents. Twelve out of 25 (48%) respondents stated that the school counselor was a student advocate with the courts or other outside agencies. A response from one of the school counselors (C3) in the study was, “I advocate for students with any staff member or parent that is struggling with a student to help everyone see both sides of the coin and to develop a solution. We use meeting mechanics during
meeting to keep focus on the solutions and not admiring the problem. I work with outside mental
health agencies and Child Protective Services when needed. On the many committees that I
serve, the purpose is to advocate for students.”

**Standard 6: Professional responsibility, knowledge and growth.** Standard 6 asks that
school counselors adhere to the ethical standards of the profession, engage in ongoing
professional learning, and refine their work through reflection. Sixteen out of 25 (64%)
respondents reported that the school counselor took time to reflect and analyze their counseling.
Those that did not reflect on their counseling stated that the counselor did not have time in their
day to do so. One school counselor (C12) stated, “I do not have time in my day before I am on to
the next situation that I have to deal with.” Twelve out of 25 (48%) stated that school counselors
use previous school counseling experiences when dealing with situations. A school administrator
(A12) said, “My school counselor has over 20 years of experience as a school counselor and 32
years of experience in education. She sometimes seems as though she is on autopilot, but I
remind myself it is because she has been doing this for so long that A: nothing surprises her
anymore so she can remain calm and know how to attack almost any situation and B: she is an
expert at what she does and because of her experience, she executes all of her tasks
wonderfully.” While most of the responses dealt with applying previous knowledge gained into
current counseling roles, at least one respondent hinted at another sentiment. Administrator
(A13) commented, “Their conversation is generally negative and unwilling to change and apply
new knowledge.” While this thought is not representative of the trends that emerged in this
study, it is important to note and worthy of possible exploration in a future study. In regards to
professional growth, 25 out of 25 (100%) of the respondents stated that the school counselor
participates in activities that further professional growth. Ten out of 25 (40%) specifically
responded to being permitted to attend the All Ohio School Counselor Conference as part of the school counselors professional development.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 explored the views of the role of the school counselor according to administrators and school counselors. This open-ended question fielded a large number of different responses. The responses were coded for theme. This data is best presented separately from the administrator view and the school counselor view. When the school counselors were asked what they saw as their role, 10 common responses from 12 school counselors emerged. 12 out of 12 school counselors (100%) reported viewing the following as their role: individual and group counseling, bullying prevention, keeping and tracking data, and community linkage. The second greatest themes that emerged when school counselors were asked what they viewed as their role, with 11 out of 12 counselors (91.7%) agreeing were serving as a member of positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) and career education. Nine out of 12 counselors (75%) felt that their roles were to serve as an advocate for students with teachers, parents, and staff and also to provide education for prevention. The last of the themes was classroom lessons, with 7 out of 12 counselors (58.3%) viewing the classroom lessons as their role as a school counselor.

The administrator viewpoints were more distributed amongst responses with only one theme for 100% of administrators all stating the same responsibility for the school counselor. Thirteen out of 13 administrators (100%) view the school counselor role to provide individual and/or group counseling to students. The second major theme from 9 out of 13 (69.2%) administrator responses was agency linkage and support as the role of the school counselor. The third theme that emerged from 6 of 13 administrator respondents (46.2%) was the view that the role of the school counselor was to serve as the test coordinator as well as the staff support with
helping to manage the staff. The last of the themes from 5 out of 13 (38.5%) administrators was the school counselor role of being a support to staff.

Research Questions 3

Research question 3 explored to what degree the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) reflects the role of the school counselor according to the views of administrators and school counselors. A comparison was done using the questionnaire responses to the School Counselor Performance Evaluation Rubric of the proposed OSCES. The evaluation system is comprised of six standards that the Ohio Department of Education has adopted for Ohio school counselors. Similar themes to research question one emerged from the data analysis.

Standard 1: Comprehensive school counseling program. Under this standard, the evaluator would be examining whether or not the school counselor collaboratively plans, implements, evaluates, and advocates for a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program which includes four components: guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning, and system support. The evaluator would be looking for implementation of guidance curriculum; the use of responsive services and individual planning; the use of data to evaluate their counseling program; collaboration with colleagues; involvement of stakeholders; and counselor involvement with committees. Sixteen out of 25 respondents (64%) reported that the counselor did not use guidance curriculum. Responsive services had a slightly better rate with only 11 out of 25 (44%) reporting the lack of use of responsive services. Six out of 12 (50%) counselors reported the use of individual planning with students for reasons such as writing social and/or behavior or academic plans for students. Three out of 4 (75%) high school counselors used individual planning to track academic progress for graduation. Noteworthy, 9
out of 25 school counselor and administrator respondents (36%) reported not allowing the school counselor time in their day for individual planning.

Data collection is an important part of the proposed OSCES, as well as the ASCA National Model. However, 13 out of 25 participants (52%) reported that data collection for the school counseling program was not done within their school. Of the 13 that reported data collection, 13 (100%) reported involving and sharing data with stakeholders. Only 3 out of the 25 study participants (12%) reported that the school counselor did not collaborate with colleagues. When the school counselors were asked about their roles, 12 out of 12 counselors (100%) reported having committee involvement. Some examples of committee involvement included but were not limited to positive behavior intervention support (PBIS), intervention assistance team (IAT), building leadership team (BLT) and early warning indicator system (EWIS).

**Standard 2: Direct services.** This standard required the evaluator to examine whether or not the school counselor provides developmentally appropriate guidance and counseling activities to proactively assist all students to develop and apply skills for maximum academic, career, and personal/social growth during the school year. The evidence that the evaluator could use for this standard is collaboration; assistance with the development of career, personal or social goals; and once again, the use of individual planning time and data collection. A strong number of participants, 22 out of 25 (88%) reported having the ability to collaborate.

Collaboration is an important component in the evaluation process. Another high number of respondents, 24 out of 25 (96%), reported assisting students with career, personal and/or social skills development. It is important to note, although it is not indicative of the entire group, administrator (A13) commented, “they do not assist students in developing skills for personal
and social needs or career development.” Only 3 out of 25 (12%) reported that their school counselor did not or was not able to collaborate. Data collection occurrence was nearly evenly split with 13 out of 25 (52%) collecting data and 12 out of 25 (48%), not collecting data for the school counseling program. As far as individual planning was reported, 25 out of 25 (100%) reported developing plans for individual students, but also important to note was that only 16 out of 25 (64%) have time set aside in their day to conduct individual planning.

**Standard 3: Indirect services.** The rubric for standard 3, indirect services, would require the evaluator to be looking to see if the school counselor advocates for students and provides professional expertise to help school personnel, parents and/or guardians, and community members to increase the effectiveness of student success, as well as the use of consultation and coordination to make referrals to other resources, as appropriate. The key components that would provide evidence for this standard would be communication and referrals to agencies. Twenty five out of 25 study participants (100%) responded that school counselors communicate with parents and/or guardians. Only 24 out of 25 (96%) commented that counselors take an active role in communicating with the community. One administrator (A13), when asked what methods the school counselor used to communicate with the community, responded, “None”. Although this response was not reflective of the entire group of respondents, when considering the need for communication in a successful evaluation of the school counselor, it was worth noting. The most common venue of communication, according to 20 out of 25 participants (80%) was technology, a theme that emerged from multiple responses that included responses such as email, phone, social media, and school website. Referrals to agencies are used by school counselors to assist students and their parents. Of the participants in this study, 25 out of 25 (100%) reported that the
school counselor made referrals to agencies. Coding was used to create the agency grouping with responses such as children protective services and mental health counseling.

**Standard 4: Evaluation and data.** Standard four of the rubric evaluates the how the school counselor creates program assessments and evaluations to review and adjust current program strategies and activities, collect data to share with stakeholders, and inform stakeholders of future program planning and goals. One other key component of standard four is also whether or not the school counselor actively participates in professional development. Participants in the study were asked if they collected data to plan for the school counseling program, and if so, is the data was shared with stakeholders. The focus of the evaluation rubric is heavy on data collection, bringing to light again that only 12 out of 25 participants (48%) reported collecting data for the counseling program. Of those 12 respondents that collect data, all 12 (100%) stated that collected data is shared with those whom they consider to be the stakeholders. Every study participant, 25 out of 25 (100%), reported that the school counselor was able to participate in professional development. One other requirement in the rubric involved developing a way to monitor and collect academic, attendance, and behavioral data to provide interventions for students. Ten out of the 25 study participants (40%) reported using an Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) to monitor attendance, academics and behavior to assign proper interventions for the students.

**Standard 5: Leadership and advocacy.** Standard 5 of the rubric is looking for leadership and advocacy from the school counselor. The evaluator would be looking for evidence that the school counselor is a committed professional who provides leadership, advocates for students, and collaborates with school personnel and parents and guardians to create a positive learning environment for all students. The rubric suggests that the school counselor would need
to provide evidence of data collection, advocacy, collaboration and creation of an environment that supports all students. Of the participants in the study, more than half, 13 out of 25 (52%), stated that the school counselor did not collect data at this time. However, 9 out of 13 of those that did not collect data (69.2%), said that if they did, they would use it to implement programs and activities. All participants in this study responded that every counselor was a student advocate, when helping students deal with issues between teachers and parents and guardians. Almost half, 12 out of 25 of participants (48%), stated that the school counselor serves as a student advocate with courts and other agencies. Collaboration with parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, and agencies is an expectation for school counselors with the proposed evaluation. Of the 25 participants in the study, only 3 (12%) stated that the school counselor did not show evidence of collaboration. A positive environment that supports all students is a concept from the ASCA National Model. Four out of 25 counselors (16%) were not able to create an environment within the school that supported all students. One counselor respondent (C9) stated, “I personally think that I do create a very welcoming environment, however, due to the nature of the job at my school, my work is valued by my administration mostly by me doing data entry and being stuck behind a computer, pushing paper from one side of my desk to the other. My students are at a huge disadvantage not having two counselor or another support staff member to free up one counselor to create and administer a curriculum.”

**Standard 6: Professional responsibility and growth.** Standard 6 includes the expectation that school counselors engage in self-reflection, take responsibility for improving skills and knowledge through professional development, practice ethical principles, and promote the school counseling profession. The rubric requires the evaluator to look for evidence that the school counselor is taking time to reflect on his or her counseling and is participating in
professional development. More than half of the study participants, 17 out of 25 (68%), reported that the school counselor does take time to reflect on his or her counseling. One of the counselor participants (C4) stated, “I don’t have time in my day to do this, so usually I do this in the evenings and during my time off in the summer to try to ensure I am doing the best job that I can as the school counselor.” A second response from a counselor (C6) stated that he or she did not take time to reflect and stated the reason for not doing so was, “I don’t have time in my day to do so.”

**Research Question 4**

Research question 4 explored how the currently assigned role of the school counselor as currently assigned relates to the ASCA National Model on which the OSCES is based. The introduction section, page xii of the *ASCA National Model* (2012) stated that to achieve maximum program effectiveness, the American School Counselor Association recommended a school counselor to student ratio of 1:250 (ASCA, 2012). The 4 elementary counselors (grades K-4) reported having a student assigned load of 200, 225, 352 and 369. This gave a mean of 286.5 assigned students to an elementary school counselor. There were 4 elementary administrators (grades K-4) that participated in the study and reported a student assigned load to the counselor of 200, 230, 350 and 370, with a mean of 287.5. There were 4 middle school counselors (grades 5-8) and 4 middle school administrators (grades 5-8) that took part in this study. The middle school counselors reported a student assigned load of 200, 298, 364 and 432 with a mean assigned load of 323.5. The middle school administrators reported student loads of 213, 402, 402 and 301 with a mean of 329.5. There were 4 high school counselors (grades 9-12) and 5 high school administrators (grades 9-12) in the study. The high school counselors reported student assigned loads of 349, 400, 409 and 548 with a mean of 426.5. The high school
administrators reported counselor assigned student loads of 340, 350, 400, 450 and 600 with a mean of 428 students. Table 2 represents the data reported by the school counselors and administrators for student assigned loads with the difference from the ASCA recommended 1:250 ratio of counselor to student.
Table 2

Reported assigned student load with difference from the ASCA recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study participant</th>
<th>Study assigned code</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Number of students assigned</th>
<th>Difference from ASCA recommended 1:250</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>+119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>+102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C5</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>+182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C6</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>+48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C8</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>+114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C9</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>+150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C10</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>+99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C11</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>+298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>C12</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>+159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>+120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>+100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>+152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>+152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>+51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>+350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>+150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>+100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A12</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>+200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>A13</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>+90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On page 45 of the *ASCA National Model* (2012), a list of *Use of Time: Appropriate and Inappropriate School Counseling Activities* is provided. The lists were adapted from Campbell and Dahir (1997) *Sharing the vision: The ASCA national standards for school counseling programs*. School counselor questionnaire responses of what their assigned roles were within their schools, were compared to the list of appropriate and inappropriate activities to examine how many counselors performed appropriate and inappropriate activities and which ones they performed. Data was applied when an activity fell into those specifically listed under appropriate and inappropriate activities. The category of appropriate activities had far less responses than the inappropriate category. Twelve school counselors were asked what their assigned roles were in their building. From those responses, 12 out of 12 school counselors (100%) stated that they were able to meet two of the appropriate activities for school counselors, namely providing individual and small group counseling services to students and advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards. Table 3 presents a summary of the responses to appropriate activities.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing individual and small-group counseling services to students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked what their assigned roles were within the school, the counselor responses could be categorized into 7 out of the list of 14 inappropriate activities. Eight of the 12 school counselors (66.7%) reported coordination paperwork and data entry for all new students. Examples of responses included in this inappropriate activity were scheduling and enrollment. Half of the school counselors, 6 out of 12 (50%), reported teaching or covering classes when teachers were absent. A large number of school counselors, 9 out of 12 (75%), reported performing disciplinary actions or assigning disciplinary consequences such as in-school intervention program coverage and academic detention. An even greater number of school counselors responded as coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs with 10 out of 12 school counselors (83.3%) performing those tasks. One out of 12 school counselors (8.3%) reported being required to serve as the person who keeps clerical records and performs data entry for the school. Six out of 12 school counselors (50%) stated that their role or responsibility included supervising common areas such as the playground or cafeteria. Table 4 represents the responses of school counselors that were considered inappropriate activities.
Table 4

_Inappropriate School Counseling Activity Responses from School Counselors_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching classes when teachers are absent.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising classrooms or common areas.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping clerical records.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as a data entry clerk.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Research Question 5**

Research question 5 explored whether or not the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) accurately evaluates all school counselors or just those that are able to adhere to the ASCA national model. Responses to the survey of principal and counselor views, assigned student ratio, and counselor assigned roles were compared to the ASCA National Model, as well as the OSCES rubric, to help determine if the counselors from this study would be accurately evaluated, if they did not adhere to the ASCA National Model.
School counselors and administrators were asked about the current evaluation process in place for school counselors. Out of the 25 total school counselors and administrators in the study, 14 (56%) reported that there currently was no system in place within their schools to evaluate school counselors. The 11 out of 25 respondents (44%) that did have an evaluation for school counselors were asked if the current evaluation related to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). Nine out of 11 administrators and school counselors (81.8%) stated that the current evaluation did not relate to OTES, at all. Evaluations are often based on job descriptions. When surveyed, 17 out of 25 administrators and school counselors (68%) stated that the school counselor had a job description. Job descriptions dictate the activities that are expected.

Administrators and school counselors were then asked if they believed that the OSCES would work to properly evaluate the school counselors on the roles that they currently perform in their buildings. Fourteen out of 25 administrators and school counselors (56%) believed that the OSCES would not work to properly evaluate school counselors in their current roles in their schools. An administrator (A9) stated the following reason as for his or her belief that the OSCES would not work for the counselors in his or her building: “The various duties related to Career Tech are not evaluated under the current description of OSCES.”

Administrators and school counselors were asked what they believed would be the positives and negatives of the creation of a state evaluation system for school counselors. Twelve out of 25 study participants (48%) believed that the creation of a state evaluation system for counselors would lead to reform for school counseling in Ohio. Another 12 out of 25 study participants (48%) viewed the creation of an evaluation system for school counselors as a way to increase accountability for school counselors in Ohio. Only 1 participant (4%) saw the creation of the evaluation system as a positive way to advocate for the importance of school counselors.
The negatives that were reported with the creation of a state evaluation system were time and current roles assigned. Eleven out of 25 participants (44%) reported that they believed the time to do the evaluation and its required steps would be an issue. Thirteen out of 25 participants (52%) saw the current roles or duties assigned to the school counselor as an issue in the creation of a statewide evaluation system. An administrator (A13) responded by saying, “The counseling positions are more varied across the state than teaching positions are. It will be harder to create a statewide assessment tool.” A second administrator (A6) commented, “Counselors within our own district do so many different jobs/requirements that I would have to think that this in itself shows the discrepancy in the use of school counselors and could create a problem when evaluating them all the same way.”

When looking at whether or not school counselors adhere to the ASCA National Model and therefore stand an equitable chance at being fairly evaluated, it is important to make note of the recommended counselor to student ratio of 1:250 and where the counselors in this study would fall with that ratio. In this study, 19 of the 25 participants (76%) reported having a counselor to student ration above 1:250. In fact, the reported mean counselor to student ratio was 1:350.2. Thus the average ratio was 100.2 over the recommended value.

Another comparison to school counselor roles in this study with the ASCA National Model involves ASCA’s appropriate and inappropriate tasks for school counselors. Counselors performing inappropriate tasks would not be adhering with the ASCA National Model, and therefore, a system based on the model would not fairly evaluate those counselors. From the study, when counselors were asked what their current role in the schools was, only 2 activities fell into the appropriate category, and 7 of the activities fell under the inappropriate tasks performed by school counselors.
A comparison to the responses from the study was done with the proposed OSCES rubric. Due to the lack of subjectivity from the responses, only the columns of “ineffective” and “accomplished” were used, based on the response of either the school counselor as completing the task or not completing the task. These results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

*Ohio School Counselor Evaluation Rubric: Standards 1-6, ratings of Ineffective or Accomplished*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing guidance curriculum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 (56%)</td>
<td>9 (36%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9 (36%)</td>
<td>14 (56%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Planning</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td>22 (88%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing data with stakeholders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with career, personal and social needs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>24 (96%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with parents/guardians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>24 (96%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to other sources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>4, 6</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates an environment that supports all students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
<td>21 (84%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates for students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects on counseling</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From this data, it is evident that school counselors in this study would be rated accomplished in all categories except for “implementing a guidance curriculum” in standard 1 of the rubric and “sharing data with stakeholders”, also from standard 1 of the rubric.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the data analysis for the study of the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System. Administrator and school counselor views were presented on the applicability of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System to the current role of twelve northwest Ohio school counselors. The perspectives of the participants of this study indicated that the school counselors were assigned many tasks that were not included in the ASCA National Model or considered an appropriate task from ASCA. However, when the data was compared to the rubric that would be used for the proposed evaluation system, over half of the school counselors in this study would have had the opportunity to receive an accomplished rating in 13 out of the 15 categories (86.7%) in the rubric.
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter five presents a review and summary of this study of the administrator and school counselor views on the applicability of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System to the current role of Ohio school counselors. The review of the study and the current research related to school counselor evaluation systems will be presented first. The results and subsequent discussions will follow, in order of research questions. The chapter will conclude with implications and recommendations for subsequent leadership implementation and future research opportunities.

Review of the Study

In 2013, the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) created the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES). The evaluation system was created after systems for superintendents, principals and teachers were already created. The 2013-2014 school year marked the first year that superintendents, principals and teachers were evaluated with their new systems. OSCA created a system that would evaluate school counselors on the job they were doing with a tool that was similar to those already created for superintendents, principals and teachers. OSCA (2013) acknowledged the guidance and structure of the ASCA National Model for making the evaluation tool possible.

In November of 2015, the Ohio Department of Education released an adopted set of standards for school counselors. Those standards aligned with the proposed school counselor evaluation system. Starting at the beginning of 2016, the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System pilot was conducted with participating test groups of school counselors and evaluators. Beginning in the fall of 2016, school counselors will be evaluated on their performances for the
first time, using a formal system for evaluating all school counselors in Ohio. School districts must have an adopted language for the evaluation to take place by September of 2016.

The professional literature on school counselor evaluation is limited, especially when discussing evaluation of Ohio school counselors, as this is a new endeavor. The foundations for this study were established by examining available literature and current studies on school counselor evaluation and standards, as well as studies involving the ASCA National Model. A review of the literature revealed that the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) set forth requirements for teachers to meet state-determined high, objective, uniform state standards of evaluation. This led to subsequent years of movement towards accountability measures. A push for accountability has led to the development of evaluation systems for school personnel in Ohio. School counselors were one group of school personnel had not yet been evaluated on a uniform system in Ohio. The OS CA created an evaluation tool that used the ASCA National Model to guide its development. The ASCA National Model was created as a framework for school counselors to use when developing their own school counseling programs. Teachers who had knowledge of the ASCA National Model agreed with the ASCA recommendations for appropriate responsibilities for school counselors but also responded that counselors rarely, or never, are able to do their appropriate responsibilities, as outlined by ASCA due to other tasks assigned to them (Reiner, et al, 2009). With counselor responsibilities varying from school to school, the research sought to find whether or not a uniform system, based on standards that research has shown, many school counselors cannot adhere to, would adequately evaluate school counselors in Ohio.

An email was sent to 30 school counselors and administrators with an invitation to participate in the study. Participants were asked 44 questions, 33 of which were open-ended questions on the role of the school counselor and school counselor evaluation. A total of 12
school counselors and 13 school administrators completed the questionnaire. Demographic information was collected, including age, gender, assigned grade level, assigned number of students, and race for the purpose of comparing participant responses. Multi-phased readings were conducted on the questionnaire responses for the purpose of thematic analysis. Themes were generated from repeated reading through analysis, and meaning units were identified and grouped together to form major themes, as they emerged from the narrative data.

**Discussion**

The discussion of results will be presented in order of research questions. There are subsections under the research questions when standards of the evaluation tool were used to group responses. The results will be discussed and connections between the results and the ASCA National Model, the six adopted standards for school counselors in Ohio, and the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES).

**Research question 1.** Research question 1 explored the perceptions of school counselors and administrators regarding how the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) standards are currently being met in the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor. Standard 1 involves the existence of a comprehensive school counseling program and plan. Standard 2 involves direct services for academic, career and social/emotional development. Standard 3 involves indirect services with the use of partnerships and referrals. Standard 4 involves the use of program evaluation and data. Standard 5 involves the use of leadership and advocacy by the school counselor. Standard 6 creates the expectation that school counselors should show professional responsibility, knowledge and growth. The standards are new to Ohio school counselors. Lapan et al. (1997) found, when studying program standard implementation in Missouri, schools that had more fully implemented the state guidance program standards
reported having students with higher grades. Those results are not yet evident in Ohio with the recent implementation of standards that are not required to be implemented.

**Standard 1: Comprehensive school counseling program and plan.** The ASCA National Model is a framework for developing comprehensive school counseling programs. Twenty-one administrators and school counselors responded to a question about whether or not they felt there was an environment created that supported all students. Those same 21 respondents were then asked how this was done. Only 7 (33.3%) administrators and school counselors felt that the school counselors supported all students through the implementation a comprehensive school counseling program. 66.7% of respondents in the study felt that the school counselor did not implement a comprehensive school counseling program. Not establishing a comprehensive school counseling program could have an adverse effect on the students and school climate. When studying guidance program implementation in Missouri, Lapan et al. (1997) found, students felt that they were more prepared for their future and the overall school climate was better when they attended a school with a fully implemented standards based guidance program.

**Standard 2: Direct services for academic, career and social/emotional development.** To meet the requirements of Standard 2, school counselors are expected to develop a curriculum, offer individual student planning, and deliver responsive services in order to assist students in developing and applying knowledge, skills and mindsets for academic, career and social/emotional development. Of all of the responses given for meeting student’s needs with responsive services, the use of individual and group counseling was the most common theme with 14 of the 25 respondents (56%) stating that individual counseling is used to meet student needs. Seventeen out of 25 (68%) respondents identified the use of group counseling for personal and social needs. Academic, career and social/emotional needs are often individualized;
therefore, counseling individually for this need is logical. Guidance curriculum was discussed in Standard 1 where it was noted that only 9 out of 25 respondents reported having or using a guidance curriculum. Of the 9 that reported using curriculum, 8 (88.9%) were elementary administrators or school counselors. One reason for this low number of comprehensive counseling programs with guidance curriculum could be due to the difference of assigned tasks for elementary, middle and high school counselors. When studying school counselor perceptions of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, Sink et al. (2001) found that high school counselors had a higher level of task concerns when compared to the elementary counselors and attributed this higher level of task concern to high school counselors being assigned more clerical aspects of work.

Common themes emerged in both the administrator responses and the school counselor responses when asked in what ways the school counselor assist students in skill development for academic success. Ten out of 25 (40%) responded that the school counselor uses Intervention Assistance Team (IAT), while 19 out of 25 (76%) stated that the school counselor develops individual plans for the students to help them with academic success. Intervention Assistance Team is used to develop individual student plans for academic and behavioral success. This could allow the data to be combined, giving a greater use of individual planning for student success. The important factor is that the majority of school counselors are using individual planning to meet student needs as this is a requirement for evaluation.

Career exploration was also a common theme. Fifteen out of 25 respondents said that the school counselor used the Career Connections and Ohio Means Jobs Online Backpack system to help students explore career development. The large numbers being reported could be due to the legislation that was past requiring all schools to implement Career Connections. The state did not
specify the requirement as one that needed to be carried out by the school counselor; therefore, the numbers reported may be a reflection of the school counselors who are not responsible for Career Connections implementation in their schools. More high school counselors and administrators reported involvement with career exploration than any other group with 7 out of 9 (77.8%) of the high school administrators and counselors stating that the counselor does career exploration during individual meetings with students that involve course scheduling and/or college exploration. This highlights the assigned differences and expectations of elementary, middle and high school counselors. While elementary counselors may be assisting students with career exploration and encouraging ideas of what students may want to be when they grow up, the elementary counselor is not faced with the requirements of assisting students with college major choices and immediate career field exploration in the way the high school counselor is.

Standard 3: Indirect services: Partnerships and referrals. Standard 3 involved collaboration and consultation of school counselors with school personnel, parents and/or guardians, community partners, and agencies and/or organizations to coordinate support for all students. The general theme of collaboration with colleagues was noted in 22 out of 25 (88%) respondents. A role of the school counselor is to collaborate with others for the needs of their students. An explanation for the three counselors that did not collaborate may be that they did not have had other colleagues to collaborate with in the same way that the others did. They may work for districts in which they are the only school counselor.

Twenty five out of 25 (100%) responded that referrals were made to outside agencies for collaboration and consultation. From that, the theme emerged to whom the referrals were made. Twenty five out of 25 (100%) made referrals to mental health agencies; 14 out of 25 (56%) to Child Protective Services; and 11 out of 25 (44%) to community programs. School counselors
often look to outside agencies to provide additional mental health support when needed for students, as well as when child protective services must be involved.

**Standard 4: Evaluation and data.** The new standards in Ohio suggest that school counselors should collaboratively engage in a cycle of continuous improvement using data to identify needs, plan and implement programs, evaluate impact, and adjust accordingly. At the time of this study, of those that participated, 12 out of 25 (48%) stated that the school counselor gathered data to plan for their school counseling program. Of those, 12 out of 12 (100%) shared the data they collect with those that they considered to be the stakeholders. While 100% of the school counselors shared their data with those they believed to be stakeholders, 13 out of 25 did not collect data for their program. Data collection plays an important role not just in the Standards for Ohio School Counselors but also in the rubric of the proposed school counselor evaluation. School counselors who do not collect data will not perform well on that standard of the evaluation.

**Standard 5: Leadership and advocacy.** Standard 5 suggests that school counselors lead school efforts and advocate for policies and practices that support an equitable, safe, inclusive and positive learning environment for all students. It is important for the school counselor to advocate on behalf of the students when dealing with other adults. The theme that emerged from 25 out of 25 respondents was that school counselors served as student advocates with teachers and parents. School counselors are the voices for the students, when students cannot serve as their own. Sometimes the school counselor has to work with advocating for students with agencies or groups outside of the school to meet the needs of the students. Just under half of the study participates, 12 out of 25 (48%), stated that the school counselor was a student advocate with the courts or other outside agencies. The results show the role that school counselors play in
representing their students and leading and advocating for them is needed. This is an important component in the Ohio standards for school counselors as well as the OSCES. The counselors in this study are meeting the standard for leadership and advocacy.

**Standard 6: Professional responsibility, knowledge and growth.** Standard 6 involves recommendations for school counselors to engage in ongoing professional learning and refine their work through reflection. One theme that emerged was that 16 out of 25 (64%) respondents that reported school counselors took time to reflect and analyze their counseling. The reason given that other school counselors did not reflect on their counseling was that they did not have time in their day to do so. Reflection is an important component of the Standards and the Evaluation, not to mention the overall growth of an individual both personally and professionally. If school counselors do not have time set aside in their day to reflect, given the reflection component of evaluation, school leaders need to do more to ensure that there is time designated for school counselors to reflect.

School counselors, like any professional, pull from personal or previous experiences to help guide them in their daily job requirements. A second theme that emerged in 12 out of 25 (48%) participants was the school counselors' use of previous school counseling experiences when dealing with situations. This provides evidence that school counselors are applying their professional knowledge and growth.

Twenty five out of 25 (100%) of the respondents stated that the school counselor participates in activities that further professional growth. From the research, it is evident that professional development is happening and school counselors are encouraged to take part. OSCA and the Ohio Counseling Association (OCA) hold an annual conference of which 10 out of 25
(40%) study participants specifically responded to being permitted to attend as part of the school counselor professional development.

**Research Question 2.**

Themes emerged with research question 2 exploring the views of the role of the school counselor according to administrators and school counselors. One of the largest themes for school counselor was that when asked school counselor roles, 10 common responses from 12 school counselors developed. All 12 school counselors (100%) reported that their roles included individual and group counseling, bullying prevention, keeping and tracking data, and applying community linkage. Interestingly, when asked an open-ended question, all 12 school counselors mentioned 10 of the same roles. This would indicate that even though there are tasks that counselors do not share definitively across the profession, there are many roles that they do share.

The second largest theme emerged when school counselors were asked the question of what they thought the role of a school counselor was. Eleven out of 12 counselors (91.7%) said serving as a member of positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) and career education. School counselors play an active role in career education for students, as well as serving as members of the PBIS team in an effort to help students be more successful. Again, this is evidence that school counselors share common tasks with one another in different buildings and districts.

A third, less frequent but still strong theme that emerged, was found in 9 out of 12 counselors (75%) who felt that their roles were to serve as an advocate for students with teachers, parents and staff and also to provide education for prevention. Advocating is a part of both the Standards and the Evaluation System. School counselors see the importance of
advocating and view it as their role. This does not mean that they have time to advocate, rather they agree that it is important in their role as a school counselor.

The last of the themes created by school counselor responses was the role of presenting classroom lessons. Seven out of 12 counselors (58.3%) viewed providing classroom lessons as their role as a school counselor. However, none of the high school counselors who participated in the study felt that classroom guidance lessons were part of their role. This again shows the differences between the roles or perceived roles of elementary school counselors, middle school counselors and high school counselors.

For administrators, one theme emerged in 100% of administrators all stating the same responsibility for the school counselor. All of the administrators viewed the school counselors’ role as providing individual and/or group counseling to students. Individual and group counseling is a common task for school counselors and one that is carried out by most school counselors. Administrators may have responded with individual and group counseling, because they may consider it as the most important role that school counselors play within the schools.

Nine out of 13 administrators (69.2%) viewed agency linkage and support as the role of the school counselor, creating the second largest theme of administrator responses. Agency linkage is a common task for school counselors when outside referrals are needed. Making referrals or linking support is an expectation in the Standards as well as the Evaluation.

The third theme that emerged, although less popular with school counselors and viewed as an inappropriate task for school counselors in the ASCA National Model, was in 6 of 13 administrator respondents (46.2%) who viewed the role of the school counselor as serving as the test coordinator, as well as providing staff support and helping to manage the staff. Test coordination is not viewed as a role of a school counselor by ASCA. Serving as the standardized
test coordinator limits the amount of time that a school counselor has to complete other appropriate roles and responsibilities.

A less common theme, but one that did exist in administrator responses was found in 5 out of 13 administrators (38.5%) who agreed that being a support to staff was the role of the school counselors. Although this response is noted, serving as a support to staff is not in the State Standards or the evaluation tool. In the evaluation process, the school counselors that are serving in this role could be at a greater disadvantage than those that are not using their time to serve as a support to staff.

Research Questions 3.

Administrators and school counselors hold both similar and conflicting ideas of what the role of the school counselor should be. A study by Zalaquett and Chatters (2012) found that middle school principals’ perceptions of school counselors’ roles and functions, ranked from highest priority to lowest were individual counseling, small group counseling, classroom guidance, consulting with parents, crisis counseling, consulting with teachers, coordinating intervention services and consulting with administrators. Research question 3 explored to what degree the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) reflects the role of the school counselor, according to the views of the counselors’ role from administrators and school counselors. There are six standards for school counselors adopted by the ODE. The research explored each of those standards. The comparison between the questionnaire responses and the School Counselor Performance Evaluation Rubric of the proposed OSCES led to theme development through responses of both the school counselors and the administrators. Similar themes as were found in research question 1 when the data was analyzed.
**Standard 1: Comprehensive school counseling program.** Standard 1 explores whether or not the school counselor collaboratively plans, implements, evaluates, and advocates for a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program which includes four components: guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning, and system support. The largest theme that emerged in standard one was the lack of the use of guidance curriculum by the school counselors. Sixteen out of 25 respondents (64%) reported that the counselor did not use guidance curriculum. This indicates, of those school counselors in the study, only 36% are using a guidance curriculum for their students. Cary, Harrington, Martin and Hoffman (2012) found that greater implementation of a more differentiated delivery system was associated with higher levels of student engagement, fewer disciplinary problems that occur and higher student achievement.

Responsive services had a slightly better rating with only 11 out of 25 (44%) reporting the lack of use of responsive services. Individual planning for students is a necessary task for school counselors under Standard 1. With the proposed evaluation system in Ohio, school counselors would be evaluated on the use of individual planning, yet of the participants in the study, 9 out of 25 school counselors and administrators (36%) reported not allowing the school counselor time in their day for individual planning. When counselors were able to use individual planning, 6 out of 12 (50%) reported using individual planning for writing social and/or behavior plans and 3 out of 4 (75%) high school counselors in the study reported using individual planning for students to track academic progress for graduation.

More than half of the respondents, 13 out of 25 (52%) reported that data collection for the school counseling program was not done within their school, yet data collection is an important
component of the ASCA National Model and the proposed OSCES that is based on the model. Data collection will help school counselors not only do their jobs better by ensuring that they are meeting the actual needs of their districts, but it will also help them by providing evidence of the tasks they are completing for evaluation. Pyne (2011) noted one of the reasons school counselors were found to be happy at their jobs was being able to take time for program planning and evaluation. Those school counselors that are not collecting data will need to transition to data collection and develop a method that works for them, as well as provides a way for the data to be shared with stakeholders. Of the 13 that reported data collection, all (100%) reported involving and sharing data with stakeholders.

When studying teacher perceptions and expectations of school counselor contributions, Clark and Amatea (2004) noted that collaboration between teachers and counselors was a common theme and heavily rooted in the ASCA National Model. Of the school counselors in the study, a high percentage were able to have some form of collaboration with their colleagues. Only 3 out of the 25 study participants (12%) reported that the school counselor did not collaborate with colleagues. The counselors that reported not having collaboration may work in smaller districts that could have only one counselor employed to provide services in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The challenge to find a way to collaborate is greater when there are less opportunities to interact daily with colleagues. Twelve out of 12 counselors (100%) from the study reported having committee involvement. This theme was found by clustering the responses of various committee participation. The most common committees for the school counselors to be involved with were positive behavior intervention support (PBIS), intervention assistance team (IAT), building leadership team (BLT) and early warning indicator system (EWIS). Standard 1 has the focus of implementation of guidance curriculum, the use of responsive
services and individual planning, the use of data to evaluate their counseling program, collaboration with colleagues, involvement of stakeholders, and counselor involvement with committees. Although school counselors reported involvement with committees, most school counselors lacked in the area of data collection which intern, made sharing results with stakeholders impossible. Thus, the school counselors from this study fell short of meeting most of these expectation for Standard 1, if they were being evaluated using OSCES.

**Standard 2: Direct Services**

Evaluators will be looking for evidence that the school counselor provides developmentally appropriate guidance and counseling activities to proactively assist all students to develop and apply skills for maximum academic, career, and personal and/or social growth during the school year. The particular evidence that the evaluator could use for this standard would be collaboration; assisting with the development of career, personal or social goals; and once again, the use of individual planning time and data collection. The data for Standard 2 shows that the school counselors in this study would perform well in most of the criteria of the rubric under direct services. All participates, 25 out of 25 (100%) reported developing plans for individual students; however, only 16 out of 25 (64%) reported having time set aside in their day to conduct individual planning. Career, personal and/or social skills development is a common role of school counselors. Hughey and Gysbers (1993) discovered that of the participants in their study, 60 percent of the students reported receiving help in planning and exploring careers and planning for postsecondary education. In this study, 24 out of 25 (96%), reported assisting students with career, personal and/or social skills development. Collaboration appears in the rubric for a second time as an expectation of school counselors. Twenty-two out of 25 (88%) study participants reported school counselors having the ability to collaborate. Collaboration is
an important component in the evaluation process, as was mentioned in Standard 1. Data
collection also appears again in the rubric in Standard 2 as a repeated expectation from Standard
1. Thirteen out of 25 (52%) study participants reported that the school counselor collected data
about their school counseling program.

**Standard 3: Indirect Services**

Standard 3 of the OSCES rubric involves indirect services. The OSCES Guide (2013)
categorized indirect services as advocating for students; providing professional expertise to help
school personnel, parents and/or guardians, and community members to increase the
effectiveness of student success; and consulting and coordinating, referrals to other resources as
appropriate. Evidence of communication and referrals to agencies would provide evaluators
with what they would need from school counselors for this standard. The most common response
for communication, 25 out of 25 study participants (100%), said that school counselors
communicate with parents and/or guardians. Communication was strong with 24 out of 25 (96%)
stating that school counselors take active roles in communicating with the community. It is
evident that the counselors in this study are strong in the area of communication. The counselors
most common forms of communication were through the use of technology with 20 out of 25
participants (80%) reporting technology as their main form of communication. Technology
included email, phone, social media, and school website.

Not all student issues can be resolved within the confines of the school. School
counselors frequently look to outside agencies to assist students and their parents in these times.
All of the participants in this study, 25 out of 25 (100%) reported that the school counselor made
referrals to agencies. Referrals to agencies included courts, child protective services and mental
health counseling. Standard 3 was a strong evaluation standard for the school counselors in this
study. Hence, if being evaluated, the school counselors in this study would perform well in this standard.

**Standard 4: Evaluation and Data**

Standard four of the rubric expects school counselors to use program assessments and evaluations to review and adjust current program strategies and activities, collect and share data with stakeholders, and inform stakeholders of future program plans and goals. The school counselor is also expected to participate in professional development as part of the requirements to perform well on the rubric in Standard 4. One other requirement is that the school counselor develops a method for monitoring and collecting academic, attendance, and behavioral data to provide interventions for students.

Less than half of the participants, 12 out of 25 (48%) reported collecting data for their counseling programs. Of the school counselors that collected data, 12 out of 12 (100%) stated that the data collected is shared with those whom they consider to be the stakeholders. The concern about evaluation is that less than half of the participants are performing a task that is necessary for the rubric. Fortunately, professional development is a key component to success in many professions, because it allows for continued growth and learning. Twenty-five out of 25 (100%), reported that the school counselor was able to participate in professional development. A system has been created to help schools monitor attendance, academics, and behavior by flagging students who show risks in those categories and then allowing school personnel to assign interventions to those students to help them be successful and decrease their risk of dropping out of school. Of those that participated in the study, only 10 out of the 25 (40%) reported using an Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) to monitor attendance, academics and behavior and assign proper interventions for the students. Possibly, the school counselors may be
monitoring attendance, behavior and academics, but did not mention a specific method in which they were doing so.

**Standard 5: Leadership and Advocacy**

To perform well in Standard 5 of the rubric, the school counselor must be able to provide evidence of being a committed professional who provides leadership, advocates for students, and collaborates with school personnel, parents and/or guardians to create a positive learning environment for all students. Some of the evidence that the school counselor could provide as evidence would be data collection, advocacy, collaboration, and creation of an environment that supports all students. Thirteen out of 25 study participants (52%), stated that the school counselor did not collect data at this time. Data collection is a theme that has shown to be important and has also shown to be a task that school counselors are not completing. Nine out of 13 of the study participants that said the counselor did not collect data (69.2%) stated that if the counselor did collect data, he or she would use it to implement programs and activities. This shows that school counselors see the importance in the use of the data but may lack the time needed to collect and analyze the data for their programs.

Every respondent, 25 out of 25 (100%), reported that the school counselor was a student advocate involving issues between students and their teachers and parents and/or guardians. School counselors often have to work with agencies outside of the school and 12 out of 25 study participants (48%) reported that the school counselor serves as a student advocate with outside agencies. Collaboration was a strong theme that emerged in the research. Collaboration with parents and/or guardians, teachers, administrators, and agencies is also an expectation with the proposed evaluation for school counselors. In this study, only 3 out of 25 participants (12%) stated that the school counselor did not show evidence of collaboration. Further research or
questions could be used to determine why those counselors did not engage in collaboration. Finally, only 4 out of 25 counselors (16%) were not able to create an environment within the school that supported all students. One school counselor believed that he or she tried to create an environment that supported all students but fell short due to lack of time to give to students throughout the day.

*Standard 6: Professional Responsibility and Growth*

School counselors need to engage in self-reflection, take responsibility for improving skills and knowledge through professional development, practice ethical principles, and promote the school counseling profession to perform well in Standard 6 of the evaluation rubric. Evidence of meeting the expectations of Standard 6 include the school counselor taking time to reflect on his or her counseling and participating in professional development. Seventeen out of 25 study participants (68%), reported that the school counselor takes time to reflect on his or her counseling. This indicates that 32% are not taking time to reflect on their counseling. Of those that did not reflect, at least one counselor participant stated that time was the factor keeping him or her from being able to collect data. If the same is assumed for the other school counselors, time should be provided in the school counselor’s day to reflect, assess and plan, just as teachers are given time to do in their day. Professional development results were discussed in the previous standards where it was noted that all participants, 25 out of 25 (100%), noted that the school counselors participated in professional development which provides evidence in Standard 6 of professional responsibility and growth.

**Research Question 4.**

Themes emerged while exploring Research question 4, looking at how the role of the school counselors in the study are aligned with the ASCA National Model upon which the
standards and evaluation are based. When reading through the proposed evaluation, it is evident that much of it is based on concepts from the ASCA National Model. One of the themes that emerged when looking at alignment with the ASCA National Model was whether or not school counselors are in compliance with the recommended student assigned ratio. The ASCA National Model (2012) stated that to achieve maximum program effectiveness, ASCA recommended a school counselor to student ratio of 1:250. It was evident that elementary school counselors in this study adhered more closely to the ASCA recommendation than the other two groups of school counselors. Elementary counselors (grades K-4) had a student assigned load of 200, 225, 352 and 369. The mean for students assigned to elementary school counselors was 286.5, only 36.5 students above the ASCA recommended ratio. Elementary administrators (grades K-4) that participated in the study also reported a student assigned load to the counselor much lower than the other two groups with student assignments of 200, 230, 350 and 370, with a mean of 287.5, which was 37.5 above the recommended ratio. Four middle school counselors (grades 5-8) and 4 middle school administrators (grades 5-8) took part in this study. The student assigned load grew larger with the progression from elementary, middle to high school. Middle school counselors reported student loads of 200, 298, 364 and 432 with a mean assigned load of 323.5. This mean load was 73.5 students over the ASCA recommendation. The middle school administrators reported student loads of 213, 402, 402 and 301 with a mean of 329.5, slightly higher than the student mean reported by the school counselors. This mean was 79.5 students over the ASCA recommendation. The middle school student assigned load average was nearly forty more students per school counselor compared to the elementary level. This advantage for the elementary counselors could lead to greater benefits in their evaluations with less students to manage. There were 4 high school counselors (grades 9-12) and 5 high school administrators
(grades 9-12) in the study. The high school counselors reported student assigned loads of 349, 400, 409 and 548 with a mean of 426.5. This mean is 176.5 students above the suggested amount by the ASCA National Model. The high school administrators reported counselor assigned student loads of 340, 350, 400, 450 and 600 with a mean of 428 students, 178 students above the ASCA recommendation. This would indicate that elementary counselors have an advantage over middle and high school counselors, and elementary and middle school counselors have an advantage in performing better in meeting student needs and demands of their positions than high school counselors based on having fewer numbers of students assigned to each counselor. Hence, elementary schools in this study adhered more closely to the 1:250 ratio that is also mentioned in the OSCES Guide (2013) listed as a recommendation under resources.

When school counselors in the study were asked about their assigned roles, themes developed that were considered both appropriate and inappropriate according to the ASCA National Model. The responses were compared to the ASCA National Model (2012) *Use of Time: Appropriate and Inappropriate School Counseling Activities*. The lists was adapted from Campbell and Dahir (1997) *Sharing the Vision: The ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs*. From the responses that were given in the study, only two appropriate activities or tasks were reported as being completed by the school counselors in this study compared to seven inappropriate activities or tasks being done. This indicates that school counselors in this study spend more time on tasks that ASCA views as inappropriate activities than they do on appropriate activities. If counselors are performing more inappropriate tasks than appropriate as viewed by the model that the proposed evaluation is based upon, then the school counselors are at a disadvantage in the evaluation. Every school counselor in the study reported being able to provide individual and small-group counseling services to students and also having
the opportunity to advocate for students. The list of inappropriate activities for school counselors contains 14 tasks. Of those 14, the school counselors in this study reported completing 7 of those activities that are deemed inappropriate. School counselors reported coordinating paperwork and data entry for all new students (66.7%); covering classes when teachers are absent (50%); performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences (75%); coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing (83.3%); clerical records (8.3%); data entry (8.3%); and supervising classrooms or common areas (50%). Again, school counselors spending more time on inappropriate tasks as deemed by the ASCA National Model, will have less time to devote to the appropriate tasks, leading to less adherence to the ASCA National Model that the OSCES is based on.

**Research Question 5**

The purpose of Research question 5 was to examine whether or not the proposed OSCES would accurately evaluate all school counselors in Ohio or just those that were able to adhere to the ASCA National Model. A comparison was done with the survey responses and the ASCA National Model and OSCES rubric. The purpose was to determine if the counselors from this study would be accurately evaluated if they did not adhere to the ASCA National Model when the OSCES rubric goes into effect, as it is currently written.

First, school counselors and administrators were asked about the current evaluation process in place for school counselors. Fourteen out of 25 participate (56%) reported that there currently was no system in place within their schools to evaluate school counselors. If 56% of school counselors are currently not being evaluated, creating and implementing an evaluation system will provide accountability and opportunity for growth for 44% of school counselors. Of those that did have an evaluation, 9 out of 11 (81.8%) stated that the current evaluation did not
relate to OTES, currently in place for teachers. The proposed OSCES only mimics OTES in that it uses a rubric. Prior to OTES, teachers and counselors were often evaluated based on job descriptions. In this study, 17 out of 25 administrators and school counselors (68%) stated that the school counselor had a job description, leaving 32% without a job description. It is understandable how the school counselors in this study would perform tasks that ASCA views as inappropriate if they have no job descriptions to guide their performance tasks.

The proposed evaluation is slated to take effect in the 2016-2017 school year. Administrators and school counselors lack confidence in the proposed evaluation that is a few months away from being implemented. Fourteen out of 25 administrators and school counselors (56%), believe that the OSCES will not work to properly evaluate school counselors on their current roles in the school buildings. Views from administrators and school counselors as to why they hold this belief included the fact that school counselors are performing tasks that will not be evaluated in the current proposed evaluation. Yet when comparing responses to the rubric, it appears that school counselors may perform well using the proposed evaluation, even with being assigned a number of duties or responsibilities that fall into the list of inappropriate tasks. Just under half, 12 out of 25 study participants (48%) believed that the creation of a state evaluation system for counselors would lead to reform for school counseling in Ohio and an increased accountability for school counselors in Ohio.

Reform may be a necessary step to ensure an equitable playing field for all school counselors in Ohio when they begin to be evaluated. The idea behind creating counselors standards was to help advocate for the role of the school counselor in Ohio, yet only 1 study participant (4%) saw the creation of the evaluation system as a positive way to lead to advocating for the importance of school counselors. The administrators and the counselors’ views on
negative outcomes from the creation of a state evaluation system included time to do the
evaluation (44%) and current roles assigned not related to appropriate counselor activities (52%).
Two administrator responses (A13 & A6) summarized it well in saying, “The counseling
positions are more varied across the state than teaching positions are. It will be harder to create a
statewide assessment tool.” and “Counselors within our own district do so many different
jobs/requirements that I would have to think that this in itself shows the discrepancy in the use of
school counselors and could create a problem when evaluating them all the same way.” The
question may become how to get the roles and responsibilities of school counselors in Ohio
changed to be less of “duties as assigned by administration” to something that is outlined by the
state. This would help counselors perform more equitable job duties, much like those of teachers
who have teaching standards to follow, outlined by the state.

To determine if the proposed evaluation is an equitable evaluation for Ohio school
counselors who don’t adhere to the ASCA National Model, student assigned ratio and
appropriate and inappropriate assigned tasks were again evaluated. As far as meeting the
assigned ratio of 1:250 student assigned load, 19 of the 25 study participants (76%) reported
having a counselor to student ration above 1:250. The mean counselor to student ratio was
1:350.2, a load 100.2 over the recommended value. If the ASCA believes that counselors would
perform best at a ratio of 1:250, yet the Ohio school counselors in this study are working at mean
100.2 above the recommended amount of students, it is possible that those school counselors
would perform lower in an evaluation than those that are at or below the recommended ratio.
When looking at appropriate and inappropriate tasks for school counselors, 2 of the themes that
developed fell into the appropriate category as listed in the ASCA National Model while 7 of the
themes that developed were the inappropriate tasks performed by school counselors. Counselors
who are performing inappropriate tasks would not be adhering to the ASCA National Model. Thus, a potential concern might be that those school counselors who are assigned inappropriate tasks may not be fairly evaluated under OSCES. Administrators could find that they have assigned their school counselor duties that administrators believe are appropriate and in their view, the counselor performs extremely well; however, terms of the proposed evaluation, which will not include the inappropriate tasks from evaluation, a once well-performing counselor may find himself or herself rated ineffective.

The study participants’ responses were compared to the proposed OSCES rubric. The columns of ineffective and accomplished were the only two used in the comparison, as the counselor was either completing the required tasks (accomplished) or not completing the required tasks (ineffective). The results indicated that the school counselors in this study, even though they were performing more tasks that were seen as inappropriate according to ASCA, and were not adhering to the 1:250 ratio, also from the ASCA National Model, had a 50% chance or higher at being rated accomplished in all categories except (a) implementing guidance curriculum (36%) and (b) data collection (48%). These results would indicate that the evaluation may be designed in such a way that school counselors still have an equitable chance to be evaluated even with completing multiple inappropriate school counselor tasks. The research also indicates that inappropriate tasks assigned to the school counselor limits the counselors’ ability to implement guidance curriculum and collect data for their counseling program.

**Conclusion**

School counselors in Ohio have found themselves without a state adopted evaluation system when other school personnel have had state adopted evaluations for the past few years. The call for accountability has led to a push for evaluation systems to be put in place for
educators in Ohio. Initially, school counselors were left out of the process. The Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) worked to develop a tool to be used to evaluate school counselors in Ohio. Before implementing the evaluation tool, OSCA worked with the Ohio Department of Education to develop six standards for school counselors which can be found on the Ohio Department of Education website. The standards that were created coincide with the standards in the proposed evaluation system. Although the standards exist, they serve as recommendations for job tasks rather than a state requirement. The evaluation system was being piloted to volunteer schools simultaneously, while this study was being conducted in the spring of 2016. The Ohio Revised Code states that the evaluation of school counselors is to begin in the fall of 2016.

This study found that more than half of the school counselors failed to collect data or implement a guidance curriculum. Both collecting data and implementing curriculum are important pieces to the evaluation process of the proposed evaluation system. The data collection was mentioned repeatedly in the rubric. If school counselors are not collecting data for their programs, they will not have evidence to provide in their evaluation. The data would also help them to evaluate their own programs and make adjustments based on student need. As far as implementing guidance curriculum, Carey et al. (2012), found when studying which characteristics of the school counseling program (i.e., student-to-school-counselor ratio, counselor time use, length of time that a comprehensive school counseling program has been implemented) were most strongly associated with student educational outcomes, and found that the greater the implementation of a more differentiated guidance delivery system that there is, is associated with increased student engagement, fewer disciplinary problems and higher student
achievement. A strong reason to focus on creating and delivering a comprehensive school
counseling program is for data collection to evaluate the programs being delivered.

This study also found that school counselors in Ohio were often assigned more tasks that
ASCA considered inappropriate than those that they considered appropriate. At first glance, it
would seem that the counselors would not perform well on the evaluation, if they were bogged
down with inappropriate tasks; however, when counselor and administrator responses were
compared to the columns of “ineffective” and “accomplished” on the proposed school counselor
evaluation, over half of the counselors were achieving accomplished ratings in all but 2
categories. This indicates that inappropriate assigned tasks do not prevent a school counselor
from being rated as accomplished. Hence, the conclusion is that the proposed school counselor
evaluation, based on the ASCA National Model will be an equitable tool to evaluate school
counselors regardless of their adherence to the ASCA National Model.

Recommendations

The results of this study may show that school counselors have the opportunity to be
evaluated and rated accomplished, even if they are performing a number of tasks that ASCA
views as inappropriate; however, the study also indicates that school counselors perform
different jobs within the same grade levels of elementary, middle and high school and even in
comparing elementary to middle to high school. The same cannot be said for teachers in Ohio. If
a person were to walk into any tenth grade English classroom in Ohio, they may see a variance in
the delivery system used for the material, however, they would be hearing the same lessons
based on the standards adopted for tenth grade English in Ohio, as well as see similar lessons at
approximately the same time of year because of the use of curriculum mapping. School
counselors have more variance in their jobs that are often dictated by their job descriptions, or
lack thereof, as indicated from this study. The recommendation would be to require the adopted standards to be mandatory for Ohio school counselors and make an effort to align to the ASCA National Model in Ohio to help support and advocate for the work of school counselors in Ohio.

School counselors are expected to collaborate with colleagues in the proposed evaluation system. School counselors in the study indicated that they currently do not collaborate. Opportunity or time could be factors for the reason that collaboration is not occurring. Creating school counselor meetings at the local level for school counselors to meet for the purpose of collaboration would give all counselors the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and meet the necessary requirements for doing so. School counselors interact and collaborate with teachers, administrators and other support staff but also need the opportunity to collaborate with school counselor colleagues. The benefit would be seen most for school counselors who may be employed in districts that only have one school counselor or have counselors employed across multiple buildings.

**Future Research Opportunities**

The results of this study suggest that school counselors spend their time on many tasks that ASCA deems inappropriate tasks for school counselors. This study did not examine the amount of time that school counselors spent on each activity that they mentioned as being a role that they perform. Future research is needed to determine if length of time on inappropriate tasks changes or has an adverse effect on school counselor performance on the proposed school counselor evaluation. The current research indicated that school counselors could still perform inappropriate tasks and have the opportunity to still be rated as accomplished with the proposed evaluation. More research is needed to determine if that would still be accurate with the amount of time that each school counselor spends performing specific tasks throughout their day, month,
and/or year. A time case study on how much time school counselors devote in their day, week or year to inappropriate tasks, would provide data needed to determine the findings. Future research to investigate appropriate vs. inappropriate activities according to differing levels (i.e., elementary, middle and high school) could be expanded upon from this study. Further research of inappropriate vs. appropriate activities for school counselors could also be explored through the lens of job responsibilities comparisons for rural vs. urban school counselors.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

FINDLAY
THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY

Institutional Review Board

Date: December 16, 2015

To: Dr. Michael Scales

Cc: Elizabeth Smith

RE: A Study of Counselor and Principal Views of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System in Relation to the Role of the School Counselor

Project Expiration date: December 16, 2016

The University of Findlay Institutional Review Board (IRB) has completed its review of your project utilizing human subjects and has granted authorization. This study has been approved for a period of one year only. The project has been assigned the number 264.

In order to comply with UF policy and federal regulations, human subject research must be reviewed by the IRB on at least a yearly basis. If you have not completed your research within the year, it is the investigator's responsibility to ensure that the Progress Report is completed and sent to the IRB in a timely fashion. The IRB needs to process the re-approval before the expiration date, which is printed above.

Understand that any proposed changes may not be implemented before IRB approval, in which case you must complete an Amendment/Modification Report.

Following the completion of the use of human subjects, the primary investigator must complete a Certificate of Compliance form indicating when and how many subjects were recruited for the study.

Please refer to the IRB guidelines for additional information. This packet can be obtained within blackboard under community section. Please note that if any changes are made to the present study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please include that number on any other documentation or correspondence regarding the study.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact IRB at (419) 414-4640 or email irb@findlay.edu.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jennifer Fennema-Bloom, Ed.D.,
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Cc: IRB Office
APPENDIX B

FINDLAY
THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY

Invitation to Participate in a Study on School Counselor Evaluation

January 1, 2016

Dear ..., 

You are invited to participate in a study of The Counselor and Principal Views of the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) in Relation to the Role of the School Counselor. I hope to learn without prejudice the effectiveness of the OSCES to the role the school counselor plays in rural and urban, elementary, middle and high schools in Ohio. You were selected as a possible participant in this study based on your position as a school administrator or counselor in Ohio. It will take about one hour to complete. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to help determine the effectiveness of the use of the evaluation system on school counselors in Ohio.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice any future relationships with The University of Findlay. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. You will be made aware of any information that varies from what has been provided to you and/or might affect your willingness to continue to participate in the project.

We will submit the results of this study for publication in its entirety. The unprocessed data will be destroyed 3 years after publication. If you are interested in the project results please email us with for information on retrieving the data. Please keep a copy of this correspondence for your records. If you have any questions regarding this project feel free to contact Michael Scoles, Ed.D. at mscoles@findlaycityschools.org or 419-306-6816.

This project is being completed as part of graduation requirements for my Doctor of Education degree at the University of Findlay. If you have any questions about my project you may contact me, Liz Smith at smithe8@findlay.edu or 429-239-3070 or my research adviser, Michael Scoles, Ed.D. at mscoles@findlaycityschools.org or 419-306-6816

Thank you for your time.

Liz Smith

Doctoral Candidate

University of Findlay
Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Elizabeth Smith successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/10/2014
Certification Number: 1447444
APPENDIX D

School Administrator Survey for the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES)

to be used for research conducted by Liz Smith

* Required

What type of building are you in? Please select the choice that best represents the most grade levels in your building. *

Please select your gender. *

How many students is your school counselor responsible for in the building? *

In what ways do you see your school counselor implementing guidance curriculum to meet the needs of all of the students? *

In what ways do you see your school counselor implementing responsive services to meet the students needs? *
In what ways do you see your school counselor meeting the needs of the students through the use of individual planning?

Is there time set aside in the school counselor's day to allow them time to develop individual student plans? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, how much time is given for planning and how often?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

Does your school counselor utilize systems to support students needs? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
If you answered yes to the previous question, which ones do you see them utilizing?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

In what ways do you see your school counselor assisting students in developing skills for academic success? *

In what ways do you feel your school counselor helps students explore skills for career development? *

In what ways do you feel your school counselor helps students develop skills for personal and social needs? *
In what ways do you see your school counselor serve as an advocate for your students? *

In what ways does your school counselor interact and communicate with parents/guardians? *

What methods do you see your school counselor using to communicate with the community *

Does your school counselor recommend referrals to other resources? *
   O Yes
   O No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which resources do they make referrals to?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.
Does your school counselor gather data to plan for their school counseling program? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

How would you see your school counselor developing questions to use on assessments to gather data if it were needed for developing their school counseling program? *

Who would you consider to be the stakeholders of your school? *
check all that apply

☐ Teachers
☐ Students
☐ Parents
☐ Administrators
☐ Board Members
☐ Community Members
☐ Other:

When your school counselor collects important data, is this information shared with the stakeholders? *

☐ Yes
Do you see your school counselor applying the data they collect to help students? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, in what ways do they apply data to help students?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

Does your school counselor collaborate with colleagues? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, under what circumstances would your school counselor collaborate with colleagues?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

Do you feel that your school counselor creates an environment that supports all students? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
If you answered yes to the previous question, please explain what your school counselor does to create an environment that supports all students.

If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

How do you see your school counselor applying knowledge gained from other experiences into their counseling? *

Do you believe that your school counselor spends time reflecting and analyzing their counseling? *

- Yes *
- No

If you answered yes, how do you see them doing this? *
If you answered no, why do you believe they do not do this?

Is your school counselor able to participate in activities that further their professional growth? *

- Yes
C. No

If you answered yes to the previous question, what activities do you see them participate in that allow this to happen? *
If you answered no to the previous question, please give the reason they are not able to participate in professional growth activities.

Please explain your current evaluation process for the school counselor. If there is no evaluation, please state that. *

Does your school counselor have a job description from your district? *

○ Yes
○ No

To what extent would you agree that the criteria the school counselor is evaluated by matches the school counselor job description?
If there is no job description for your counselor, do not respond.

○ Strongly Disagree
○ Disagree
○ Neutral
○ Agree
○ Strongly Agree
If there is no job description, explain what criteria and how the criteria is used to evaluate the counselor.

In your opinion, does the current system of evaluation match the actual job that the school counselor is able to perform in your building? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ There currently is no system to evaluate school counselors in our building

Please explain why you responded yes or no to the previous question. *

How does the current counselor evaluation process in your building relate to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) that is already being done with teachers?

To what extent would you agree that you are familiar with the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES)? *

☐ Strongly Disagree
Do you believe that OSCES will work properly to evaluate school counselors on the role they currently perform in your school building? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

Please briefly state why you responded yes or no to the previous question. *

What positive things do you see with the creation of a state evaluation system for school counselors? *

What negatives do you see with the creation of a state evaluation system for school counselors? *
Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

100%: You made it
School Counselor Survey for the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES)

to be used for research conducted by Liz Smith

* Required

What type of building are you in? Please select the choice that best represents the most grade levels in your building. *

Please select your gender *

How many students are you responsible for in the building? *

In what ways do you implement guidance curriculum to meet the needs of all of the students? *

In what ways do you implement responsive services to meet the students needs? *
In what ways do you meet the needs of the students through the use of individual planning?

Is there time set aside in your day to allow them time to develop individual student plans?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, how much time is given for planning and how often?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

Do you utilize systems to support the needs of your students?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which ones do you utilize?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

In what ways do you assist students in developing skills for academic success? *

In what ways do you feel you help students explore skills for career development? *

In what ways do you feel you help students develop skills for personal and social needs? *

In what ways do you serve as an advocate for your students? *
In what ways do you interact and communicate with parents/guardians? *

What methods do you use to communicate with the community? *

Do you make referrals to other resources? *

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which resources do you make referrals to?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.
Do you gather data to plan for your school counseling program? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

How would you develop questions to use on assessments to gather data if it were needed for developing your school counseling program? *

Who would you consider to be the stakeholders of your school? *

check all that apply
☐ Teachers
☐ Students
☐ Parents
☐ Administrators
☐ Board Members
☐ Community Members
☐ Other:

When you collect important data, is this information shared with the stakeholders? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
Do you apply the data you collect to help students? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, in what ways do you apply data to help students?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

Do you collaborate with colleagues? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, under what circumstances would you collaborate with colleagues?
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.

Do you feel that you create an environment that supports all students? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, please explain what you do to create an environment that supports all students.
If you answered no to the previous question, no response is given here.
How do you apply knowledge gained from other experiences into your counseling? *

Do you take time to reflect and analyze your counseling? *

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, how do you do this? *
If you answered no, please explain why you do not?

Are you able to participate in activities that further your professional growth? *

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, what activities do you participate in that allow this to happen? *
If you answered no to the previous question, please give the reason you are not able to participate in professional growth activities.

Please explain the current evaluation process for the school counselor. If there is no evaluation, please state that.

Do you have a job description from your district?

☐ Yes
☐ No

To what extent would you agree that the criteria the school counselor is evaluated by matches the school counselor job description?
If there is no job description for school counselors in your district, do not respond.

☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

If there is no job description, explain how and what criteria is used to evaluate the counselor.
If there is no evaluation of the school counselor, do not respond.
In your opinion, does the current system of evaluation match the actual job that the school counselor is able to perform in your building? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ There currently is no system to evaluate school counselors in our building

Please explain why you responded yes or no to the previous question.

How does the current counselor evaluation process in your building relate to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) that is already being done with teachers? *

To what extent would you agree that you are familiar with the proposed Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES)? *

☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

Do you believe that OSCES will work properly to evaluate school counselors on the role they currently perform in your school building? *
☐ Yes
☐ No

Please briefly state why you responded yes or no to the previous question. *

What positive things do you see with the creation of a state evaluation system for school counselors? *

What negatives do you see with the creation of a state evaluation system for school counselors? *
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