ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the extent to which school counselors in Alabama are engaged in accountability practices consistent with the ASCA National Model and other contemporary views of the school counselors' roles and responsibilities. This study includes a sample of 420 professional school counselors. Participants completed the School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire (SCAPQ). A cross sectional survey design was used to examine how school counselors are collecting, analyzing, and using achievement and achievement related data, what data driven initiatives school counselors in Alabama are implementing, and what assistance school counselors in Alabama need to analyze, collect, and share accountability data about their school counseling programs.

Results indicate that most professional school counselors (59%) do not participate in accountability activities. Additionally, the open-ended responses offers information about data driven initiatives school counselors in Alabama are implementing and what assistance counselors in Alabama need to analyze, collect, and share accountability about their school counseling programs. Implications for the findings are discussed, along with recommendations for future research in school counseling.

VITA

LaWanda S. Edwards, daughter of John and Marian Edwards, was born November 28, 1976, in Opelika, Alabama. She graduated from Auburn University at Montgomery in Montgomery, Alabama with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance in 1999. She graduated from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, in Tallahassee, Florida with a Master of Education Degree in Counselor Education in 2002. After completion of her Master's Degree, she worked as a school counselor in an elementary school and later in a middle school. She graduated from Troy University in Phenix City, Alabama with an Educational Specialist Degree in School Counseling in August 2004. In 2004, she also enrolled in the Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program at Auburn University, in Auburn, Alabama.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the school counseling profession in the early 1900s, the roles and responsibilities of school counselors have changed in response to legal and cultural changes. Frequent changes in the roles and responsibilities of school counselors have led to disagreements about the role of school counselors and how to implement those roles (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). The community, school board members, parents, administrators, teachers and students are also confused about the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor (Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999; Fitch, Newby, Ballastero, & Marshall, 2001; Kirchner, Setchfield, & Zalaquett, 2005).

When community leaders and school administrators do not know how school counselors improve academic achievement, the school counselor's position is not viewed as a necessity. Lack of clarity about the roles of school counselors has led to loss of jobs and assignments of non-counseling duties (Otwell & Mullis, 1997; Vail, 2005). In order to minimize negative perceptions, school counselors must demonstrate how program efforts are linked to student achievement. Although the links to achievement have not always been direct, it is evident that school counselors have been and still are important to student success in schools (Hayes, Dagley, & Horne, 1996).

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (2005) states that accountability answers the question: "How are students different as a result of the

program?" In addition to enumerative data (i.e., time-on-task and number of sessions), school counselors must also collect and publish results data to show how the efforts of the school counselor affect students (Stone & Dahir, 2007). Although it is evident that accountability is a necessity in the school counseling profession, there are still some counselors who do not demonstrate accountability. This study examined the extent to which school counselors in Alabama are including accountability practices in their programs.

Background Literature

Although researchers have long acknowledged that school counselors should be accountable, some school counselors do not include accountability practices in their programs. There are many reasons for school counselors' avoidance of accountability activities. School counselors do not collect accountability data because of the fear of evaluation and negative consequences (Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Fairchild, 1993; Lewis, 1983); lack of training (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Fairchild, 1993; Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983; Wheeler & Loesch, 1981); lack of financial and people resources (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Wilson, 1985); time constraints (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983); not knowing what criteria to measure (Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983) thinking that the accountability activity may be too cumbersome and difficult (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Fairchild, 1993; Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983); not knowing where to start or end (Miller & Grisdale, 1975); and, having a negative attitude towards research (Bauman, 2004). Although school counselors have these thoughts about

accountability, they must overcome their discomfort and become accountable for program and student outcomes (Sink, 2002). Recent research has focused on the role of school counselors (Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999; Burnham & Jackson, 2000), the principals' perception of school counselors (Fitch, Newby, Ballastero, & Marshall, 2001; Zalaquett, 2005), promoting professional identity (Johnson, 2000), and the effects of interventions on student outcomes (Whiston & Sexton, 1998). However, there has been little research conducted to determine the extent to which school counselors incorporate into their programs accountability practices. Fairchild (1986, 1993) provides a notable exception. His research on accountability practices of school counselors in 1990 concluded that counselors were more involved with accountability efforts in 1990 than they had been in 1986. Subsequent to Fairchild's research, a number of initiatives in school counseling led to renewed emphases on accountability practices. Common to most of these initiatives is the emphasis on data based decision making and the use of evidenced based practices in educational settings. These initiatives include the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 (U. S. Department of Education, 2001), the development of the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the implementation of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 2007), the establishment of the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) in 2003 (Education Trust, 2007) and the development of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2003).

Coinciding with these professional developments, some researchers have begun to explore how school counseling programs have impacted student achievement and

success. Researchers discovered that group counseling decreased acting out behaviors (Brantley, Brantley, & Baer-Barkley, 1996), improved self-esteem, academic achievement, and classroom behavior (Bauer, Sapp, & Johnson, 1999; Edmondson & White, 1998). Other researchers concluded that classroom guidance positively influenced students' academic achievement in mathematics (Lee, 1993), decreased test anxiety (Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, & Coy, 2002) and improved student behavior (Schlossberg, 2001). The implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs has also impacted student achievement. The implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program is associated with higher grades, better preparation for the future (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997), student success (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2003), and improved standardized test scores (Sink & Stroh, 2003). Research citing outcomes of school counseling programs and practices indicate that school counselors are engaged in research. However, no new studies examine the specific accountability practices of counseling in a program context since Fairchild's study (1963).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

School counselors have identified accountability as an important practice since the profession started in the early 1900s. Since then there have been changes in the roles and responsibilities of school counselors reflecting changes in society in general, as well as in education. These changes have resulted in an expectation that school counselors will be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program and interventions used to promote academic achievement (Myrick, 2003). School counseling programs may be achieving their goals related to improving the academic performance of

<div align="center">4</div>

students, but there is no proof that this is true (Loesch & Ritchie, 2005). The effectiveness of school counseling programs and interventions used to meet program goals must be documented through systematic, ongoing accountability practices. This study examined the current accountability practices of school counselors in the state of Alabama.

This investigation was significant for a variety of reasons. First, the study explored the differences in school counselor accountability practices now, compared to practices observed in 1990 (Fairchild, 1993). Although there has been much talk about the importance of school counselors' accountability, we do not know the extent to which contemporary school counselors are participating in accountability practices and what form these practices take. The definition of accountability has also changed since 1990. In 1990, school counselors thought that enumerative data, counting the number of sessions or activities, was demonstrating accountability. Now, in addition to what they are doing each day, school counselors must show how theses activities result in changes for students. Second, previous studies identify the reasons counselors do not engage in data collection and analysis to generate accountability information. This study determined the extent to which counselors are still faced with barriers identified in the 1980s and 1990s. Third, the results of this study produced information that counselor educators and professional organizations may use to plan and implement accountability training for counselors-in-training and practicing school counselors.

Purpose of Study

In the past, school counselors demonstrated accountability by keeping logs of services they provided and calendars of planned services. Presently, school counselors are urged to implement results based programs and evaluate the effectiveness of their programs in relation to student achievement (Astrovich & Coker, 2005). This study examined the extent to which school counselors in Alabama are engaged in accountability practices consistent with the ASCA National Model and other contemporary views of the school counselors' roles and responsibilities.

Research Questions

1.   Are school counselors in Alabama collecting, analyzing, and using student achievement and related data to plan and improve school counseling programs?

2.   What data-driven school counseling initiatives are school counselors in Alabama implementing?

3.   What assistance do school counselors in Alabama need to collect, analyze, and present accountability data about their school counseling program.

Definition of Terms

Accountability: Being responsible for performance, program implementation and results (ASCA, 2005).

American School Counselor Association (ASCA): National professional organization for school counselors.

Comprehensive school counseling program: Refers to a school-counseling program that is comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, and developmental in nature (ASCA, 2005).

Data-based programming: The use of data to identify problems and plan school counseling program interventions (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

Enumerative data: Data that includes counting the number of students counseled or the amount of time spent on conducting groups

Evaluation: Process used to determine effectiveness or progress (ASCA, 2005).

Evidence-based practices: "The intentional use of the best available evidence in planning, implementing, and evaluating school counseling interventions and programs" (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007, p. ix).

Perception data: Data that is used to answer the question, "What do people think they know, believe, or can do" (ASCA, 2005, p. 50).

Process data: Data that answers the question, "what did you do for whom" (ASCA, 2005, p. 50).

Results data: Data that shows the impact of a counseling activity or program (ASCA, 2005, p.50).

School Counselor: A professional with a master's degree in school counseling and the required state issued certificate or license.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of literature on the accountability practices of school counselors. The chapter begins with the history of accountability in school counseling and the different accountability themes that emerged between 1920 and 2000. Major accountability initiatives are described to show how and why school counselors' accountability models and practices have evolved since 1990. Types of data and methods for collecting data used in accountability models will be presented. Lastly, there will be a discussion on barriers to school counselor accountability and the training needed for school counselors to be prepared to be accountable to the profession, communities, schools, parents and students.

The History of Accountability

Gybers (2004) traced the evolution of accountability from 1920s to 2000s. Each decade focused on accountability in different ways:

1. 1920s focused on establishing standards and evaluation of guidance and counseling programs;

2. 1930s continued to focus on establishing standards and evaluation of guidance and counseling programs and also started looking at the results and effectiveness of programs;

3. 1940s continued to emphasize the need for program evaluation and started looking at how school counselors were trained in evaluation;

4. 1950s continued to emphasize evaluation of school guidance and counseling programs. They called for more and better evaluation of guidance programs;

5. 1960s with the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) becoming a law in 1958, educators had to start being more accountable, which increase accountability in guidance and counseling. Discussions during this era also focused on the need for evaluation and the lack of it.

6. 1970s the focus on accountability increased because of the awareness of the lack of evaluation of guidance and counseling services. There was an emergence of the development of comprehensive systematic approaches to guidance program development and management.

7. 1980s practicing accountability was no longer a luxury, but a necessity, due to the budget cuts in the 80s. The concern for accountability increased and so did the research on accountability practices and the lack of it.

8. 1990s and 2000s continued to focus on the lack of research supporting the impact of guidance and counseling on the development of children and adolescents.

The question in the school counseling profession is no longer, "What do counselors do?" but "How are students different as a result of what counselors do?" Johnson and Johnson (2003) cite the following major changes in school counseling and accountability:

Focus on student results- In the past, services delivered to students were based on student and local school demand and need. Now services are based on the educational, career and personal/social needs of students."

Accountability – In the past, accountability was used to define counselor duties, but now accountability is focused on student results.

Teaming – In the past, counselors worked as individuals to meet the needs of students, but now counselors work in teams with other counselors and professionals to meet the needs of students.

Inductively Planned – In the past, counseling services were designed based on needs assessments, but now services are designed based on research.

Program Evaluation – In the past, program evaluation was based on how many services were offered to students and how many students were receiving services. Now, program evaluation is based on the number of students who demonstrate the expected outcomes.

Counselor Evaluation – In the past, counselors were evaluated on a standardized list of duties, but now counselors are being evaluated on their success in helping students.

Systems Oriented – In the past, counselors would try to assist students to solve their problems through crisis intervention, but now counselors have a new proactive approach and must reach out to all students. (p. 182)

Accountability Research

Recent emphasis on outcome research in counseling has resulted in a number of studies demonstrating the effectiveness of school counselors' interventions. Research has shown how students' academics, behavior, attitude and self-esteem has positively been impacted by comprehensive school counseling programs (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2003; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Sink & Stroh, 2003), classroom guidance (Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, & Coy 2002; Lee, 1993; Schlossberg, Morris, & Lieberman, 2001) and group counseling (Bauer, Sapp, & Johnson, 2000; Brantley, Brantley, & Baer-Barkley, 1996; Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Edmondson & White, 1998). Researchers have also explored comprehensive school counseling programs and their impact on student academics and success in school. Implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program is associated with higher grades, better preparation for the future, a positive school climate (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997), student safety and success (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2003), and improved standardized test scores (Sink & Stroh, 2003).

Comprehensive Developmental Guidance Programs

Sink and Stroh (2003) conducted a study to see if school counseling interventions in elementary schools with comprehensive developmental guidance programs foster higher academic achievement test scores in students. The researchers randomly selected one hundred and fifty elementary schools to participate in the study. Standardized norm-referenced and criterion reference test scores were used to assess academic achievement among the students. The results from this study indicate that elementary students who attend the same school for three or more years at a school with a comprehensive

developmental guidance program, do better academically. The results also indicated that students who remain in the same school, with a comprehensive developmental guidance program, for multiple years do better academically than those students who attend schools without comprehensive developmental guidance programs.

Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2003) conducted a study on the impact of a more fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling programs on students' perception of their safety in school, satisfaction with their education, grades, perception of their relationship with their teachers, and perceptions of the importance and relevance to their future. They collected data from teachers and students from 184 schools from 1992 to 1996. Students who participated in this study reported that they have better relationships with their teachers, higher grades, a belief that education is was more important to them and relevant to their future.

Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) conducted a study on the impact of comprehensive developmental guidance programs on student outcomes. The study was conducted with 236 high schools in the state of Missouri. The study concluded that schools with more fully implemented comprehensive guidance programs reported higher grades, students indicated that their school was preparing them well for later life, students reported that career and college information was readily available to them and students reported a positive school climate. This study showed how a fully implemented comprehensive guidance program would have a positive impact on student achievement and career development.

Classroom Guidance

Classroom guidance is used to help students in the areas of academics, behavior, attitude and self-esteem. Lee (1993) and Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, and Coy (2002) conducted research with elementary students to examine how classroom guidance impacted students, while Schlossberg (2001) conducted research with high school students. Lee (1993) found that classroom guidance lessons on school success positively influence students' academic achievement in mathematics. Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, and Coy (2002) taught students how to identify and cope with test anxiety through classroom guidance and group counseling. The classroom guidance and group counseling sessions decreased the students' test anxiety and 14 out of 16 of the group members passed the Reading and Math portions of the statewide test.

Based on their research, Schlossberg, Morris, and Lieberman (2001) concluded that classroom guidance units that addressed the developmental needs of ninth grade students, improved their behavior and school attitude. Six developmental guidance sessions were delivered to ninety-six ninth grade students by addressing goal-setting, problem solving, career exploration and recognition of available resources in the school setting. The students' attitude, behavior and level of information awareness were measured by student self-reports and teacher reports. Student behavior was measured by school habits and actions observed by teachers, student attitude was measured by the student's feeling about school and the level of information awareness was measured by the student's knowledge of counseling services, scheduling procedures and career planning. The students who participated in the developmental guidance sessions scored

higher in the areas of attitude, behavior and level of information awareness, than the students who did not participate in the developmental guidance sessions.

Group Counseling

Other researchers have used group counseling to help students in the areas of academics, behavior, attitude and self-esteem. Brantley, Brantley, and Baer-Barkley (1996) found group counseling to be effective in decreasing acting-out behaviors in elementary school students. Edmondson and White (1998) research suggests that middle school students' self-esteem, academic achievement and classroom behaviors will improve with the combination of tutoring and group counseling. Bauer, Sapp, and Johnson (1999) concluded that both cognitive-behavioral and person centered groups had a positive effect on high school students' self-esteem, academic self-concept, grade point average and detention. Brigman and Campbell (2003) used both group counseling and classroom guidance to increase student score, in math and reading, on a state standardized test and improve classroom behavior.

Studies demonstrating outcomes, such as those cited above, are important in that they provide counselors with a body of knowledge and empirically supported interventions to use under specified conditions. Unfortunately, there is a corresponding absence of research establishing best practices in systematic data collection and analysis practices used by school counselors to inform program development and implementation. Fairchild and Zins (1986) and Fairchild (1993) conducted two studies focusing on accountability practices of school counselors. The same questionnaire was used in both studies. The researchers wanted to determine if there was a difference in the accountability practices

of school counselors during the 6 years between studies. The researchers asked the following questions:

Are you currently gathering accountability information?

What do you consider to be significant barriers to the gathering of accountability information?

Why are you collecting accountability information?

How is the information used?

What types of data do you gather?

What types of methods do you use?

From which consumer groups is accountability information solicited?

How are data shared?

Where did you learn about accountability methods?

What assistance could professional organizations or university training programs give to assist you in collecting accountability data? (p. 2)

The results of the two surveys showed a statistically significant difference between the percentage of 1984 (54.8%) and 1990 (67%) respondents who were involved in accountability activity and collecting all three (enumerative, process and outcome) types of data. Time analysis and expert and peer reviews all had increased at a statistically significant rate. School counselors started soliciting input from parents more, increasing from 42.7% to 54.3%. There was a statistically significant increase in the respondents who used the school newspaper to share accountability information. There were two statistically significant changes in reasons school counselors collect information. There was a statistically significant decrease in the supervisor requiring the collection of

information and a statistically different increase in the state department requiring the collection of information. No published studies were found that examined the accountability of school counselors subsequent to Fairchild (1990).

Recent Initiatives in School Counseling

There have been many initiatives in education that have influenced the school counseling profession since Fairchild's research in 1990. These initiatives include the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 (U. S. Department of Education, 2001), the development of the National Standards for School Counseling Programs in 1997 (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the implementation of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 2007), the establishment of the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) in 2003 (Education Trust, 2007), the development of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model for School Counseling Programs in 2003 (ASCA, 2003) and the revision of the Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public Schools in 2003 (Alabama State Department of Education, 2003).

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) was passed to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required schools to be more accountable for student progress and achievement. One important part of this legislation included data driven programming and implementation of evidence-based practices to promote student learning and development. In this context, school counselors are challenged to show how

their efforts contribute to closing that achievement gap (Dahir, 2004). Through the use of data, school counselors are in a better position to demonstrate their effectiveness to constituents such as school board members, community and school leaders, parents and students (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; Whiston, 2002). Since the NCLB was passed (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), educators have been charged with closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their counterparts. Traditionally, central office personnel, school board members, administrators and teachers were held accountable for student achievement. Improvements in students' attendance, grades, dropout rates, retention, and test scores were used to show accountability in schools (Stone & Dahir, 2007). School counselors' efforts were not directly linked to student achievement in the past, but it was evident that school counselors were important to student success in schools (Hayes, Dagley, & Horne, 1996). The NCLB called for all school personnel including school counselors, evaluate the activities used with students and determine what impact, if any, these activities had on student achievement.

National Standards for School Counseling Programs

In 1994, the ASCA governing board decided that the development of National Standards for School Counseling programs was needed (Dahir, 2001, 2004). National Standards for School Counseling Programs (National Standards) were believed essential to guide the development of school counseling programs and to accurately convey to school stakeholders what students were expected to achieve as a result of participating in school counseling programs (Perry, 1991). There are nine standards identified across three content areas: academic; career; and personal-social development. The nine standards identify the attitude, skills and knowledge that students should acquire through

17

different experiences in each of these three areas (Dahir, 2001). The standards establish

expected outcomes for students as a result of participating in school counseling programs.

These standards guide the development of school counseling programs and specify

student outcomes to be measured.

Transforming School Counseling

In the early 1990s the Education Trust (2007) and DeWitt Wallace-Reader's

Digest started a national agenda to transform school counseling. To start transforming

school counseling, the Education Trust conducted a national assessment with practicing

school counselors and counselor educators. The assessment focused on school

counselors' preparation. The Education Trust got the following results from the

assessments:

(1) school counselors received training in school that was not related to actual

practice

(2) school counseling programs added courses, but they did not strategically add

courses specifically for school counselors

(3) counselors were trained separate from other educators and their courses were

not connected to other education training

(4) counselor training programs did not offer much training in advocacy,

leadership and collaboration skills. (p. 1)

Based on these findings, the Education Trust and DeWitt Wallace Fund developed

a competitive grant to help transform the training of school counselors. The Transforming

School Counseling Initiative was started with grants awarded to six universities to

implement changes in the following areas: criteria for selection and recruitment of

students, school counseling curriculum, field experiences, induction process, and development for counselor educators, partnerships with the school district and partnerships with the state department of education. This initiative was aimed toward providing a counselor preparation program that graduated students who were prepared to collaborate with stakeholders, serve as leaders in the school and who could use data to develop programs that resulted in improved student achievement. This initiative helped school counselors in training receive the training needed to use data and develop programs that positively affect student achievement.

In 2003, The Education Trust (2007) collaborated with MetLife Foundation to establish the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) to help train school counselors how to help all students be academically successful. The NCTSC (Education Trust, 2007) was formed to:

(1) serve as a voice for school counselors helping to close the achievement gap,

(2) produce literature and tools to promote the movement,

(3) assist counselor preparation programs with the transformation in school counseling,

(4) conduct research on effective school counseling practices,

(5) work with state departments of education to involve school counselors in closing the achievement gaps,

(6) offer workshops to train practicing counselors the skills needed in a standards based school system, offers conferences and meetings to bring practicing counselors, counselor educators, state leaders and partners together.

This initiative came at a time that school districts and schools were raising standards and school counselors needed to be trained on accountability practices.

ASCA National Model

When the National Standards for School Counseling Programs were introduced, they were welcomed by the profession, but there was still a need for a framework for implementing the Standards (ASCA, 2001). The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) was developed to provide the framework for developing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs that included the national standards. School counseling programs are comprehensive, preventive, developmental, integral in the total educational program, designs a delivery system, conducted in collaboration, monitors student progress, driven by data, seeks improvement, and shares success. There are four elements of the ASCA National Model:

1. The foundation includes the beliefs and mission of the counseling program and student competencies or what skills, knowledge or attitudes the student obtained or showed as a result of the school-counseling program.

2. The delivery system defines how the school-counseling program will be implemented. The four components of the delivery system include the guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and systems support.

3. The management system describes how the program will be managed at the school and includes the management agreements, advisory council, use of data, action plans, use of time, and calendars.

4. The accountability system addresses how effective the school-counseling program is. This includes results reports, school counselor performance standards, and program audits. (ASCA, 2005)

There are also four themes incorporated into the ASCA National Model: leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming and systemic change. School counselors must serve as leaders of change initiatives to help students be more successful. School counselors must advocate for the educational needs of all students. This is done by believing and supporting students' goals and working with students to remove barriers to learning. School counselors must collaborate with students, teachers, parents, administrators and other professionals to develop and implement responsive educational programs that help students to be successful. School counselors also serve as leaders in systematic change. This occurs when data are used to make policy and procedural changes.

The ASCA National Model's foundation is the ground from which the rest of the program is built. The foundation includes beliefs and philosophies, the mission statement and ASCA National Standards. Beliefs are formed from the experiences and background of school counselors. The beliefs then drive the school counselor's behavior. The philosophy is a set of principles that individuals follow when implementing a school counseling program. The mission statement describes the program's purpose and vision and it should be aligned with the school and district's vision. The ASCA National Standards for student academic, career and personal/social development describe what the students should know and be able to do within the educational system. All these

components are included in the foundation of the ASCA National Model to discuss what every student will know and be able to do.

The delivery system describes the activities and areas in which school counselors work to deliver the program. School guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services and system support are all components of the delivery system. The school guidance curriculum is comprehensive in scope, preventative and proactive, developmental in design, coordinated by school counselors and delivers by school counselors and other educators. The curriculum promotes knowledge, attitudes and skills through the areas of academic achievement, career development and personal/social growth. The school guidance curriculum is delivered through classroom instruction, interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities and parent workshops and instruction. Individual student planning is another component of the delivery system. School counselors are responsible for working with each individual student to plan, monitor and manage their own learning. Individual student planning is implemented through individual or small-group appraisal and individual or small-group advisement. Responsive services is the component of the delivery system that includes activities that meets the students' immediate needs and concerns. Responsive services are delivered through consultation, individual and small-group counseling, crisis counseling, referrals and peer facilitation. The last component of the delivery system is the system support. The system support includes activities that establish, maintain and enhance the total school counseling program. Professional development, consultation, collaboration and teaming, and program management and operations are all areas in system support.

The third element of the ASCA National Model is the management system. The management system describes the processes and tools needed to manage the school counseling program. The management system includes the management agreement, advisory council, use of data, action plans, and calendars. The management agreement is an agreement between the school counseling staff and site principals and administration. It includes information on the organization and assignment of counselors, budget requests and professional development plans. The advisory council is a group of stakeholders appointed to assist and advise the school counseling program. The members on the advisory council should reflect the diversity in the community.

Data should be used to drive the school counseling program. The data will show how the school counseling program impacted the students. To create a data-driven school counseling program, school counselors must monitor student progress through student-achievement data, achievement-related data and standards-and competency-related data. School counselors must also disaggregate data to see if there are any groups of students not doing as well as others. When evaluating the program, school counselors should use process, perception and results data. They also have to look at data over time by collecting data over three time frames: immediate, intermediate and long range.

The action plan is a detailed plan that shows how the counselor intends to achieve desired results. The school guidance curriculum action plan is organized to help students acquire, develop and demonstrate competencies within the three domains of academic, personal/social and career. The closing the gap action plan addresses programs and activities, that will help to lessen barriers and begin to close the achievement gap. Although the school guidance curriculum action plan can remain the same from year to

year, the closing the gap action plan may change from year to year based on the data and needs of the school.

School counselors must develop calendars to assist with planning and inform students, parents, teachers and administrators of what and when school counseling activities are scheduled. The school counselor should develop annual, monthly and weekly calendars to help identify counseling priorities, events and activities throughout the school year. The calendar should be located in the following places to help promote the school counseling program: department bulletin board, school and student bulletin boards, administrative offices, parent center, career center, classrooms, newspapers and websites.

The fourth component of the ASCA National Model is the accountability system. The accountability system demonstrates the effectiveness of the school counseling program. The accountability system includes the results report, school counselor performance standards and the program audit. The results report ensures that the programs were implemented and evaluate their effectiveness. The data collected indicates what programs and activities worked and what needs to be improved. The school counselor performance standards are also a part of the accountability system. School counselors are evaluated in the areas of program implementation, program evaluation and professionalism. The program audit is used to see if the program is aligned with ASCA's National Model. The results of the program audit should guide the program goals and training for the following year.

Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public Schools

The Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public Schools (2003) was revised in 2003 to provide a framework for school counselors to use to develop and implement school counseling and guidance programs. This ASCA National Model was used to develop this revised model for Alabama school counselors. The Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public Schools identifies four program delivery components to prepare students for success in academic, career, and personal/social development: School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support. The model gives information on program design, coordination, implementation, and accountability. The plan is based on the following premises:

1. School counseling and guidance programs are based on specific student knowledge and skill content.

2. School counseling and guidance programs are outcome-based programs.

3. School counseling and guidance programs are developmental and comprehensive in scope and sequence. (Alabama State Department of Education, 2003)

Alabama's comprehensive counseling and guidance programs should be data driven and linked to student success. Students should have multiple opportunities to acquire competencies in the three domains of academic development, career development and personal/social development. The four program delivery components will help students to achieve competencies in these three areas. The four delivery components are School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services and

System Support. Again, these delivery components are aligned with ASCA National Model's delivery components.

The school guidance curriculum includes classroom guidance activities, group activities, interdisciplinary curriculum development and parent workshops and instruction. The school guidance curriculum includes structured experiences presented to students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The individual student planning component includes individual or small-group appraisal, individual or small-group advisement and placement and follow-up. Individual student planning provides every student with the opportunity to plan, monitor and manage their academic, personal/social and career development. Responsive services are indirect guidance management activities that maintain and enhance the counseling and guidance program. The responsive services component includes consultation, personal counseling, crisis counseling, peer facilitation and referrals. These are counseling or referral activities that meet the immediate needs and concerns of students. The last component of the delivery system is system support. System support include professional development, in-service, consultation, collaboration and teaming, public relations, community outreach, consultation with staff, curriculum development support, advisory committees, program management and operations, research and evaluation and fair-share responsibilities.

The program accountability components in Alabama's school counseling and guidance programs include monitoring student progress, monitoring program progress, and personnel evaluations. Student progress can be monitored with student-achievement data, achievement related data, standards and competency related data, disaggregated data, and data over time are all used to determine how students have changed as a result

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of school counselors' efforts. Program progress can be monitored through program

evaluations, student results evaluations, and program audits. The Alabama Professional

Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) Program for Counselors is used to complete

personnel evaluations.

The Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public

Schools was developed to provide a framework for local school districts and schools to

develop and implement school counseling and guidance programs. The revised version of

this model was developed to be closely aligned with the ASCA National Model.

Although the Alabama state model is closely aligned with the ASCA National Model, it

is still unknown if counselors in Alabama are practicing accountability as outlined in

both.

Data-Based Programming

The collection of data are essential when evaluating programs and there are

different types of data that can be used to evaluate programs. In his early research,

Fairchild (1980) identifies three different types of data used for evaluation. The three

types of data are enumerative, process, and product or outcome data. Enumerative data

involves keeping track of the amount of time devoted to various activities or the number

of times an activity is performed. Enumerative data includes counting the number of

students counseled or the amount of time spent on conducting groups. The advantage of

using enumerative data is that it can be collected with a minimum amount of time, but it

does not give information on the quality of the process. Fairchild's second type of data is

process data. Process data gives information on the effectiveness of the process and is

collected during the evaluation. Fairchild's third type of data is product or outcome data.

This data gives information on the extent to which the goals and objectives of the

program are achieved. To summarize the three types of data, the enumerative data

describes the types of services delivered and the time spent delivering those services,

process data describes the quality of the services and the product or outcome data

describe the effectiveness of the services. Fairchild (1993) emphasized the importance of

collecting all three types of data because they all provide three different types of

information for evaluation.

More recently, the ASCA model refers to three types of data as well (ASCA,

2005). Process data answer the question, "what did you do for whom" (p. 50)? Perception

data is used to answer the question, "What do people think they know, believe, or can do"

(p. 50)? Results data show the impact of a counseling activity or program. When

reporting the impact of a counseling activity or program, school counselors may use

indicators such as attendance, suspension, behavior, graduation, promotion/retention

and/or grades (ASCA, 2005).

There are many different methods that school counselors use to gather

accountability data. Some of the most common methods used to gather accountability

data are tabulation (Fairchild, 1986, 1993; Fairchild & Seeley, 1995), time analysis

(Fairchild, 1986, 1993; Fairchild & Seeley, 1995; Keene & Stewart, 1989), case-study

(Fairchild, 1986, 1993; Fairchild & Seeley, 1995, Keene & Stewart, 1989), interview

(Fairchild, 1986, 1993), expert or peer opinion (Fairchild, 1986, 1993; Keene & Stewart,

1989), and rating scale or questionnaire (Fairchild, 1986, 1993; Fairchild & Seeley, 1995;

Myrick, 1990). Tabulation and time analysis both produce enumerative data. Tabulation

is a method used to count the number of activities conducted by a school counselor (Fairchild, 1993). This may include counting the number of counseling sessions, tests administered, parent trainings, or classroom guidance activities provided. Time analysis is another accountability method used by school counselors. This method is used to document the amount of time spent on various activities.

The interview, expert or peer opinion and rating scale or questionnaire can all be used to gather process or outcome data. If the information gathered from students, teachers, parents, administrators, peers or experts is used to evaluate the school counselor's professional skills, work habits or personal characteristics, it would be process data (Fairchild, 1993). If the information gathered from the same stakeholders listed above to measure any changes that occurred as a result of the school counselor's involvement, then the data would be outcome data (Fairchild, 1993). The case-study method is another way to collect outcome data. It is used on a selected number of individuals to study the effectiveness of the interventions and techniques used with each individual (Keene & Stewart, 1989).

Models for Accountability

Eschenauer and Chen-Hayes (2005) developed an accountability model for urban school counselors. The Transformative Individual School Counseling model (TISC) was developed because Eschenauer and Chen-Hayes believed that the needs of urban schools, families and students differed from traditional schools, families and students. The TISC is a four-step model: (1) shift from mental health perspective to school perspective, (2) define the problem, (3) implement short-term counseling interventions, and (4) evaluate

data using single-case research design. This model is a tool that can be used by school counselors to show the effectiveness of interventions used with students and address the issue of accountability.

Astramovich and Coker (2007) developed the Accountability Bridge Counseling Program Evaluation Model. This model has two cycles: the counseling program evaluation cycle and the counseling context evaluation cycle. The accountability bridge connects these two cycles. The counseling program evaluation cycle includes program planning, program implementation, program monitoring and refinement and outcomes assessment. The counseling context evaluation cycle includes feedback to stakeholders, strategic planning, needs assessment and service objectives. The accountability bridge is the process of communicating program results to stakeholders.

Another accountability process is the M.E.A.S.U.R.E., which is an acronym for Mission, Elements, Analyze, Stakeholders, Unite, Reanalyze, and Educate (Dahir & Stone, 2003). This is a seven-step process that supports the accountability component of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). The M.E.A.S.U.R.E. demonstrates how school counselors are dedicated to help close the academic gap. This accountability process shows that counselors are committed to focus on student achievement and contribute to the school's and system's goals and identify issues that interfere with student opportunities. Dahir and Stone (2003) state that sharing the responsibility for school improvement with all stakeholders is the driving force in transforming school counselors' work.

The School Counselor Rating Scale (SCARS) was developed to measure how school counselors spend their time versus how they would prefer to spend their time in

job-related activities (Scarborough, 2005). The list of preferred activities include consultation, coordination, counseling, and curriculum interventions. These preferred activities were taken from the ASCA National Model (2003). SCARS is used by counselors to gather process data. Process data is used for program evaluation and describes how the school-counseling program is structured and conducted and if plans were followed through. School counselors need process data to demonstrate their effectiveness and advocate for the school counseling profession.

Barriers to Accountability Efforts

Although there is much literature that expresses the need for school counselors to participate in accountability activities, school counselors have historically failed to do so. Researchers have identified many reasons why some school counselors are not collecting and using data. School counselors do not collect accountability data because of the fear of evaluation and negative consequences (Fairchild, 1993; Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Lewis, 1983); lack of training (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Fairchild, 1993; Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983; Wheeler & Loesch, 1981); lack of financial and people resources (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Wilson, 1985); time constraints (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983); not knowing what criteria to measure (Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983) and thinking that the accountability activity may be too cumbersome and difficult (Astramovich & Coker, 2005; Fairchild, 1993; Keene & Stewart, 1989; Lewis, 1983). Miller and Grisdale (1975) stated that school counselors have difficulties with developing evaluation procedures because they do not know where to start or end. Bauman (2004)

and Myrick (1990) both agree that school counselors are resistant to research. Bauman stated that the resistance of school counselors to research, are time constraints and a negative attitude towards research and Myrick acknowledged that some counselors are resistant because of the sophisticated research designs.

Solutions to Commonly Identified Barriers

Pine (1975) solved the counselors' problem of not knowing where to start or end by giving school counselors specific methods that could be used for evaluating effectiveness of programs. These methods include:

(1) The experimental approach, which includes the "after-only" design, the "before-and-after" design, and the "before-and-after-with-control-group" design;

(2) The tabulation approach;

(3) The expert opinion, which is a subjective evaluation by experts;

(4) The client opinion, which is opinion surveys of counselees;

(5) The external criteria or "do you do this" method;

(6) Opinion surveys of stakeholders;

(7) The descriptive approach; and

(8) The case-study approach. (p. 139)

Fairchild (1995) also answered counselors' question with thirteen strategies to improve counseling services, show effectiveness and improve the image of school counselors. Fairchild's strategies included needs assessments, advisory committee, tabulation of activities, time analysis, counseling case notes, student evaluation of counseling, teacher

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evaluation of counseling program, accountability conference, parent and teacher evaluation of assessment service, formal written report, school board presentation, teacher presentation, and public relations-public information activities. Fairchild's thirteen strategies emerged after the results of Fairchild's (1993; Fairchild & Zins, 1986) research on accountability practices of school counselors.

Midkiff and Burke (1987) and Gillies (1993) focused on action research for conducting program evaluations. Midkiff and Burke (1987) introduced a three dimensional framework of program evaluation. The three dimensions were: target or level on which the program evaluation was to be conducted, purpose or reason for conducting the program evaluation and stage or phase of the program during the evaluation. The program evaluation could be targeted at individuals, groups, systems/organizations, and/or larger social systems. The program evaluation would be conducted to develop programs, improve programs, accountability of programs and contributions to the knowledge. An evaluation would examine the program inputs, implementation and/or program outputs. Midkiff and Burke (1987) stated that action research is conducted to provide information to assist in decision-making and to lead to action and change.

Gullies (1993) agreed with Midkiff and Burke, by stating that action research provides information that has an impact on schools and leads to action and change. Gullies discussed the four approaches to action research that school counselors use: diagnostic, participant, empirical, and experimental. Counselors use diagnostic action research to deal with issues on a daily basis. This approach to action research involves the counselor making decisions about students with little input from others. Participant action

research involves the counselor and others in identifying the problem and being a part of the decision-making process. Data is gathered with questionnaires, interviews or needs surveys and the results are presented with graphs or tables. Empirical action research is used when a counselor wants to evaluate an intervention. The counselor would use the results to decide if the intervention was effective or needs to be modified. Experimental action research is different from empirical action research because it has a control and comparison group. Midkiff and Burke (1987) and Gillies (1993) describe action research as being essential to take action and make changes that impact achievement of students.

Some counselors are resistant to accountability because of the sophisticated research designs (Myrick, 1990). In an attempt to lessen the resistance to accountability, Myrick discussed using the retrospective method to evaluate effectiveness of counselor interventions. The retrospective method is conducted by asking the participants for their recollections of events or ideas. The participants are asked to respond to questions that reflect ideas, concepts and skills before the intervention and learned as a result of the intervention.

Other counselors wanted to move forward with being accountable and they developed accountability tools for other counselors to use. Fairchild and Seeley (1994) declared that time analysis was an important accountability tool for school counselors. Fairchild and Seeley state that improved time management skills, better professional image, evidence of effectiveness and improved services are all benefits of conducting a time analysis. Counselors' time management skills are improved because counselors are able to identify where time is wasted and become more focused and organized. The professional image is enhanced because time analysis provides information on the range

and extent of services counselors offer. Time analysis is evidence of effectiveness because it provides information to evaluate the consistency of the counselors' activities and priorities and goals for the school and district. The purpose of time analysis is to improve the quality and quantity of services and make necessary changes.

Wilson (1997) was another counselor who wanted to move forward with accountability. He identified a record-keeping system as an accountability tool. Wilson stated that there are three benefits to having a record-keeping system: (1) written documentation, (2) self-reflection, and (3) evaluation. A record-keeping system examines the reasons that students access counseling services and help counselors to make informed decisions about program changes.

Wheeler and Loesch (1981) respond to counselors' hesitancy to conduct research by explicating the differences between research and program evaluation. Wheeler and Loesch argue that program evaluation and research are different in many aspects. Program evaluation provides meaningful information for decision-makers to make changes but research provides new knowledge or builds or improves a theory. Research and program evaluation are also different in their relevance. Wheeler and Loesch believe that research is relevant to how it relates to a theory and program evaluation is relevant to how it relates to a goal or objective.

Developing and implementing a system for program evaluation takes time (Trevisan, 2001). It is important that counselors have the support of the building principals and district board members to implement an effective program evaluation. It is also important that there is strong leadership leading the development and

implementation of the program evaluation. Bardo, Bryson, and Cody (1978) provide

suggestions on ways that counselors increase accountability:

(1)   Counselor time and evaluation: request release time to complete

evaluation tasks. You can also use interns, counselor aides, parent

volunteers or other resource persons to assist while completing evaluation

tasks.

(2)   Counselor training: Counselors must be competent evaluators. Counselor

renewal workshops should be offered to assist counselors in upgrading

their skills.

(3)   Counselors can also return to the university to take specific courses in

evaluation.

(4)   Criteria for evaluation should be identified by providers and consumers of

guidance services: Counselors should be inventive and develop objectives

and criteria based on the uniqueness of their settings.

(5)   Evaluation has a positive influence on the development of school guidance

programs. Counselors should believe that they help students be successful.

Career-education programs should include community as resources for

guidance programs. (p. 205–208)

Other researchers are concerned that although school counselors are trying to be

accountable, there are other duties in the school that prevent them from participating in

accountability activities. Ekstrom, Elmore, Schafer, Trotter, and Webster (2004)

conducted research to identify how often school counselors performed various

assessment and evaluation activities. The results suggest that school counselors are not

able to use their professional expertise and training due to their non-counseling duties assigned to school counselors. This has been a huge discussion over the past couple of years. The discussion prompted ASCA to publicize a list of duties that are appropriate for school counselors and duties that are inappropriate for schools counselors (ASCA, 2007).

Although the school counseling profession has made many advances (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001), Sink (2002) believes that now is not the time for school counselors to get comfortable. Sink suggests that school counselors should stay focused on updating skills to serve all students, measuring student and program accomplishments and needs, having well-designed comprehensive programs, and advocating for themselves and their program. Otwell and Mullis (1997) state that counselors have to be more accountable in order to respond to parents' skepticism and budget cuts by some school boards.

While Brown and Trusty (2005a, 2005b) and Sink (2005) all agree that the school counselor's main mission is to support academic achievement (ASCA, 2005), they disagree about how to show the connection between efforts of school counselors and student outcome data. Brown and Trusty (2005a) believe that school counselors should use strategic interventions, such as study skills groups and behavior contracts, and proximal outcomes targeted by these interventions to show effectiveness and accountability. They argue that there are too many factors involved and research has not proven that the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program increases academic achievement. Sink (2005) believes that the effects of a comprehensive school counseling program on the academic achievement of students can be observed over time, when there is an effective evaluation team and collaboration.

Accountability Training

      When teaching graduate students how to become accountable school counselors, it is important that counselor educators examine the curriculum to decide how it can be most effective for graduate students. Granello (1998) and Sexton, Whiston, Bleuer, and Walz (1997) believe that it is essential for counselors in training to learn about accountability in the counselor education program, but they have different views of when accountability should be introduced to the graduate students. Granello (1998) thinks that graduate students should be introduced to accountability through a research course early in the counselor education program. Sexton, Whiston, Bleuer, and Walz (1997) have a different view of when accountability should be introduced to graduate students. They believe that research should be introduced to graduate students later in their program because many students have a statistics phobia.

      Granello (2000) makes suggestions about how the graduate students should be taught. She suggests that counselor educators use contextual teaching when working with graduate students. This is relating the concepts and information to the real world. Granello (2000) believes that it is five major components: situated nature of cognition, social nature of cognition, distributed nature of cognition, problem based learning and authentic assessment. Counselor educators should present the information to the students, allow students to explore the information presented, then allow the students to apply what they have learned (Granello, 1998). When counselors-in-training are taught statistical procedures, they cannot always apply what they have learned to program evaluation (Sexton, Whiston, Bleuer, & Walz, 1997). Students have to actively participate in the activity of program evaluation to understand how to use the knowledge they have

received. This is called situated nature of cognition. This can be applied to counselor education with case studies and role plays. Astramovich and Coker (2005) suggest that students should be trained on basic foundation methods and these methods should be incorporated into practicum and internship experiences. Most of the school counselors in their study stated that they needed training in evaluation methods and they also agreed that students in school counseling programs should learn about program evaluation. Fairchild's (1993) study concluded that university courses were third to professional literature and collaboration with colleagues, as a source of information about accountability.

Learning to use technology is another essential part of school counselor preparation programs. Hayes and Paisley (2002) stated that experience and learning to use technology are essential in school counselor preparation programs. They believe that experience is the only way that a graduate student can be taught how to effectively use technology. Also important is the need for counselors-in-training to learn how to communicate and collaborate with stakeholders about the effectiveness of their programs. Technology can be used to show how the counseling program is helping students to achieve academic, social, and personal success and this is an essential part of being accountable (Sabella, & Booker, 2003). Technology can also be used to manage student information in schools (Sabella, 2004) or supervise counselors-in-training (Sabella, 1995). Counselor education students are learning the skills needed to conduct online counseling (Trepal, Haberstroh, Duffey, & Evans) and participating in computer based supervision (Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007).

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on the accountability practices of school counselors. First, the history of accountability in school counseling was discussed, then major accountability initiatives were described to show how and why school counselors' accountability models and practices have evolved since 1990. Next, the types of data and methods for collecting data used in accountability models were presented. Last, barriers to school counselor accountability and how accountability is incorporated into counselor training were discussed. Combined, these areas of the significant literature support the need to investigate the current accountability practices of school counselors. Alabama's school counselors are an appropriate group from which to gather information for two reasons: 1) Alabama has adopted a model program based on the ASCA model, and 2) the evaluation system need for Alabama school counselors at local and state levels are predicated on this model, including the accountability component.

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a description of the research design and methodology used to examine accountability practices in school counseling. This chapter includes the research questions addressed, a description of the participants, the instrument used, data collection procedures and the method for data analysis.

A cross sectional survey design was used to answer the following research questions:

1.   Are school counselors in Alabama collecting, analyzing, and using student achievement and related data to plan and improve school counseling programs?

2.   What data-driven school counseling initiatives are school counselors in Alabama implementing?

3.   What assistance do school counselors in Alabama need to collect, analyze, and present accountability data about their school counseling program.

The cross-sectional survey design was most appropriate to examine current accountability practices among counselors in Alabama (Creswell, 2005).

Participants

Prospective participants were school counselors solicited from the 2007–2008 membership list of the Alabama Counseling Association (N = 950). This is

approximately 50% of all the school counselors in Alabama (N = 1892). The prospective

participants were contacted by the Alabama Counseling Association and asked to respond

to a structured questionnaire designed to get information on their accountability practices

as a school counselor. An e-mail was sent to members who belong to the Alabama

Counseling Association listserv, to solicit their participation in this study. Two weeks

after the first e-mail, a second e-mail was sent out on the Alabama Counseling

Association listserv, to solicit school counselors' participation in this study (see

Appendix A). A total of 431 counselors responded, but 11 of the counselors were not

school counselors. Their responses were not used for this study. There were 420 school

counselors who responded and this was a 44% response rate. This is higher than the

average response rate of 36.83% for e-mail surveys researched by Sheehan (2001). The

number of respondents by grade level included elementary (n = 146), middle (n = 138),

high (n = 134), and K–12 (n = 2) school counselors.

<center>Instrument</center>

During the literature review, no existing instrument aligned with the ASCA

National Model, was identified to examine the accountability practices of school

counselors in Alabama. The School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire

(SCAPQ) was developed by the researcher to examine the accountability practices of

school counselors in Alabama. The questionnaire consists of thirteen questions with items

based on literature that identified accountability practices of school counselors (Alabama

State Department of Education, 2003; American School Counselor Association, 2005:

Astramovich & Coker, 2007; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Fairchild, 1980, 1995; Fairchild &

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Seeley, 1994; Fairchild & Zins, 1986; Pine, 1975). The SCAPQ was designed to answer the three research questions proposed for this study (see Appendix B). There are a total of 13 questions on the SCAPQ.

For the first question, participants answered yes or no. For questions two through ten, participants responded to a 5-point Likert scale. The Likert scale had the responses of: not at all, somewhat, frequently, often and always. Participants gave an open-ended response to questions eleven through thirteen. Questions were developed based upon the literature and ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005; Alabama State Department of Education, 2003; Fairchild, 1993, 1995). The instrument was constructed to reflect the areas that ASCA identify as important in school counselor accountability practices (ASCA, 2005). The questionnaire was pretested and evaluated by a counselor educator faculty member and two practicing school counselors. These school counseling professionals evaluated the SCAPQ and provided feedback. Pretesting is a highly used part of questionnaire design to get feedback in a timely manner (Dillman, 2000).

Procedures

After receipt of approval of the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (see Information Sheet, Appendix D), participants were recruited by sending an e-mail invitation (see Appendix C) describing the study and asking school counselors to participate. The e-mail was sent out to 1500 subscribers to the ALCA listserv. No incentives or motivators were offered to participate in the research. After reading the information sheet (see Appendix D), participants were asked to fill out an online questionnaire through Survey Monkey. Survey monkey is an online tool used to develop

surveys and collect and analyze data. Only individuals who were currently practicing school counselors were eligible to participate. The participants' e-mail addresses were not captured, so the information will remain anonymous. A follow-up e-mail invitation (Appendix A) was sent out on the ALCA listserv two weeks after the first invitation.

Data Analysis

The Survey Monkey online program was used to collect and analyze the quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected from questions one through ten were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The mean and median were used to find the central tendencies of the responses and the standard deviation was used to find the average distance of the responses from the mean. Responses for 11 through 13 were open-ended questions and analyzed by reviewing all participant response to identify themes and patterns. The themes and patterns were similar to the barriers that were identified in Fairchild's research (Fairchild, 1993).

Summary

This study was accomplished by obtaining information from practicing, professional school counselors. Voluntary participants provided information regarding their accountability practices via an electronic survey. Survey monkey collected the data and organized the data by question, into a spread sheet. The information was then imported into SPSS. Results from the study will be addressed in the following chapter.

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which school counselors are including accountability practices in their programs. The first three chapters of this study presented an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, a review of relevant literature, and methods and procedures used to collect data. This chapter will revisit the primary research questions and focus on the results of the study. The results of the study are presented descriptively and in tabular format.

Research Questions

1.   Are school counselors in Alabama collecting, analyzing, and using student achievement and related data to plan and improve school counseling programs?

2.   What data-driven school counseling initiatives are school counselors in Alabama implementing?

3.   What assistance do school counselors in Alabama need to collect, analyze, and present accountability data about their school counseling program?

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which school counselors are including accountability practices in their programs. All participants were members of the Alabama Counseling Association. A total of approximately 950 school counselors in

Alabama were solicited to complete the survey. There were 420 surveys completed by school counselors and 11 were completed by counselors not currently practicing as a school counselor. This was a total of a 44% return rate.

The first research question was: Are school counselors in Alabama collecting, analyzing, and using student achievement and related data to plan and improve school counseling programs? To answer the first research question, participants were asked the following survey questions:

Are you currently participating in accountability practices?

To what extent do you collect the following data?

To what extent do you use the following methods to collect data about your
school counseling program?

To what extent do you collect accountability data for the following reasons?

To what extent did you learn about accountability methods from the following?

To what extent do you use the following student achievement data for
accountability practices?

To what extent do you use achievement related data for accountability practices?

To what extent are you likely to use the following categories to disaggregate and
view data?

To what extent do you use the following to share data?

Participants were first asked: Are you currently participating in accountability practices? The results indicate that a little over half of the participants (n = 250) are not participating in accountability practices, while fewer than half of the participants (n = 170) are

participating in accountability practices. The following tables (Tables 1–8) report the
measures for central tendency.

Another question relates to research question 1: To what extent do you collect the
following data? To answer this question, process data, perception data, and results data
were examined using SPSS and described in terms of their mean and standard deviation
(see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Data Being Collected

[CoE1]Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Process Data	166	3.61	4.0	1.169
Results Data	165	3.54	4.0	1.140
Perception Data	165	3.36	3.0	1.143

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Methods Used to Collect Data

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Rating scales/Questionnaire	161	3.73	4.0	.960
Tabulation	163	3.72	4.0	1.157
Reports generated at school or system level	163	3.40	4.0	1.270

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Interviews	161	3.16	3.0	1.264
Time analysis	162	3.06	3.0	1.384
Expert/Peer review	157	2.92	3.0	1.354
Case studies	161	2.75	3.0	1.429
Other	9	2.56	2.0	1.667

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Reasons Accountability Data is Collected

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Program planning and improvement	162	3.88	4.0	.944
Supervisor requirement	161	3.71	4.0	1.069
Personal choice for professional growth	161	3.69	4.0	1.102
District central office requirement	162	3.62	4.0	1.086
State department of education requirement	160	3.59	4.0	1.135
Other	3	2.0	1.0	1.732

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Where Accountability Methods Were Learned

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Professional conference	160	3.76	4.0	1.019
Reading professional literature	163	3.60	4.0	1.125
Developed on own/collaboration with colleagues	161	3.50	4.0	1.090
State department of education	161	3.30	3.0	1.229
University course	159	3.30	3.0	1.305
Other	4	1.50	1.0	1.000

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for the Use of Student Achievement Data for Accountability

Practices

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Standardized test scores	163	4.02	4.0	.962
Promotion and retention rates	163	3.76	4.0	1.059
Grade point averages	161	3.71	4.0	1.187
Passing all classes	160	3.60	4.0	1.156
Completion of academic programs	160	3.13	3.0	1.415
Dropout rates	159	2.83	3.0	1.572

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Graduation rate	159	2.81	3.0	1.613
Other	5	1.60	1.0	1.342

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Use of Achievement Related Data for Accountability Practices

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Excessive absenteeism	161	3.78	4.0	1.017
Discipline referrals	161	3.73	4.0	1.078
Suspension rates	159	3.61	4.0	1.180
Parent or guardian involvement	161	3.57	4.0	1.042
Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug violations	160	3.21	4.0	1.415
Course enrollment pattern	160	3.18	4.0	1.440
Homework completion rates	159	3.14	3.0	1.345
Participation in extracurricular activities	160	3.08	3.0	1.350
Other	12	2.08	1.0	1.379

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Responses on How Data is Disaggregated and Viewed

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Race/ethnicity	162	3.51	4.0	1.227
Gender	162	3.48	4.0	1.207
Socioeconomic status	161	3.30	3.0	1.269
Students who are overage for grade by two years or more	149	3.21	3.0	1.280
Proficiency with English	162	2.98	3.0	1.369
Students retained in kindergarten or first grade	158	2.84	3.0	1.445

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Responses for Sharing Data

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Formal report to administrators	163	3.75	4.0	1.096
School newsletter	161	3.02	3.0	1.353
School website	160	2.97	3.0	1.380
Other	10	2.90	3.0	1.595
Presentation to school board	163	2.87	3.0	1.505
Local newspaper	160	2.61	3.0	1.480

The third research question was: What assistance do school counselors need to collect, analyze, and present accountability data about their school counseling program? To answer the third research question, participants were asked the following survey questions:

To what extent do the following barriers prevent you from practicing accountability?

What assistance could professional organizations or university training programs provide that would increase the likelihood that you collect, analyze, and present accountability data about your school counseling program?

What assistance could your school system provide that would increase the likelihood that you collect, analyze, and present accountability data about your school counseling program?

Table 9 reports the measures for central tendency for the first survey question that answers the third research question: To what extent do the following barriers prevent you from practicing accountability? The other two survey questions that answer the third research question, are analyzed in the "Analysis of Open-Ended Questions."

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Barriers that Prevent School Counselors from

Practicing Accountability

Item	N	Mean	Median	SD
Too time consuming and cumbersome	245	3.94	4.0	1.079
Concern about negative consequences	247	3.73	4.0	1.138
Do not like to do research	247	3.73	4.0	1.095
Unfamiliar with accountability practices	248	3.71	4.0	1.089
Other	5	3.60	4.0	1.673
Have not given accountability much thought	247	3.34	3.0	1.153
Perceive accountability information as unnecessary	248	3.14	3.0	1.318

Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

Research Question 2: What data-driven school counseling initiatives are school counselors in Alabama implementing? To answer this question, participants were asked to respond to Question 11 in the SCAPQ: Describe one example of a data-driven school counseling initiative that you implemented and explain how this initiative contributed to student achievement. Of the 159 (38%) participants who answered this question, 82 (52%) indicated that they had not implemented any such initiatives.

The 77 (48%) respondents who did implement a data-driven initiative reported that these initiatives focused on test taking skills (n = 24), grades (n = 14), high school

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graduation exam (n = 9), behavior (n = 8), career development (n = 8), attendance (n = 7), drug awareness (n = 5), and parental involvement (n = 2). Research Question 3: What assistance do school counselors in Alabama need to collect, analyze, and present accountability data about their school counseling program? To answer this research question, participants were asked to respond to Question 12 in the SCAPQ: What assistance could professional organizations or university training programs provide that would increase the likelihood that you collect, analyze, and present accountability data about your school counseling program? There were 407 (97%) of the total number of participants (N=420) who answered this question. There were 162 (46%) respondents who answered, "training," "workshop," or "in-service." There were 82 (20%) of the respondents who answered, "none," "I do not know," "n/a," or "nothing." Table 10 displays the results for responses to Question 12 (see Appendix E).

Table 10

Assistance from Professional Organizations or University Programs

Item	Responses	%
Trainings	169	42
None/NA	82	20
Manual	72	18
Inform Administrators	33	8
Courses	31	8
Support	6	1
Journal Articles	4	1
Other	3	1

For additional information pertaining to research question 3, counselors responded to Question 13: What assistance could your school system provide that would increase the likelihood that you collect, analyze, and present accountability data about your school counseling program? There were 407 (97%) of the total number of participants (N = 420) who answered this question. There were 183 (45%) of the respondents who answered, "training," "workshop," or "in-service." There were 85 (21%) of the respondents who answered, "none," "I do not know," "n/a," or "nothing." Table 11 reports the findings that answers question 13 (Appendix F).

Table 11

Assistance from School System

Item	Responses	%
Trainings	183	45
None/NA	85	21
Inform Administrators	63	15
Manual	41	10
Support	21	5
Other	14	3

This concludes all of the analyses. In chapter five, a summary of the findings, limitations of the study, implications for school counselors, counselor educators, professional organizations, and school administrators, and recommendations for future research will be addressed.

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which school counselors are including accountability practices in their programs. The first four chapters of this study presented an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, a review of relevant literature, methods and procedures used to collect data, and the results of data analyses. Included in this chapter are the limitations of the current study, a discussion of the results and their implications, as well as recommendations for future research.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the study that should be addressed. The first limitation of the study is related to how the data were collected from the sample. An on-line survey was used to collect data on school counselor accountability. When data are collected using an on-line survey, it limits participation to only school counselors who have access to a computer. There are some school counselors who do not have access to a computer or do not have the skills needed to effectively work on a computer. As a result, the participants in this study may not represent the entire population of school counselors in Alabama.

The second limitation of this study is the use of a self-reporting measure. Using a self-reporting measure may have caused the participants to report information that is socially desirable or expected from a professional organization. Studies have indicated that one of the barriers to school counselors participating in accountability activities is the fear of negative consequences. This fear could have contributed to the participants reporting what is believed to be socially desirable and not reporting their actual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

The third limitation of this study is that the study may not be generalized to represent all school counselors in Alabama or nationwide. School counselors in Alabama are also not a representation of the entire population of school counselors. The results may have been different if the data had been collected from a national sample.

A final limitation of this study is that the characteristics of school counselors were not identified. If the characteristics of school counselors, such as years of experience, were identified, counselor educators and professional organizations would know what population of school counselors would need assistance with increasing accountability practices.

Overview

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the accountability practices of school counselors in light of recent initiatives and educational reforms. There have been many initiatives in education that have influenced the school counseling profession since 1990. These initiatives include the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 (U. S. Department of Education, 2001), the development of the National Standards for

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School Counseling Programs in 1997 (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the implementation of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 2007), the establishment the Nation Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) in 2003 (Education Trust, 2007) and the development of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model for School Counseling Programs in 2003 (ASCA, 2003). Common to most of these initiatives is the emphasis on data based decision making and the use of evidenced based practices in educational settings.

In the past, school counselors demonstrated accountability by keeping logs of services they provided and calendars of planned services. Presently, school counselors are urged to implement results based programs and evaluate the effectiveness of the program as it relates to student achievement (Astrovich & Coker, 2005). This study examined the extent to which school counselors in one state in the southeastern United States were participating in accountability practices and implementing data-driven initiatives. This study also sought to understand what types of assistance school counselors need to increase their participation in accountability practices.

Results of the Study

This research study was comprised of 420 currently practicing school counselors in Alabama. The participants completed the School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire (SCAPQ) which was developed for this study. The questionnaire contains thirteen questions intended to find out the accountability practices of school counselors. The questionnaire addressed how school counselors are collecting, analyzing, and using achievement and achievement related data, what data driven initials school counselors in

Alabama are implementing, and what assistance school counselors in Alabama need to analyze, collect, and share accountability data about their school counseling programs.

School counselors from all four educational levels (elementary, middle, high, K–12) participated in the study. The participation was fairly evenly distributed across elementary (34.8%), middle (32.9%) and secondary (31.9%) school counselors. As might be expected due to the limited number of schools designated as K–12, school counselors employed in this setting represented the smallest number of participants (.4%).

Accountability Practices of School Counselors in Alabama

The first question in this study focused on school counselors analyzing, collecting, and using accountability and accountability related data to plan and improve school counseling programs. The results indicate that more than one-half of the respondents, 59% (n = 250) do not participate in accountability practices. The remaining 40.5% (n = 170) of the participants do participate in accountability practices. School counselors report that the greatest barriers to practicing accountability are the amount of time required, their dislike of research, and concerns about negative consequences if data indicate that their interventions and programs are not achieving the desired results. Given the current emphasis throughout education to demonstrate results, this finding is alarming. Counselors who are unable to demonstrate that their programs and interventions effectively assist students to achieve success in school and acquire the skills students need to be successful upon graduation are in danger of being replaced by programs and initiatives that are able to demonstrate successful outcomes.

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Respondents reported that they collect process data (40%), results data (39%), and perception data (39%). Fairchild (1993) reported similar findings in his 1990 study. Process data is useful because it can be collected in a minimal amount of time and can be used when reporting the amount of time devoted to non-guidance duties. Results data show the impact of a counseling intervention or program. Results data is also used to show how school counselors impact student achievement. Perception data is used to evaluate what students think or believe they know or can do. This data is useful when showing how a school counselor implemented intervention or program can impact students' belief or thoughts about what they know or can do.

Most of the respondents reported that they were using tabulation (39%), review reports generated at school or system level (39%), and time analysis (39%) to collect accountability data. In the past, school counselors thought that counting the number of sessions or activities, thus accounting for whom they spent their time and how many students they saw was being accountable. In the current educational climate and consistent with reforms in school counseling, school counselors are urged to demonstrate how students have changed as a result of school counseling programs and activities. In order to do so, school counselors must learn and take time to collect data and use data that demonstrate results in relation to student achievement (Astrovich & Coker, 2005).

Most of the school counselors reported that they collect accountability data for program planning and improvement (39%) and because district central office required them to collect data (38%). The specific types of data collected and used most often for program improvement include achievement data such as standardized test scores (39%) and promotion and retention rates (39%). Information about excessive absenteeism

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(38%), discipline referrals, and parent or guardian involvement (38%) were also identified by respondents as achievement related data used for accountability purposes. For these types of data, most respondents reported that they disaggregate by race/ethnicity (39%), gender (39%), and socioeconomic status (38%). When looking at data on student achievement, the school scores may be within desired ranges, but when disaggregated, some groups of students may not be achieving at acceptable levels. "Disaggregated data … is very important in the study of student performance and in examining equity issues. This disaggregation of data makes it possible to determine how policy and practices affect issues of equity as counselors work toward closing the gap in student opportunities and achievement" (Stone & Dahir, 2006, p. 247). When sharing data, most respondents reported that they make a formal report to administrators. Many of the respondents also reported that they make presentations to the school board and use the school newspaper to share data.

Data-Driven Initiatives

Of the 420 participants in this study, only 170 (40%) reported that they participate in accountability activities. Out of the 170 who reported that they participate in accountability activities, only 159 (38%) of these participants answered the question about data-driven initiatives that were implemented. Only 78 (19%) out of the 159 (49%) provided an example of a data-driven initiative that they had implemented. This is a concern because only 78 (19%) of the total participants (N = 420) were able to discuss how student achievement has increased as a result of their efforts. The lack of school counselors implementing data-driven initiatives may be due to the lack of skills and

knowledge that school counselors acquired about practicing accountability. This is addressed in the next section.

Assistance Needed to Collect, Analyze, and Share Data

Close to half of the respondents (42%) reported that they need trainings, in-service, workshops, or conferences to increase the likelihood that they would collect, analyze, and share accountability data about their school counseling programs. Respondents reported that they learned accountability methods from professional conferences (39%), state department of education (39%), and developing their own/collaboration with colleagues (39%). This means that most school counselors did not learn accountability methods from university training programs (38%). This is a concern because school counselors who enter the profession without the necessary skills and knowledge may not be motivated to develop these skills on the job. As a result, they may not practice accountability.

Respondents also identified needs for a step-by-step guide or manual (18%), more university courses (8%), and inform administrators of non-guidance duties in order to increase their accountability efforts (8%). Respondents also reported that they need training (45%), inform administrators of non-guidance duties (15%), and a manual (10%) from the local school system to increase the likelihood that they would collect, analyze, and present accountability data about their school counseling programs. These results indicate that school counselors feel that they need more training in the area of accountability, more resources, manuals, or guides to assist with accountability practices, and more local support to increase their accountability practices.

Implications for School Counselors

School counselors may use the results of this study in several ways. First, this study will make school counselors in Alabama more aware that although there is a definite need for school counselors to participate in accountability practices, there is also a lack of school counselors practicing accountability. Secondly, school counselors will also be more aware of the barriers that are preventing school counselors from practicing accountability. With the knowledge of the barriers, school counselors can work with colleagues, supervisors, and counselor educators to become more familiar with and adept at using accountability procedures and learn how to overcome the concerns with potential negative consequences. Lastly, school counselors can use this information to talk to principals, administrators, and other stakeholders about the need for school counselor trainings and workshops on accountability.

Implications for Counselor Educators

Results from this study will help counselor educators when they are planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating their counselor education programs. The results of this study identify the barriers that are preventing school counselors in Alabama from participating in accountability activities. Counselor educators can use that information to help develop the courses that are needed to increase school counselor participation in accountability practices. Accountability practices should be integrated in all counseling courses, so school counselors can have the knowledge and skills required to practice accountability. Counselor educators can also focus on the identified barriers when planning field experiences, practicum and internship. School counselors in training

can learn the skills and techniques needed to overcome barriers to participating in accountability activities.

Counselor educators can work with professional organizations and local school counselor supervisors to develop an easy to read, step-by-step manual to help school counselors overcome barriers that prevent school counselors from participating in accountability practices. The manual could be used by school counselors-in-training and practicing school counselors who need assistance with being more accountable.

Counselor educators should also work with local school systems to identify the lacking skills and knowledge in accountability. After identifying the need for those particular school systems, the counselor educators and university could offer workshops and trainings for practicing school counselors to increase their skills and knowledge in accountability. Lastly, counselor educators could also use the results of this study to infuse accountability practices in all school counseling courses. This will help school counselors to make the connection between theory and practice.

Counselor educators can help to advocate for the profession by communicating with administration educators about guidance and non-guidance duties. Counselor educators can work with administration educators to develop trainings, workshops, or courses to help administrators understand the role of school counselors and how data-driven initiatives can improve student achievement. Counselor educators should also advocate for the profession by submitting articles to administrator journals. Articles should focus on guidance and non-guidance duties and accountability practices in school counseling.

Implications for Professional Organizations

Professional organizations for school counselors can benefit from the results of this study. Professional organizations should use the results of this study to develop more trainings, workshops, and conferences to help school counselors increase and improve their practices in accountability. Professional organizations should also have more journals and journal articles that focus on accountability in school counseling. Lastly, professional organizations can use the information from this study to help advocate for more funds to be distributed to school counselor training programs and the development of comprehensive, data-driven school counseling programs in K-12 schools. This will help school counselors to develop programs that will contribute to academic achievement and decrease the dropout rates.

Implications for School Administrators

The results from this study can help school administrators to understand the difference in guidance and non-guidance duties. School administrators will also be more aware of how comprehensive, data-driven school counseling programs positively affect the academic achievement of students in the school. Implementing a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program is difficult for school counselors when they are bombarded with non-guidance duties. School administrators should collaborate with school counselors to ensure the improvement of student achievement.

Suggestions for Future Research

School counselors and educators need to continue to conduct research in the area of accountability. The current research focuses on accountability practices of school counselors in Alabama. Future research should be conducted on accountability practices of school counselors nationally. Future research should also be conduct in the next five to ten years in Alabama to see if school counselors have increased their practices in accountability. Future research should also be conducted to see if the guidance duties are different in schools where school counselors are implementing data-driven initiatives. The profession would also benefit from future research with school administrators to get their perception of data-driven initiatives that are being implemented by school counselors.

The results from this study also show that there is a need for future research to examine the extent to which counselors-in-training are receiving training in collecting and analyzing data. School counselors should not only be receiving information and training on collecting and analyzing data, they should also be participating in experiences that allow them to connect the theory to practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FIRST AND SECOND RECRUITMENT EMAILS

Dear ALCA Members,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology, and School Psychology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to determine if school counselors have changed their accountability practices in light of recent educational reforms that emphasize data driven decision making and evidence based practice. You may participate if you are a practicing school counselor in Alabama.

For more information or to access the survey, please go to:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=6Y7tk44CR1a63IPSU_2fgWbA_3d_3d.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. Your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions regarding completing this study or the results of this study, please contact the principal investigator, LaWanda Edwards at (334) 844-5160. Alternatively, you may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Debra Cobia at (334) 844-5160.

Sincerely,

LaWanda Edwards, Ed.S.
2084 Haley Center
Auburn University
Auburn, AL 36849
e-mail: edwarls@auburn.edu
Phone: 334-844-5160

For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

Dear ALCA Members,

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APPENDIX B

SCHOOL COUNSELOR ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE

(SCAPQ)

School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire

1. Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET
For Research Study Entitled
---ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS---

You are invited to participate in a research study to determine if school counselors have changed their accountability practices in light of recent educational reforms that emphasize data driven decision making and evidence based practice. The study is being conducted by LaWanda Edwards under the supervision of Dr. Debra Cobia. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a practicing school counselor in Alabama.

If you decide to participate, you will fill out a questionnaire which has a total time commitment of approximately 20 minutes. There is no risk and compensation associated with participating in this study. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. Information collected through your participation will be used to fulfill an educational requirement (doctoral degree), may be published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting. You have the right to withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty, however, after you have provided anonymous information, you will be unable to withdraw your data after participation since there will be no way to identify individual information.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or Department of Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology and School Psychology.

If you have any questions, I invite you to contact me at the telephone number or email listed below.

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The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from July 14, 2008 to July 13, 2009. Protocol #08-164 EX 0807

2.

＊1. Are you currently a practicing school counselor?

◯ Yes

◯ No

3.

School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire

* 2. What is your current work-setting?

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Middle / Jr. High
- ☐ High
- ☐ K-12

4.

* 3. Are you currently participating in accountability practices?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5.

* 4. To what extent do the following barriers prevent you from practicing accountability?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Unfamiliar with accountability procedures	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Do not like to do research	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Too time consuming and cumbersome	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Have not given accountability much thought	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Concern about potential negative consequences	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Perceive accountability information as unnecessary	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other (specify below)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other

[   ]

6.

* 5. To what extent do you collect the following types of data?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Process Data (What service was offered?) Example: Conducted 5 eight-session counseling groups with eight students on study skills.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Perception Data (What are the attitudes, skills, or knowledge acquired?) Example: 85 percent of the students can identify the steps in conflict resolution.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Results Data (How have students changed as a result of your counseling program?) Example: Attendance rates improved by 10 percent.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7.

School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire

* 6. To what extent do you use the following methods to collect data about your school counseling program?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Tabulation (counting # of times an event occurs)	○	○	○	○	○
Rating scales / Questionnaire	○	○	○	○	○
Time analysis	○	○	○	○	○
Interviews	○	○	○	○	○
Case Studies	○	○	○	○	○
Expert/ Peer review	○	○	○	○	○
Review of reports generated at school or system level	○	○	○	○	○
Other (specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

Other

8.

* 7. To what extent do you collect accountability data for the following reasons?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Personal choice for professional growth	○	○	○	○	○
Program planning and improvement	○	○	○	○	○
Supervisor requirement	○	○	○	○	○
District central office requirement	○	○	○	○	○
State department of education requirement	○	○	○	○	○
Other (specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

Other

9.

* 8. To what extent did you learn about accountability methods from the following?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Reading professional literature	○	○	○	○	○
Developed on own/ collaboration with colleagues	○	○	○	○	○
University course	○	○	○	○	○
Professional conference	○	○	○	○	○
State department of education	○	○	○	○	○
Other (specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

Other

10.

School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire

* 9. To what extent do you use the following student achievement data for accountability practices?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Standardized test scores	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Grade point averages	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Graduation rate	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Passing all classes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Promotion and retention rates	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Dropout rates	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Completion of specific academic programs (i.e., academic honors, college prep, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other (specify below)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other

_____

11.

* 10. To what extent do you use achievement related data for accountability practices?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Course enrollment pattern	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discipline referrals	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Suspension rates	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug violations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Excessive absenteeism	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Parent or guardian involvement	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Participation in extracurricular activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Homework completion rates	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other (specify below)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other

_____

12.

* 11. Based on the data you indicated in 7 and 8, to what extent are you likely to use the following categories to disaggregate and view data?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Race / ethnicity	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Gender	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Socioeconomic status	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Proficiency with English	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Students retained in kindergarten or first grade	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Students who are overage for grade by two years or more	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

13.

School Counselor Accountability Practices Questionnaire

* 12. To what extent do you use the following to share data?

	not at all	sometimes	frequently	often	always
Formal report to administrators	○	○	○	○	○
Presentation to school board	○	○	○	○	○
School website	○	○	○	○	○
School newsletter	○	○	○	○	○
Local newspaper	○	○	○	○	○
Other (specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

Other

14.

* 13. Describe one example of a data-driven school counseling initiative that you implemented and explain how this initiative contributed to student achievement.

15.

* 14. What assistance could professional organizations or university training programs provide that would increase the likelihood that you collect, analyze, and present accountability data about your school counseling program?

16.

* 15. What assistance could your school system provide that would increase the likelihood that you collect, analyze, and present accountability data about your school counseling program?

---

17. You have completed the survey.

Thank you for completing this survey!

APPENDIX C

E-MAIL REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

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APPENDIX D

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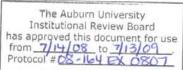
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APPENDIX E

DATA-DRIVEN COUNSELING INITIATIVE RESPONSES

Attendance

"I worked on improving the attendance rate for the school."

"I worked with the entire school population to improve attendance."

"I started an attendance incentive program that improved the school's attendance rate."

"I helped the school attendance improve with an attendance incentive program."

"Student attendance related to course grades but particularly failure rates. New

attendance policy was created."

"We used absentee/tardy reports to form a group that helped improve student

attendance."

"Attendance tracking for incoming 6th grade students resulted in a 145 absence decrease

from the prior year. Students were tracked every month and reward incentives

were given when attendance goals were met."

Behavior

"I implemented a group for 8 young men who had discipline problems. The group lasted

for 8 weeks and the group focused on decision-making skills. Five out to the 8

young men were not referred to the office again after ending the group."

"I have allowed students to read Character Education messages over the intercom and

so far, discipline referrals have decreased this school year, compared to the last

year."

"Small group activities related to conflict resolution."

"Parent surveys indicated that bullying was a great concern in second grade. I

implemented an anti-bullying curriculum in 3rd grade and the 3rd grade parent

surveys decreased the feeling of bullying as a concern."

"Behavior modification groups"

"Anti-bullying school-wide plan. Data provided each month on frequency. School climate improved dramatically and test scores went up."

"A No-Bullying Program was implemented, using various surveys (i.e. Pathways Pals Bully Survey) and classroom, group, and individual intervention strategies, the discipline referrals reduced a great deal."

"Conflict Resolution Skills practice to reduce bullying and enable students to learn in a safe environment."

Career Development

"Implemented a career education series of guidance lessons. Used pre and post assessment as well as inventory (Career Key) to gather two kinds of data. Students were able to access the OOH on-line, use interest inventories to lead exploration, and learned what traditional v. non-traditional job choice was and not to be limited by it."

"I use the STI Guidance tab to track student contact. A report can be printed at the end of the year to list how many students have been seen for academic, personal, social, or career reasons."

"I developed a small group on grief for students who lost a loved one in their immediate family. Students' grades and attendance were measured as was their outlook. All measures indicated a positive change after meeting with other students and participating in group."

"We did a study on learning styles – if teachers know how their students best learn – they can teach a certain way."

"I use the STI Guidance tab to track student contact. A report can be printed at the end

of the year to list how many students have been seen for academic, personal,

social, or career reasons."

"Increased the number of small groups."

"Needs Assessment – used for planning program"

"I started a program to help 9th graders stay on track and not drop out of school. This

program decreased the number of students dropping out between 9th and 10th

grade."

Drug Awareness

"Teach Too Good For Drugs Too curriculum provided by the county. Improved students'

knowledge regarding the dangers of drug use and how to avoid peer pressure."

"We used PRIDE survey results to examine alcohol/drug use over time and used this data

to obtain a grant and then structured guidance interventions based on the

statistics we get back yearly."

"I use the Too Good For Drugs Curriculum by the Mendez Foundation. I believe the

information contained in this program and the activities the students participated

in contribute to student achievement as it helps them to look at short and long

term goal planning, what kind of personality type they are, teaches them how to

refuse peer pressure, and teaches them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. I

think the more students are made aware of the dangers of risky behavior the more

likely they will stay on track and experience high levels of student achievement. I

give the students a pre and post test to see how much knowledge they gain over

the course – 10 lessons that run from August to February. Most student scores

improve."

"Use Too Good For Drugs Curriculum. Administer pre and post test scores to see level

of retention and understanding of material presented."

"Too Good for Drugs Curriculum"

Grades / Retention

"I implemented a program that focused on helping middle school males who were

retained the previous school year and most of them were promoted to the next

grade at the end of the school year."

"I implemented a program for students who were retained twice in the past and most of

these students made improvements in their grades. I am still monitoring them

until they graduate from high school.

"I conducted a group with sixth grade girls with failing grades and only 2 out of the 9

girls were retained that year."

"I started a group for students who were retained two or more times. The group focused

on study skills, decision-making skills, and getting along with authority figures.

All but one student passed on to the next grade the following school year."

"I conducted group counseling with a group of failing students. After attending group for

a semester, the students were able to improve their grades."

"started a group for students who were retained the previous school year"

"counseling group to help students retained the previous school year"

"We started a Credit Recovery Program this year. Credit deficient students are able to take advantage of this free program. Transportation is provided. Many of our at-risk students take advantage of this program and are able to move on."

"We utilize 9 week grades and BBSST referrals to track if academic support group s and homework club program were beneficial in helping students succeed in the classroom."

"Seventh graders who were failing math were grouped for peer tutoring. Ninety-eight percent success rate with those passing."

"We implemented ZAP (Zeroes Aren't Permitted) with 7th grade and gathered data as to how it impacted school promotion/retention rates. We found the number of students on the at-risk for retention list decreased by 38% after participating in ZAP for one semester. Based on that result data, I presented the results to administration and we implemented the ZAP Program in all three grades the next year (this year)."

"Academic achievement plans for students who have failed two or more classes over two consecutive nine week periods. Performed individual and group counseling with students in program. Students were asked to write down goals and evaluate where they stand in regards to being promoted or retained. The group consisted of 25 students. Over 70% of those students were somewhat unaware of the possibility of being retained. After several re-evaluations of grades, individual, and group counseling sessions only 24% were retained."

"Freshman Academy and High School 101 classes…reduced failure rate by more than 50%."

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"Developed Academic Success Group for At-Risk Youth: Improved homework

completion/ class performance and decreased absenteeism and credit recovery needs."

Graduation Exam

"I helped five students pass the graduation exam by offering tutoring by college

students."

"I worked with the students who could not pass the high school graduation exam."

"I helped some of the students pass the graduation exam by offering afterschool tutoring

from college students."

"I helped students to pass their high school graduation exam by having intense study

sessions each weekend."

"We implemented a program that helped students with their test taking skills and the

graduation passing rate increased the following school year."

"I started a program to help seniors pass the graduation exam and the passing rate

increased by 3% the first year of the implementation of the program."

"I started remediation courses for students that who were not successful on the Alabama

High School Graduation Exam."

"From AYP data and AHSGE passing rates... used to schedule classes to maximize

student success rate."

"Documentation skills needed to pass the HSGE and relating it to our subject matter on

the career/technical side of education."

Parental Involvement

"The success of single parent students vs. students with both parents in the home"

"Increase in rate of attendance of parents to PTA/Curriculum Night function following

specific intervention activities."

Test-taking Skills

"I see students with low test scores on a weekly basis to encourage and offer incentives

for improvement. I track their improvement or lack thereof, to see if extra support

helps to make them more successful in school."

"Stress checklist on homework and taking tests"

"tutorial program"

"I started a study skills group for freshmen and it has been successful."

"after-school peer tutoring groups"

"study skills"

"peer after-school tutoring"

"I talked with the students and told them they better do good on tests. I really scared

them good! Now they do better (or else!)"

"Faculty disaggregation of test data at beginning of school year. Implemented strategies

to improve test scores."

"BBSST required study skills class."

"Using SAT 10 data for 2007-2008 I led our staff development in targeting weaknesses

by grade level. I then worked with grade levels to develop strategies for

improvement and incorporated them into the local SAE plan.

Math was our weakest area across the board. In addition, I am integrating math

    strategies into my regular large group guidance classes. I will use the 2008-2009

    SAT 10 data to evaluate program effectiveness for these goals."

"Individual review of standardized test results for at-risk population in prior and current

    year. Students who were informed of their performance had increased

    performance levels."

"study skills group, students test scores increased due to strategies learned"

"Conducted sessions on test taking strategies. Sessions helped with the stress factor,

    therefore enhancing student performance."

"SAT scores allow us to step back and see where our children perform, and what we

    need to fine tune to get the standards across to our students."

"Peer tutoring program implemented to assist struggling/reluctant readers referred from

    DIBELS test scores. Tutors were trained to assist and give praise individually and

    as a group. Reading/DIBELS scores improved."

"Disaggregation of test data at in-service before school starts-educators see student

    deficiencies and can focus curriculum on weaknesses."

"Looked at incoming freshmen's Stanford Achievement scores and ARMT scores to

    determine placement in remedial math and reading classes."

"With the recent release of Alabama's School Systems AYP, I am looking at data to

    strengthen the weaknesses and maintain the increase of strengths that were

    reported on the AYP. To better serve students, teachers will have professional

    development courses or workshops to better address issues related to students'

    success in mastering the Alabama content standards."

"explanation of test trax to teachers to help them track data"

"Gave all 7th grade teachers a Direct Writing Practice Workbook and the scores were higher as a result."

"Reviewed SAT reports and targeted students who scored in 1-3 stanine. Students met weekly for assistance with organization, study skills and were placed in an additional reading or math class to improve their knowledge."

"I began to look at our SAT 10 and ARMT scores over time to find our weak areas and made my findings know to my principal and we began to look for material or ideas to supplement those areas."

"I compile Accountability Data Reporting Notebooks each year with all individual score reports to include all standardized test results, ADAW, SAT 10, ARMT, and AMA. From the binders the teachers compile student profile sheets for data driven instruction."

APPENDIX F

ASSISTANCE FROM PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OR UNIVERSITY

TRAINING PROGRAMS RESPONSES

Other ways that professional organizations or university training programs provide assistance:

> *We currently work with a University School Counseling Professional who is an asset to our program. She, along with a doctoral student, conducts our audits.*

> *The impossible – more time during the day.*

> *How to fund QA departments … since that is how businesses handle this issue.*

APPENDIX G

ASSISTANCE FROM LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM RESPONSES

Other ways that local school systems can provide assistance:

"mentoring"

"More time to implement and track students."

"I really do not want to do any accountability activities."

"Stop cutting positions in the guidance office in order to meet "budget demands"

"I would like our school system to recognize that data that is being collected and
utilize it in bringing about systematic change."

"it would be nice for the counselors to have like a swap session to discuss
different methods to obtain accountability data"

"mentoring"

"require data driven results / accountability"

"require it"

"use performance evaluation with accountability data"

"Allow counselors to have planning periods. This undisturbed time would allow
for processing of data without staying late everyday."

"Allow time for collaboration and data collection and review."

"More funding"

"Require specific data collection from each counselor at each school"