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School Counseling Outcome Research &
Evaluation

2010

CSCORE's Annual Review of Research

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CSCORE's Annual Review: Research that Improves School Counseling Practice

Presented by:

**Rich Lapan, Carey Dimmitt, Jay Carey,
and Karen Harrington**

**Center for School Counseling Outcome
Research and Evaluation
University of Massachusetts Amherst**

Goals for Session

- 1. Review current outcome research**
- 2. Focus on the needs of practicing school counselors working in schools**
- 3. Engage you in discussion of best practices that are supported by credible evidence**

Outcomes for Session

- 1. Be able to leave this session with research findings and best practice suggestions that you can use right now to improve your work with students**
- 2. Be better prepared to ADVOCATE for your work as a school counselor with key policy makers, decision makers, and public opinion makers**

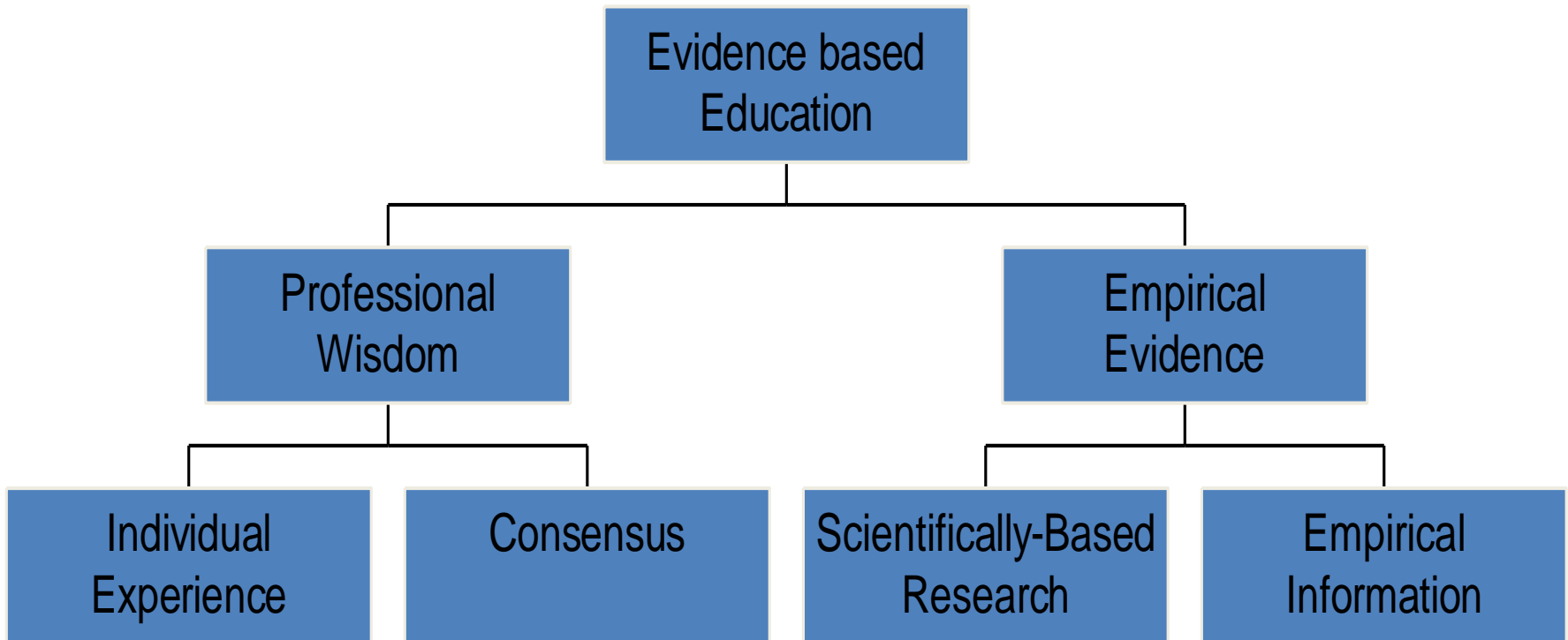
CSCORE

- Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation
- Was CSCOR until 2010
- Founded in 2002 by Jay Carey, current Director
- Carey Dimmitt is Associate Director
- Housed at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

CSCORE www.cscor.org

The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) is dedicated to improving the practice of school counseling by developing and disseminating the research base that is necessary for responsible and effective practice. CSCORE provides national leadership in the measurement and evaluation of the outcomes of school counseling interventions and programs, and helps K-12 leaders and practitioners improve school counseling practice by providing information about implementing evidence-based interventions, measuring student outcomes, and evaluating program effectiveness.

The Big Picture: Evidence-Based Education



What is Professional Wisdom in School Counseling?

- The judgment that individuals acquire through experience
- Consensus views- what has worked before?
- Professional wisdom includes identifying and incorporating local circumstances into program decisions

What is Empirical Evidence in School Counseling?

- Scientifically-based research in educational settings
- Relevant research from related fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and neuroscience
- Data on school counseling program and intervention outcomes

Why are Both Needed?

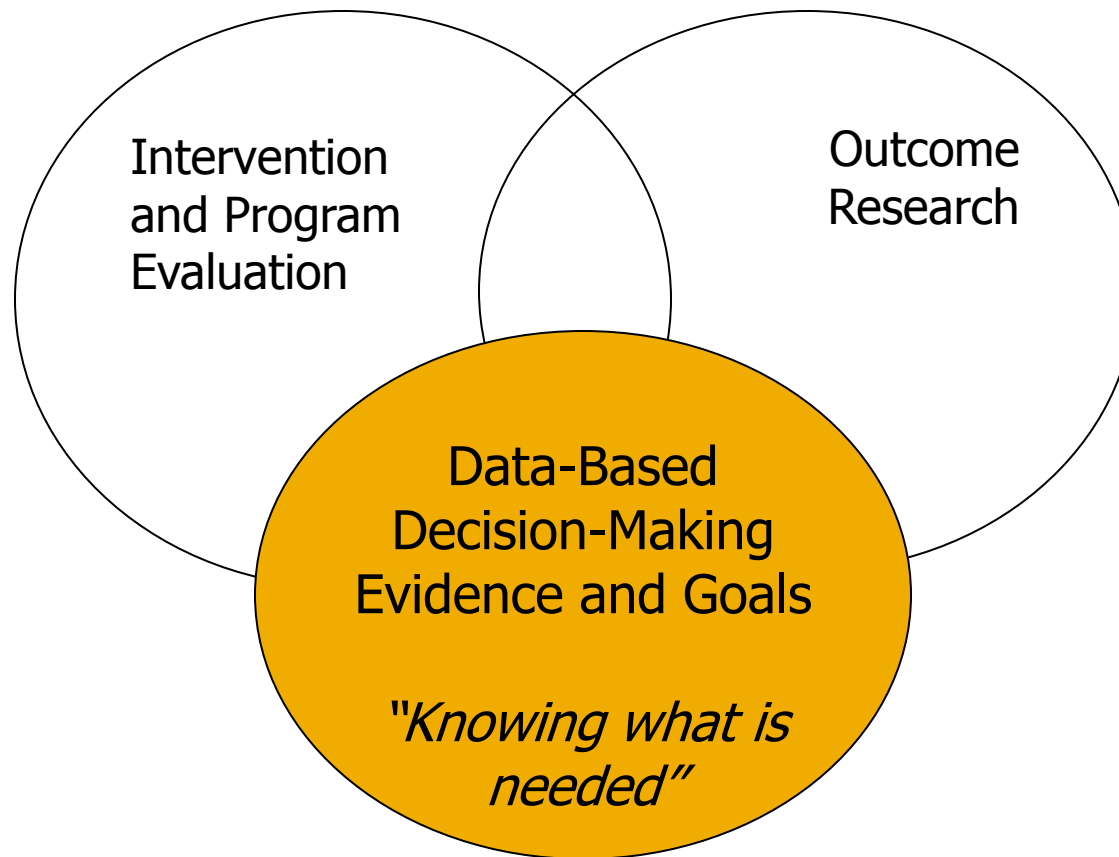
- Without professional wisdom education cannot
 - adapt to local circumstances
 - operate intelligently in the many areas in which research evidence is absent or incomplete
- Without empirical evidence education cannot
 - resolve competing approaches
 - generate cumulative knowledge
 - avoid fad, fancy, and personal bias

A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice

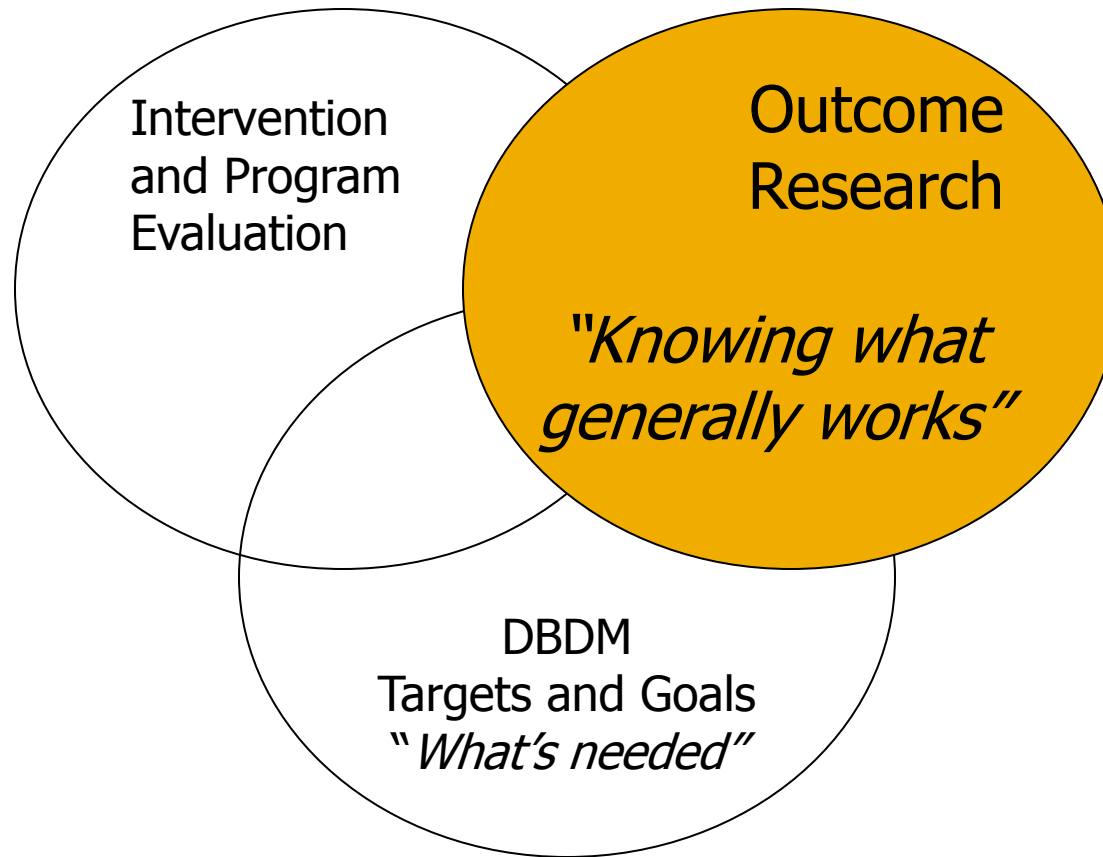
Evidence-Based practice in school counseling integrates three sources of information:

1. Data-Based Decision-Making Evidence
Knowing what is needed in that setting
2. Outcome Research Evidence
Knowing what interventions work generally
3. Intervention Evaluation Evidence
Knowing that an intervention worked in this setting

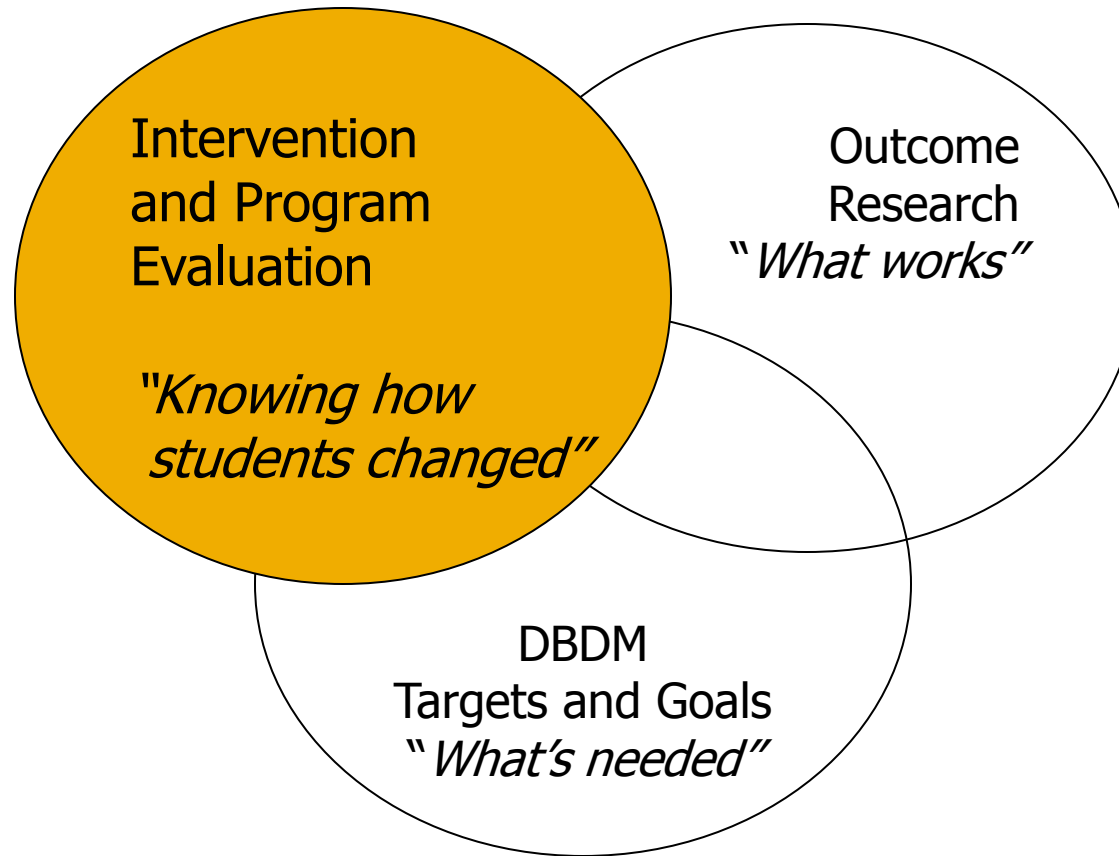
A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice



A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice



A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice



Outcome Research

- Outcome research is specifically interested in the *results* of an intervention or program.
- “How did the classroom guidance unit impact student knowledge about post-secondary possibilities?”
 - The answer to this question in one school is outcome evaluation. The answer to this question in many schools is outcome research.
- What are the outcomes of your school counseling program?

School Counseling Research

- A recent meta-analysis of school counseling outcome research involving 117 studies of 153 school counseling interventions with 16,296 students found an effect size of .30
- *Students who participated in the school counseling interventions improved almost a third of a standard deviation more than their peers who did not receive the interventions.
- Whiston, S. C. & Quinby, R. F. (2009). Review of school counseling outcome research. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(3), 267-272.)

Whiston Meta-Analysis of SC Interventions: Conclusions

- School counseling interventions are moderately effective
- Individual planning at the middle school level has a large effect size (small number of studies)
- Guidance curriculum is an important program component, especially at the middle and high school level
- Responsive services have a larger effect size at elementary level

Whiston Meta-Analysis of SC Interventions: Conclusion

- SC interventions have large effects on:
 - Career knowledge
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Disciplinary referrals
- SC interventions contribute to academic achievement
- SC interventions are moderately effective in reducing anxiety and depression, increasing interpersonal social skills, and positively influencing attendance

School Counseling Research

- Elementary school students do better on both national tests of academic knowledge and on state tests of academic achievement when there is a comprehensive developmental school counseling program in their school (sample of 5,618 students).
- Sink, C.A. & Stroh, H.R. (2003). Raising achievement test scores of early elementary school students through comprehensive school counseling programs. *Professional School Counseling*, 6(5), 350-364.

School Counseling Research

- Career interventions that do not use school counselors (e.g. computerized career guidance programs) have been found to be significantly less effective than groups, workshops and classes run by counselors.
- Whiston, S.C., Brecheisen, B.K., & Stephens, J. (2003). Does treatment modality affect career counseling effectiveness? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62, 390-410.

School Counseling Research

- Students who participate in career development curriculum show significantly more understanding of career possibilities, more future orientation, and greater self-efficacy and increased school engagement.
- Dimmitt, C. (2007). *The Real Game evaluation results*. Washington, DC: America's Career Resource Network. Available on-line at: http://californiacareers.info/downloads/FinalReport_RG_Evaluation.pdf

School Counseling Research

- School-based programs designed to decrease aggressive behavior show considerable success in impacting behaviors, related feelings of safety, and disciplinary events.
- Wilson, S. J., Lipsey, M.W., & Derzon, J.H. (2003). The effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behavior: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71*, 136-149.

School Counseling Research

- School counseling classroom curriculum designed to educate HS students about goal-setting, problem-solving, career exploration, and school resources has been found to significantly improve student behavior, attitude and knowledge in these areas.
- Schlossberg, S. M., Morris, J.D., & Lieberman, M.G. (2001). The effects of a counselor-led guidance intervention on students' behaviors and attitudes. *Professional School Counseling, 4*, 156-164.

School Counseling Research

- Group counseling by school counselors has positive effects on academic achievement with underachieving elementary and middle school students.
- Campbell, C. A., & Brigman, G. (2005). Closing the achievement gap: A structured approach to group counseling. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 30*, 67-82.;

School Counseling Research

- Elementary and middle school students who participate in school counseling curriculum and group interventions that focus on cognitive, social and self-management skills (Student Success Skills) have consistently shown significantly stronger math and reading scores on state tests.
- Webb, L., Brigman, G., & Campbell, C. (2005). Linking school counselors and student success: A replication of the Student Success Skills approach targeting the academic and social competencies of students. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 407-413.

Public Agenda 2010

“As part of the research analysis, we compared the responses of young people who said that their counselors seemed to see to them as just another face in the crowd with the responses of young people who said that their counselors really made an effort to get to know them and help them.” (Sec1:9)

Public Agenda 2010

Young adults who had school counselors who made an effort to know them and help them (47% of those surveyed) were more likely to:

- Go directly from high school to college
- Receive financial aid or scholarships to pay for college
- Be satisfied in their college choice
- Choose their college based on its academic reputation and/or financial offers made to them
- Feel that their college would help them get a good job after graduation

Public Agenda 2010

**Student Needs Survey results:
72% said they would like the opportunity to speak with an advisor who knows all about the different colleges and job training programs so they could make a good choice (91% African American; 82% Hispanic American)**

Missouri School Counselors Benefit All Students

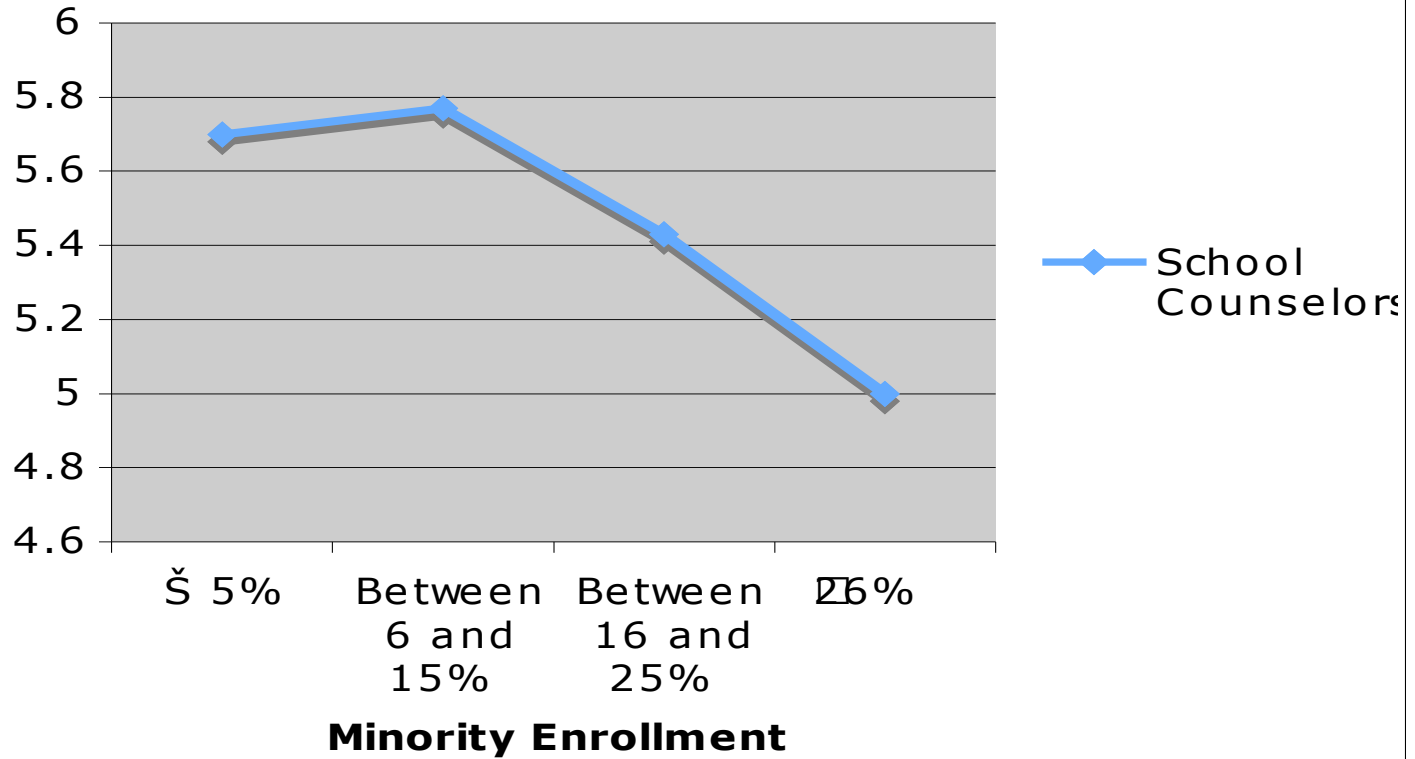
Rich Lapan and Norm Gysbers (2006)

The relationship between program implementation and student outcomes:

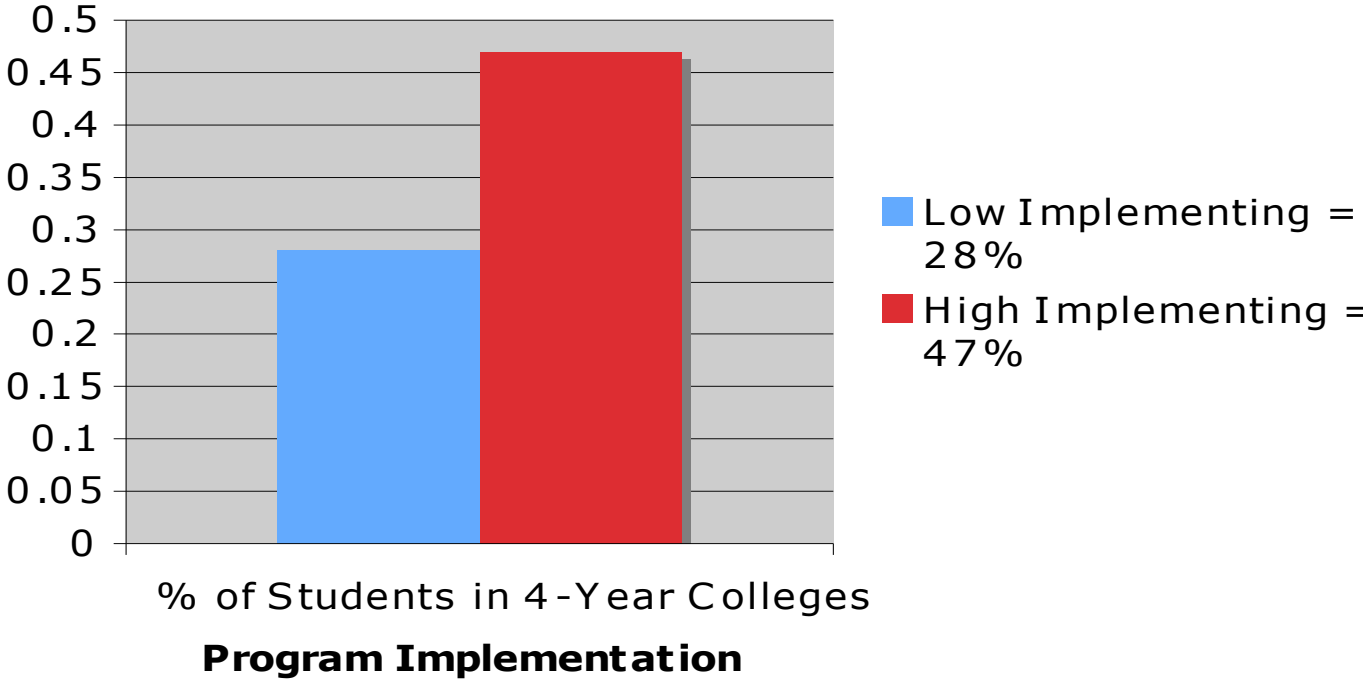
- Higher math & communication arts test scores
- Higher graduation rates
- Better attendance
- Fewer discipline problems
- Advantages for college and career counseling
- Principals ratings supported school counseling ratings

- Better attendance
- Fewer discipline problems
- Principals' ratings supported school counseling ratings

Minority Student Enrollment and Individual Planning Services in High School



4-Year College Going Rates for Students from High Schools with more than 15% Minority Student Enrollment and Program Implementation



Paving the Road to College: How School Counselors Help Students Succeed

Rich Lapan and Karen Harrington

Center for School Counseling Outcome Research

School of Education

University of Massachusetts Amherst

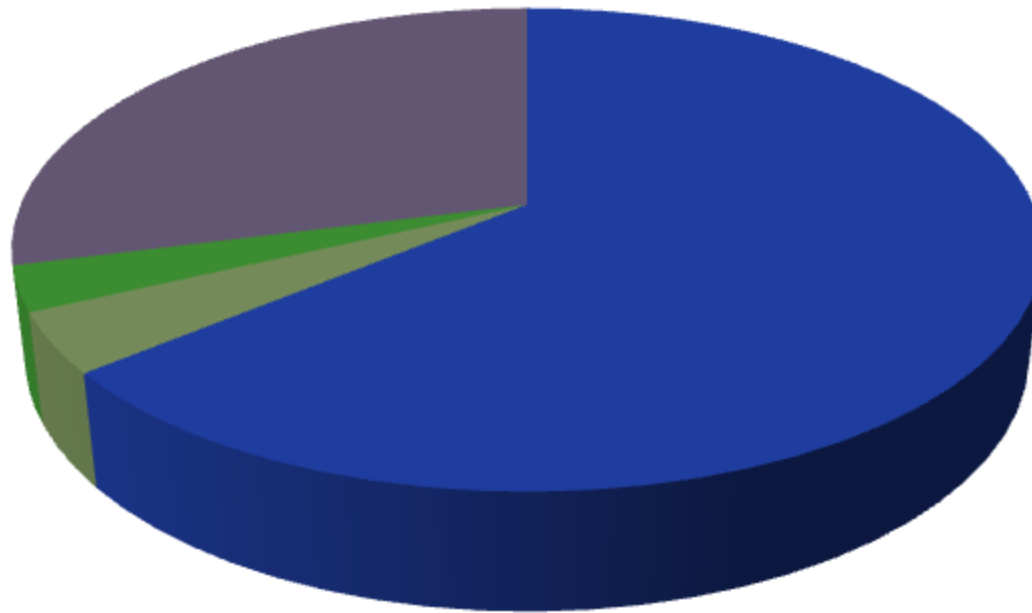
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Chicago Public Schools

Joyce Brown and Regina Manley

Value Added: PSCs help to promote higher test scores

Predicting PSAE Composite Scores



■ Free or Reduced Lunch-64%

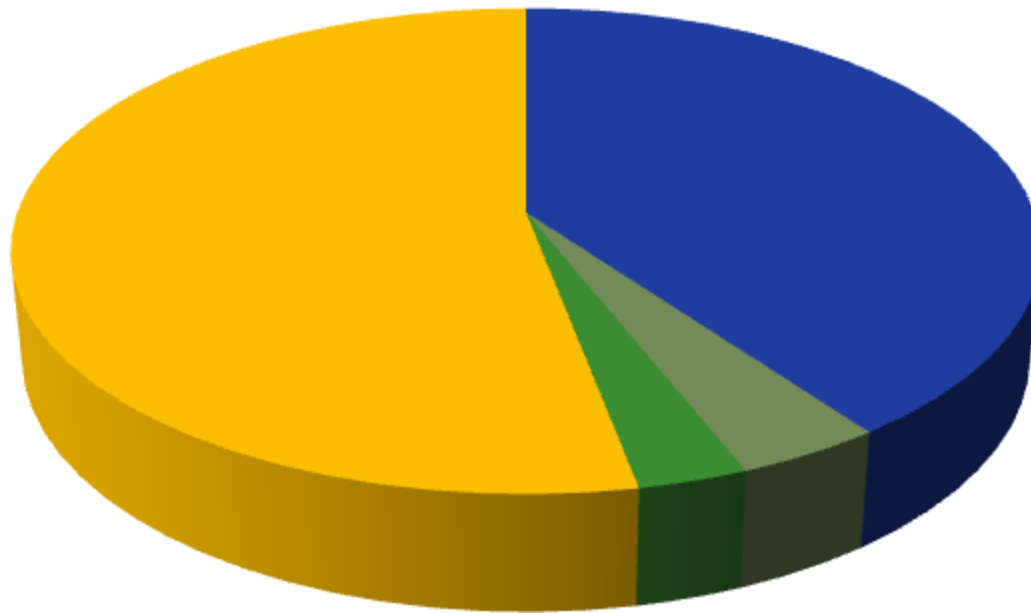
■ Non-Guidance Tasks-4%

■ Individual Planning-3%

■ Unexplained Variance-29%

Value Added: PSCs help to increase enrollment in AP Courses

Predicting Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses



■ Free or Reduced Lunch-40%

■ Non-Guidance Tasks-4%

■ Individual Planning-3%

■ Unexplained Variance-53%

Figure 4.1: Coordination and Clerical Tasks Performed by School Counselors

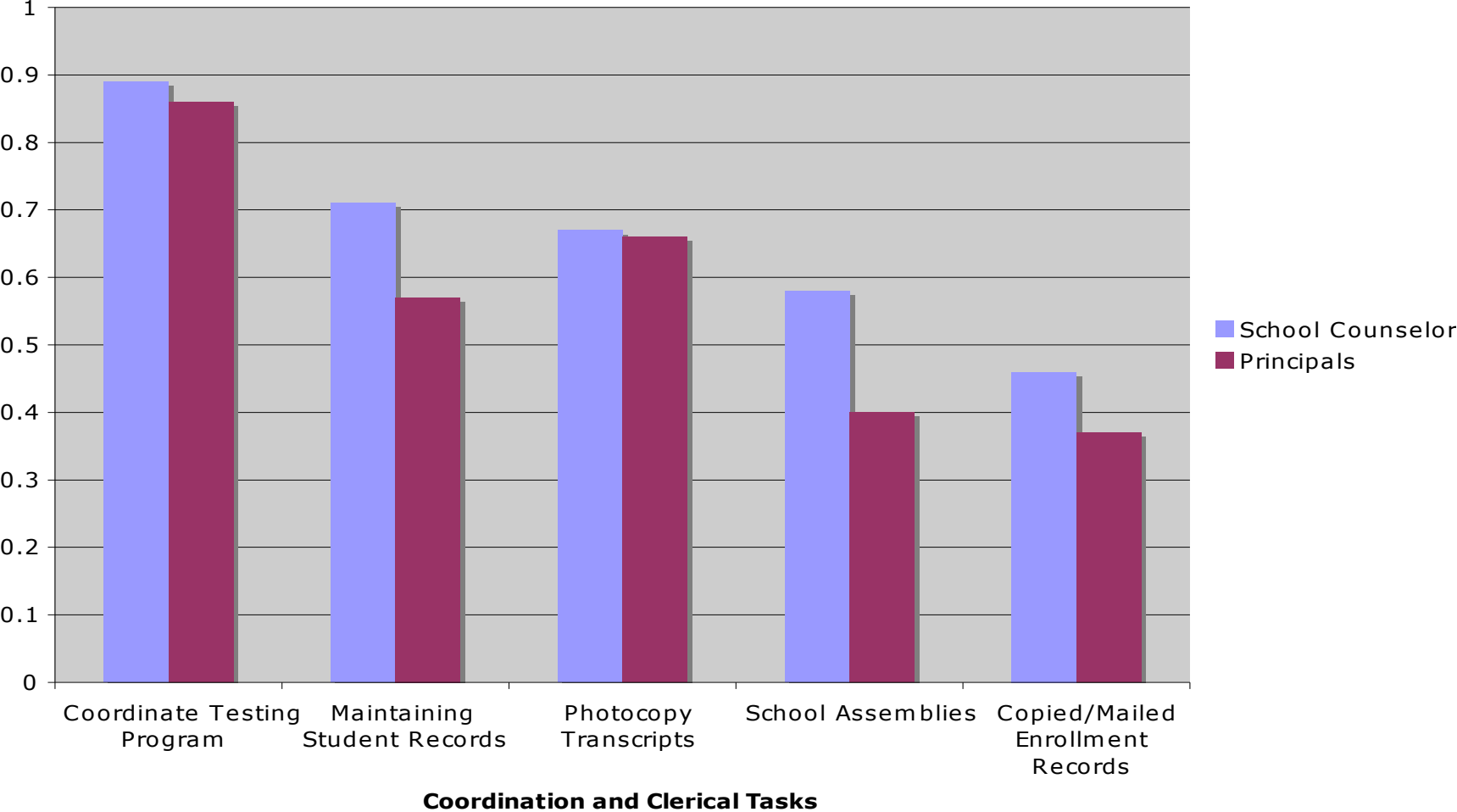


Figure 4.2: Other Duties As Assigned Performed by School Counselors

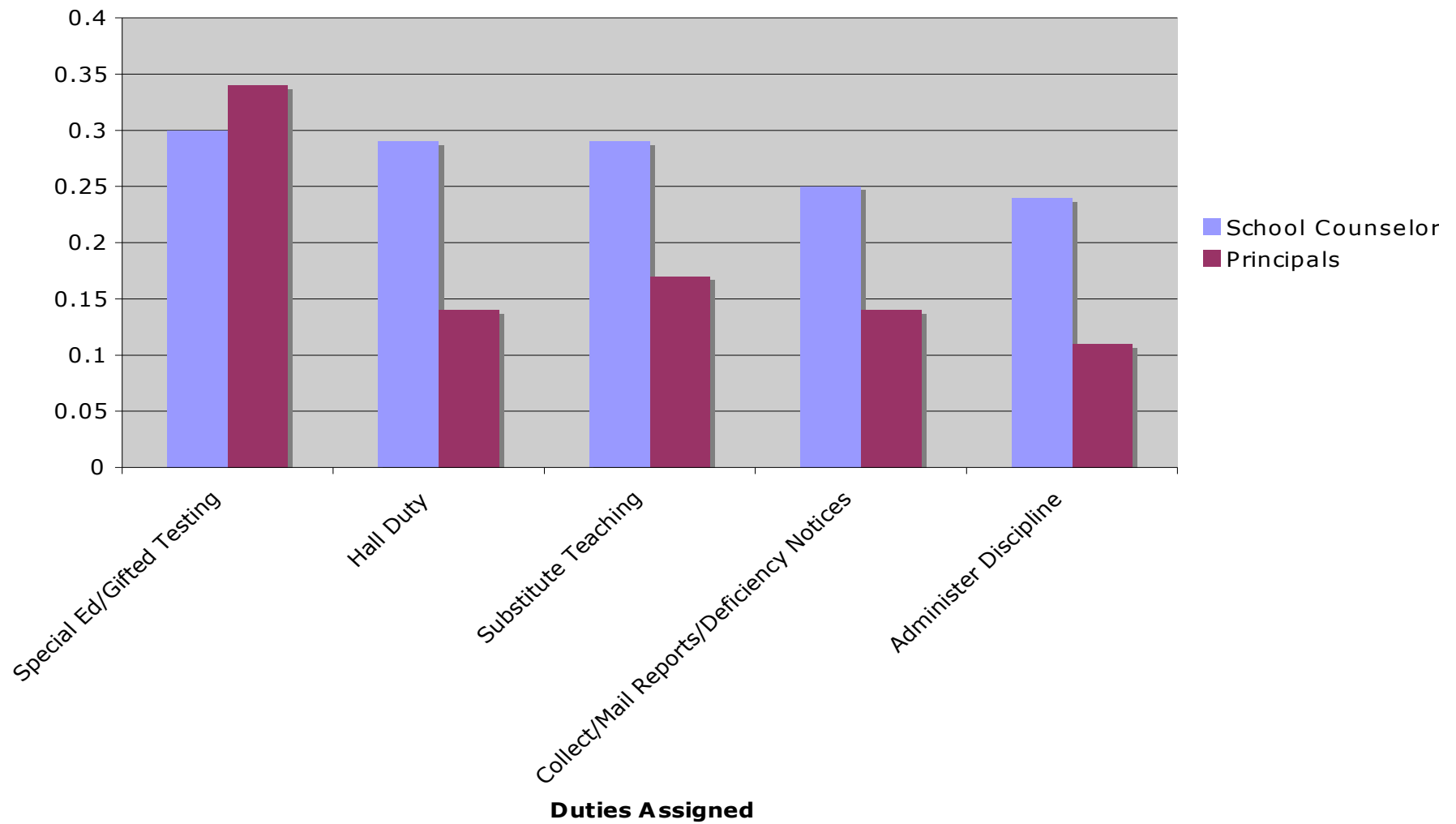


Figure 4.3: Relationship between Free and Reduced Lunch and Non-Guidance Tasks

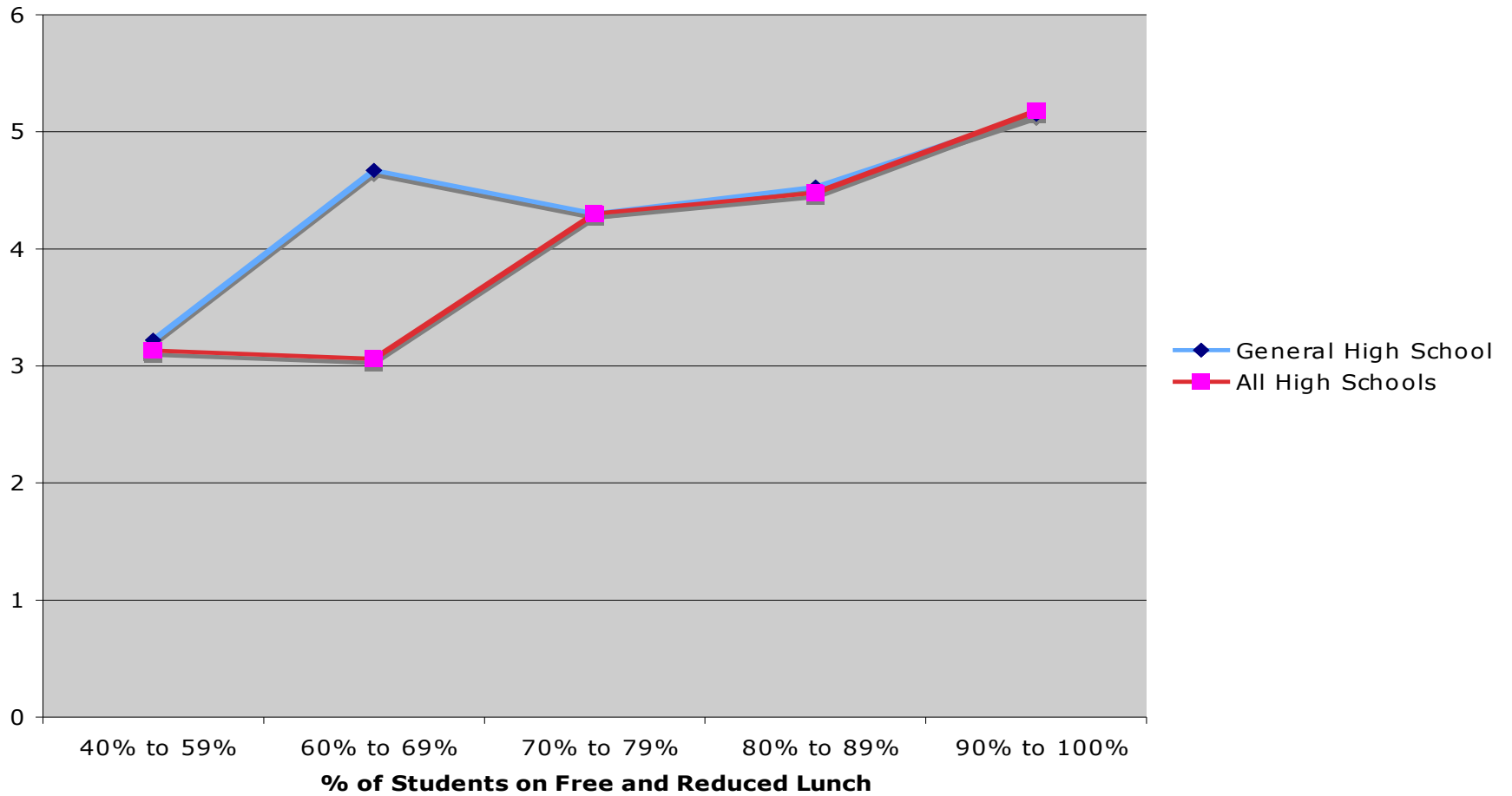
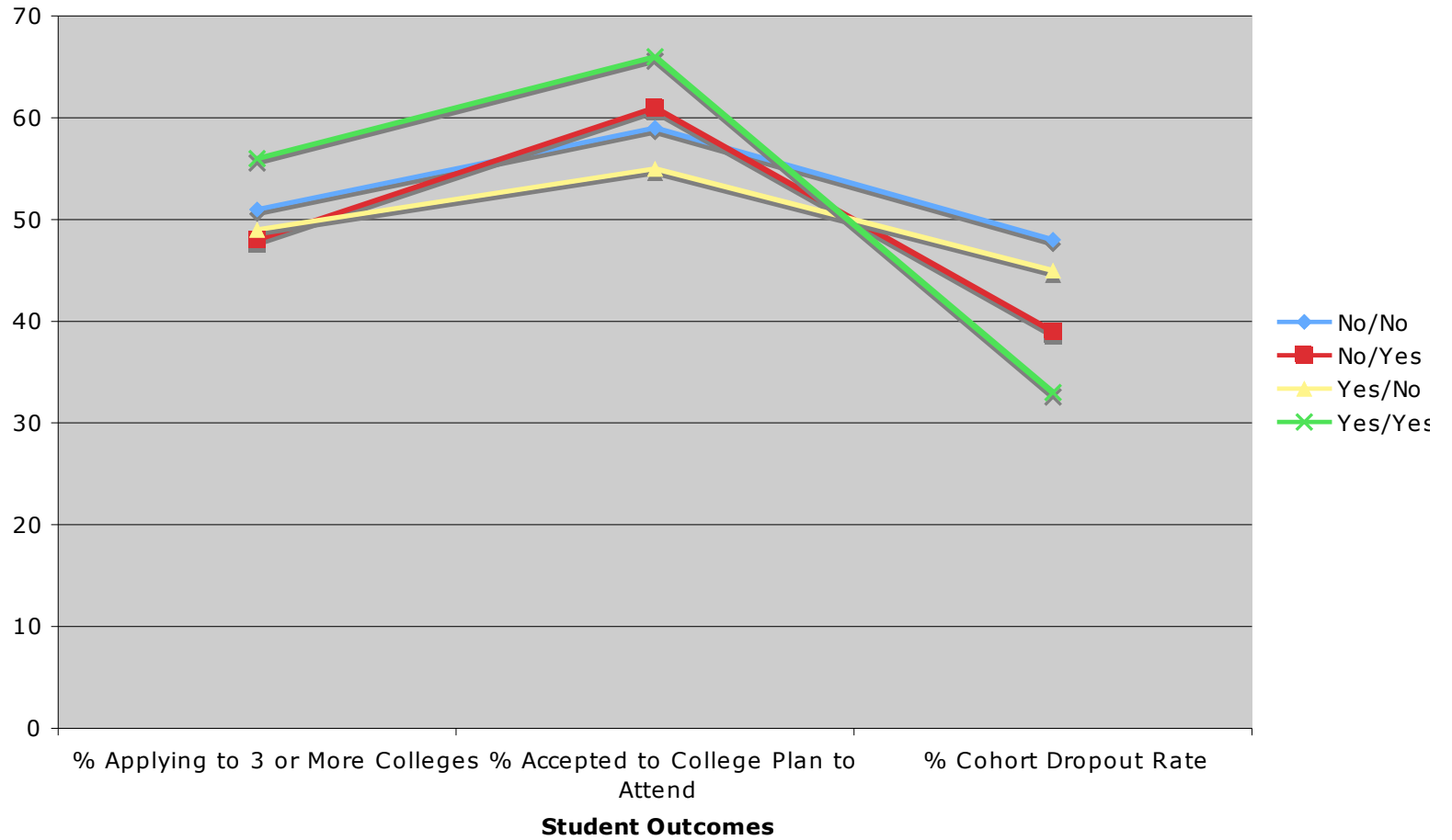


Figure 5.5: Agreement Between Principals and School Counselors on Individual Planning



Four Major Findings

CPS high school counselors play an important role in promoting student academic achievement

An implementation gap exists across CPS high schools in the organization and delivery of a comprehensive guidance program, thus advantaging some students and disadvantaging others

CPS high school counselors impact how students plan, prepare, search, apply, and enroll in college

CPS high school counselors play a vital role in helping 8th grade students successfully transition into high school

Recommendations

- **Close the implementation gap in the organization and delivery of a comprehensive guidance program**
- **Establish a working alliance with each 8th grader**
- **Reduce non-guidance tasks**
- **Enhance Individual Planning skills of school counselors for a global 21st Century economy**
- **Increase parental involvement**
- **Get principals to support implementation**

Inspiration & Innovation: Ten Effective Counseling Practices from the College Board's Inspiration Award Schools

Militello, Carey, Dimmitt, and Schweid (2006)

10 strategies PSCs use in Inspiration Award schools to promote student success and college attainment

1. Be part of school leadership team
2. Help to establish achievement-oriented school climate
3. Provide academic and financial outreach to parents
4. Offer college-focused interventions for low-income students
5. Establish partnerships with colleges and the community
6. Share responsibility and power with colleagues and principal
7. Provide systemic, multilevel counseling interventions
8. Use data to support student achievement
9. Shape school policies and practices
10. Counselors counsel: not inundated with clerical & administrative tasks

From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, and Moeller (2008)

How the very high aspirations of CPS high school students are being lost in the college preparation, search, application, and enrollment process

Four Recommended Areas for Improvement

1. Create strong college-going cultures in each high school
2. Help students and families manage the high costs of college
3. Encourage students to apply to multiple colleges
4. Have students enroll in colleges that matched their qualifications

Personalization Matters

- Students need
 - Meaningful engagement with adults in the building
 - To feel connected and known
 - To feel like they belong and are wanted
 - To feel safe

From Research to Practice

**Just meeting with students isn't
enough:**

**What you do with them makes
the difference!**

Research Into Practice

- Good guidance makes a difference, but not all students are getting good guidance from school counselors
- Effective School Counselors:
 - Provide services to all students, through classroom, group and individual interventions that develop competencies in the academic, career and personal/social domains

Research Into Practice

- Effective School Counselors:
 - Support students through transitions
 - Work extensively with families and communities
 - Evaluate outcomes to make sure that program components are effective
 - Are culturally competent
 - Use data to make decisions, to demonstrate accountability, and to evaluate outcomes

If time...

- Next Steps in CSCORE's work
 - International model for counseling in schools
 - Better curriculum materials with evidence of impact
 - Dissemination of research, resources, links, and materials that meet CSCORE criteria
- Questions
- Discussion