

*Converting High School Achievement
Into Adult Opportunity:*
The School Counselor Role and Beyond



The Joyce Ivy Foundation

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Converting High School Achievement into Adult Opportunity: The School Counselor Role and Beyond

SECTION 1:

Executive Summary

“I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training...every American will need to get more than a high school diploma.” – U.S. President Barack Obama, February 24, 2009

Getting students to meet President Obama’s charge is an arduous challenge. Even schools whose students achieve superior test scores and grades provide no guarantee their students will find an appropriate post-high school educational opportunity; the right post-high school choice is simply not a natural outgrowth of doing well in school. In particular, the college search process is complicated and could easily be an academic subject unto itself. The process often requires extended preparation and planning between a team of counselors, teachers, parents, and the student. Effectively managing this process is critical to matching students’ abilities to adult opportunity, and high schools that do not invest sufficiently in this step risk not

fully capitalizing on thirteen years of hard work.

Research indicates that success in college is not only a matter of intellect and preparation; it is equally a matter of finding an appropriate educational environment for the student. A December, 2008, study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, *Barriers to College Attainment: Lessons Learned from Chicago*, makes this clear. The report finds that students without sufficient information and guidance conduct a “constrained” college search informed only by the limited information of family and friends. As a result, 62% of Chicago high school students do not attend a college that matches their abilities. Most significant is the report’s conclusion that college graduation rates were dramatically lower when students attended colleges below the selectivity level appropriate to their ability. In an extreme example, Chicago high school graduates with a 4.0 high school GPA had a 97 percent probability

of graduating within six years when attending highly selective Northwestern University, but only a 29 percent graduation rate when attending less selective Northeastern Illinois University.

Mastery of the college selection and application process involves a combination of many skills: marketing of experiences, researching colleges, understanding the financial aid system, creating and sticking to a schedule, to name but a few. These skills are not typically taught in the classroom, and school counselors are often cast into the pivotal role of filling this knowledge void. The majority of counselors, however, lack the time and resources to achieve adequate post-high school planning for their students.

In Ohio, counselors spend only 29% of their time on post-high school planning, and frequently have no more than 15 minutes of individual time with non-crisis students a semester. The current approach to counseling in Ohio—uneven perceptions

of counselors in the education system, lack of counselor role definition, lack of accountability linked to appropriate roles—have led to a situation in which counselors are far less effective than they could be. In many cases, school systems are leaning on counselors to teach students about post-high school options, then giving them little time or training to do it.

In stark contrast to the critical responsibilities counselors carry, only a small portion of education reform efforts acknowledge the importance of the post-high school transition process and the school counselor's role. Recent national reform agendas, such as those of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices outlined in a report, *Accelerating the Agenda: Actions to Improve America's High Schools*, do not contain a single mention of school counselors. In January 2009, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland outlined an impressive Education Reform and Funding Plan. A 250:1 school counselor ratio was put forth in the master plan, but otherwise school counselors were largely on the sidelines. Across the nation, organizations like Teach for America and New Leaders for New Schools are addressing the need for high quality teachers and administrators, but also do not explicitly address the

role of the school counselor. Despite their smaller numbers, school counselors are a key leverage point in a student's life and the role deserves the same thoughtful treatment that other school leaders are receiving.

In late 2008 and early 2009, the Joyce Ivy Foundation approached more than 1,500 high school counselors in the State of Ohio, asking each of them via survey how well the educational and social systems were helping high school students with their post-high school planning. This resulting Joyce Ivy Foundation 2009 Ohio Report includes the responses of more than 630 counselors, supplemented with in-depth one-on-one interviews with counselors at public, private, rural, suburban, and urban schools. These counselors report that both the quantity and quality of counseling resources are insufficient; as a result, the quality of post-high school planning decisions suffers.

Currently, a school counselor is not mandated in an Ohio high school, and when present, a counselor's role is often a loosely-defined overflow position for the school administrator. In fact, one-third of a counselor's time is spent performing administrative work, such as scheduling, testing management,

maintaining student records, and signing tardy slips. These activities take away from the specialized and unique role that counselors are intended to play and prevent counselors from spending face-to-face time with students in an advisory capacity. The American School Counselors Association (ASCA) recommends that counselors spend 80% of their time in direct contact with students. With only 66% of time spent on counseling activities, Ohio counselors cannot meet this standard. Adding to the challenge, an Ohio counselor must then split this limited counseling time among an average caseload of 335 students, a far greater student population than the 230 students per counselor national average. The result: almost one out of three Ohio counselors do not believe that the students in their high school receive adequate counseling on their post-high school education plans. This is a remarkably high percentage given it represents a self-assessment. It conveys the frustration many counselors feel, and illustrates the degree to which Ohio is underserving its students in this area.

Actions clearly are required to improve the situation. The counselor role, in particular, needs to be redefined for a new age. The Joyce Ivy Foundation also believes students, parents,

and all Ohio secondary and postsecondary counselors, teachers, and administrators must individually and collectively act to improve the quality of, and access to, the information necessary for students to make the best possible choices among their post-high school options. Finally, the Joyce Ivy Foundation acknowledges the extraordinary financial circumstances that are affecting Ohio schools in the current economic crisis. In the short term, this economic downturn will certainly lead to staffing cuts, and programs considered ancillary will be the first to go. It is hoped that this report and its recommendations will assist—and reframe—the debate about what services are essential.

Thirty Recommendations: A Summary

The State and its public secondary educational institutions should:

1. Require professional school counseling resources in public high schools, and maintain individual counselor caseload at or below 250 students.
2. Create a liaison between the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and school counselor professionals and organizations to include the school counselor perspective in policy and communicate more effectively with the counselor community.
3. Further define the school counselor role, including credentialing, a career ladder, clear responsibilities, accountability, and rewards/penalties based on performance.
4. Implement a statewide comprehensive school counseling program based on the American School Counselor Association National Model or a similar state-developed model that clearly outlines the expectations of a school counseling program.
5. Hire para-professionals in each high school to assist with non-counseling, administrative responsibilities currently carried out by professional school counselors, thereby freeing counselors' time for more impactful counseling activities with their students.
6. Evaluate the benefits of a more specialized school counselor model, such as focusing some school counselors on providing career/college counseling and others on providing social and emotional needs counseling.
7. Mandate an individual meeting take place no later than February of junior year between the counselor, the student, and the parent/guardian to plan the path that will lead to the student's postsecondary decision.
8. Mandate a post-high school Planning Evening is offered for students and parents in every public high school in the State every fall.
9. Create a volunteer program to mobilize the power of retired school counselors and private school counselors.
10. Expand on The Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) database to include Ohio students' college admission data collection.
11. Create a statewide database of educational scholarships available for Ohio high school students.
12. Require schools to offer an elective (or mandatory) class focused solely on SAT/ACT test preparation, the college admissions process, college application / financial aid form completion, and college survival skills.
13. Require all public and private colleges and universities in the State to accept the Common Application or an Ohio-based equivalent; limit all public and private colleges and universities in the State to no more than one supplemental essay and one supplemental

question beyond those on the Common Application.

Counselors should:

14. Ensure student and parent(s) have ready email access to the counselor.

15. Ensure the most appropriate range of post-high school options are considered.

16. Provide parents and students an estimate of the true net cost (i.e. total cost to attend minus typical grant money received) of various colleges to enable a fair comparison between public and private college options.

17. Encourage academic programs during the summers following 10th and 11th grades for the most promising students.

18. Seek to provide opportunities for students to visit college campuses, and bring back young alumni who are attending college to speak to current students about their experiences.

19. Evaluate greater coordination among the multiple school counseling and postsecondary associations in the State to provide a stronger voice for legislative and reform efforts.

High School teachers should:

20. Encourage students to begin the post-high school decision process no later than fall semester of their junior year.

21. Orient class assignments to promote post-high school decision-making and planning, particularly taking a lead role in assisting with the assignment of classroom essays that can serve double duty as college application essays and encouraging students to take Advanced Placement and SAT Subject Tests immediately after relevant classes have been completed.

Ohio colleges and universities should:

22. Join and support the use of the Common Application or an Ohio-state equivalent.

23. Introduce in their Schools of Education curricula a greater emphasis on college admission counseling for those studying to become school counselors, and require continuing education credits in changes to college admissions, standardized testing, and financial aid processes for secondary school counselors.

Parents should:

24. Manage the timeline and assume a quarterback role in the overall process, beginning no later than January of 11th grade and continuing until the final application is submitted.

25. Ensure email and phone access to their child's high school counselor.

26. Understand the true net cost of various colleges and universities, and be open-minded about potential opportunities and choices for their children.

Students should:

27. Develop a college-going mentality starting in 9th grade.

28. Familiarize themselves with both the Common Application (or Ohio equivalent) website as well as the Statewide data tool (currently the OCIS database).

29. Investigate spending time at an on-campus academic program at a college or university in the summers following sophomore and/or junior year.

30. Review the Ohio state database of scholarships available to high school seniors.

SECTION 2:

Recommendations

High school counselors in Ohio surveyed for this report clearly stated the need for an overhaul in the State's approach to preparing students for post-high school opportunities. The changes required to provide better advice and guidance to high school seniors are varied, interrelated, and involve multiple parties in the State.

The Joyce Ivy Foundation recommends that the participants in the secondary and postsecondary system, including students and their parents, take action on several fronts.

The State and its public secondary educational institutions should:

1. Require professional school counseling resources in public high schools, and maintain individual counselor caseload at or below 250 students.

The State of Ohio invests far too much in its students' abilities over a 13-year period to shortchange the process by which this effort is turned into adult opportunities. Counselor workloads, especially in public

schools, are simply too high in the State of Ohio for counselors to adequately guide the process. The State should move to immediately increase the investment in school counseling by implementing the proposed 250:1 student:counselor ratio, a level also recommended as a maximum by ASCA. This would be a modest goal. At a caseload of 250 students per counselor, Ohio would rank just 30th among all states. Assuming the full cost for one school counselor (compensation, benefits, office space and support) at \$100,000 per year, the school counseling expenditure for a high school of 1,000 high school students would need to increase approximately \$100,000 to lower the average caseload from 335 to 250, or an additional \$100 per high school student (\$35 per student on a K-12 measured basis). For this amount, Ohio public high school counselor caseloads would become much closer to those of private high schools in the State. With approximately 570,000 high school students in the State, the total cost of this reallocation of funds for the entire State would be \$57

million, before taking into account efficiencies outlined in other recommendations. Recognizing the unusual economic hardship facing the State education system and many schools at this time, the Joyce Ivy Foundation recommends a gradual phase in of this plan over the next three years.

2. Create a liaison between the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and school counselor professionals and organizations to include the school counselor perspective in policy and communicate more effectively with the counselor community. Currently, Ohio counselors are advocating to have their voice heard by the ODE. While there have been recent gains in strengthening the relationship between the ODE and school counselors, the ODE should create a position, or designate time from an existing senior staff position, to serve as a liaison to and advocate for counselors. School counselors are eager to take an active leadership role in Ohio education and possess a unique expertise and perspective that can be beneficial in education discussions within

the State. As counselors are the primary school leaders dedicated to postsecondary guidance, the failure to explicitly include counselors in the reform objective also shortchanges implementation of this important process.

3. Further define the school counselor role, including credentialing, a career ladder, clear responsibilities, accountability, and rewards/penalties based on performance. To keep the counselor role relevant to post-high school planning, the counseling profession must receive the same level of reform now underway for teachers and principals (although not necessarily the same solutions). This includes a recruiting program that accesses multiple channels for talent, more relevant training and credentialing, a career ladder that provides sufficient incentives to retain quality counselors, well defined responsibilities, and a reward/penalty system that holds counselors accountable for linking students' abilities to opportunities. Schools cannot afford to ignore the importance of post-high school planning and the counselor role must be updated to reflect this importance.

4. Implement a Statewide comprehensive school counseling program based on the American

School Counselor Association National Model or a similar state developed model that clearly outlines the expectations of a school counseling program. ASCA has established its National Model as a means of ensuring that a counseling program furthers the academic achievement, career planning, and personal and social development goals of a school's students. The ASCA National Model helps schools to establish its core beliefs and philosophies with regard to guidance, establish a delivery system for services, a management system, and a method of accountability. The Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) has produced an Ohio School Counseling Model and continues to promote it to school counselors and leaders across the state. The Joyce Ivy Foundation encourages the State to work with OSCA and the rest of the counselor community to implement a statewide program. For those schools that cannot meet all aspects of a state model in the near term, the model will serve as a useful aspirational guide where even partial implementation (e.g., a district writing a more focused counselor job description) would yield tangible benefits.

5. Hire para-professionals in each high school to assist with non-counseling, administrative responsibilities currently

carried out by professional school counselors, thereby freeing counselors' time for more impactful counseling activities with their students. In addition to the need to reduce school counselors' student workloads, counselors today are overburdened with activities that should be shifted to lower-cost resources. Borrowing from a common private sector tool, the jobs of school counselors need to be refocused on higher-value activities by delegating testing and other administrative activities to para-professionals or district administrators. In all high schools, the counselor role is to be performed by a person with a master's degree—a level of education put to poor use supervising tests or the cafeteria. At the same time, para-professionals should not assume school counseling activities they are not qualified to deliver.

6. Evaluate the benefits of a more specialized school counselor model, such as focusing some school counselors on providing career/college counseling and others on providing social and emotional needs counseling. Many high schools ask counselors to provide a broad range of services as varied as administrative work, crisis counseling, and post-high school planning. Trying to succeed in all three of these roles, much less the many other ad hoc

roles that counselors often play, can be counter-productive. Many school districts divide counselor responsibilities for students in accordance with the students' last name or by grade, but an alternative model is to divide the counselor workload by service provided to allow for specialization in each area. The State should evaluate the potential benefits of specialization, such as having dedicated career/college counselors or dedicated social/emotional needs counselors. This type of specialization may increase the quality of services to students without increasing the current overall number of counselors at a high school.

7. Mandate an individual meeting take place no later than February of junior year between the counselor, the student, and the parent/guardian to plan the path that will lead to the student's postsecondary decision. At this meeting of no less than 30 minutes, the counselor should facilitate an open and honest dialogue with the student and parent about the realistic post high school options for the student, taking into consideration finances, location, and possible areas of academic or work interest. The counselor needs to suggest a clear game plan for the student to follow and also articulate roles for the parent(s). For college bound students, this

plan should include, at a minimum: a schedule of the tests (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and Advanced Placement) that the student must take by the following December, the in-person visits that should be made to colleges of interest, and the application schedule and application strategy the student should follow during fall of senior year (e.g., whether to apply "early decision" at schools, when to apply during rolling admission cycles, and when to have essays, recommendations, and applications completed). Every student in Ohio deserves a thorough individual conference by February of his or her junior year with a qualified school counselor who can help prepare an eleven-month plan for the balance of the calendar year. Without this meeting, time and resources are likely to be wasted and opportunities missed by students and parents. Having parents present at this meeting is a critical component of its success. Ideally, this conversation should be one of many conversations among counselor, student and parents, starting as early as 7th or 8th grade when students are planning what courses they will take in high school.

8. Mandate a post-high school Planning Evening is offered for students and parents in every public high school in the State

each fall. Included in the goal of this evening should be to educate parents and students on the college planning and financial aid process. The counseling staff and other school leaders should provide panel discussions regarding the upcoming planning cycle, as well as invite college admissions officers to participate. This meeting will create a base of common knowledge, so that subsequent individual student-parent-counselor meetings can focus on the specific needs of the individual student. Many Ohio high schools currently offer an optional session to provide this information, but an optional meeting tends to reach only those students and parents that are already highly motivated. To dispel the recurrent myths that keep many students from entertaining their full range of post-high school opportunities, this Planning Evening must be a mandatory part of the school curriculum.

9. Create a volunteer program to mobilize the power of retired school counselors and private school counselors. Volunteerism is at a 30-year high in the U.S., and with the Baby Boom Generation retiring and enjoying longer, active periods in retirement, this trend is likely to continue. Between 2005 and 2007, Ohio's 2.7 million volunteers dedicated 316 million hours of service per year, with

25% of these hours dedicated to education. The State of Ohio should build on the networks of volunteers being developed by the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) and others, and create a Statewide system for retired school counselors or other qualified individuals—private school counselors, college admission officers, and high school alumni—to volunteer time to help public high school students navigate the college admissions process. The results could be significant: just 8,200 volunteers across the entire State of Ohio providing approximately 8 hours (1 day) a week could provide every senior in the State with 2 hours of one-on-one college counseling every month during the crucial 11-month window leading up to the college application period. A training program for such volunteers is also recommended, which, if developed at the State level, could be implemented at the local level in a lower cost fashion.

10. *Expand on The Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) database to include Ohio students' college admission data collection, including acceptance rate, associated GPA, test scores, financial aid amounts, and college graduation rate for a particular college; make this aggregate data available publically and searchable by school and region. The college*

admissions process is opaque, with limited data provided by colleges and universities as to how particular cohorts and populations of students fare in the admissions process. This lack of data has given rise to imperfect and controversial college ratings compiled by publications like *U.S. News and World Report*. The State should develop a data collection protocol that would mandate collection of the above data, and then aggregate this data by school, county, and state to aid school counselors in their counseling, as well as parents and students in decision-making. Students should also be tracked post-admission to determine matriculation and graduation rates. This data can be collected and collated without being tied to individual students, and will allow counselors, students, and parents to assess likely outcomes for different application strategies.

11. *Create a statewide database of educational scholarships available for Ohio high school students.* Today, every high school does its best to provide a list of the hundreds of local, state, and national scholarships available for summer study and post-high school study. However, despite the advances of scholarship aggregators like FastWeb, the market for scholarships is still very inefficient, with full information

available only to those students and parents who invest significant time in research. As a result, some scholarships go unfilled every year and many deserving students head off to college unaware of scholarship funds that might have defrayed their college expenses. The State of Ohio should take the lead in creating a comprehensive, searchable database of both public and private scholarships available to Ohio high school students. This database should be publicly available on the Internet and integrated into the revised Ohio Career and College Information System.

12. *Require schools to offer an elective (or mandatory) class focused solely on SAT/ACT test preparation, the college admissions process, college application / financial aid form completion, and college survival skills.* Given the complexity of the admissions process and the variety of activities in which students are engaged, finding structured time during the school day to assist students in meeting deadlines in the final semester of the application process is strongly encouraged. This could be accomplished through a nine week course, or by integrating this content into a “homeroom” or “advisory” period at the beginning of the school day. An ancillary benefit of offering such a class is to significantly

broaden the population of teachers and staff involved in the college application process.

13. Require all public and private colleges and universities in the State to accept the Common Application or an Ohio-based equivalent; limit all public and private colleges and universities in the State to no more than one supplemental essay and one supplemental question beyond those on the Common Application. Most of the highly selective colleges and universities in the United States accept the Common Application, a standardized application that can be submitted to numerous colleges. Many schools that accept the Common Application require only minimal supplemental forms beyond that provided in the base application. For example, Dartmouth College and Williams College, two of the most selective higher educational institutions in the United States, distinguish among thousands of applicants based on the Common Application form, with no required supplemental essays. Most colleges and universities in Texas, both public and private, use a common application, called ApplyTexas, which greatly simplifies the task of applying to multiple schools in Texas. The college application process is arduous enough on Ohio high school students without requiring

multiple applications for Ohio institutions of higher learning. Postsecondary educational institutions in Ohio which currently have very simple applications and for which the full Common Application would increase the burden placed on students could elect to use a subset of the information on the Common Application for their admissions process.

Beyond actions by the State and by local school districts, counselors themselves should pursue several steps to improve the quality of their counseling:

14. Ensure student and parent(s) have ready email access to the counselor. We have fully entered the digital age. School counselors must ensure they are accessible to students and families online. Counselors should provide their email address to every student and parent or guardian.

15. Ensure the most appropriate range of post-high school options are considered in a meeting with the student and parent(s) during the junior year. Many students and their families have an unnecessarily limited view of the post high-school options available for every student. Good and average students can choose among a wider range of colleges and universities, both in-state and out-of-state, than ever before.

Top students' access to colleges and universities is increasing even more quickly, with many private institutions providing significant financial aid to families that actually results in a net cost lower than many public options (see Recommendation #18 below). For students who select the college path, counselors must assist families in researching the best possible options for each student, help students and parents narrow the choices, and strategize application approaches to specific colleges. There are many benefits to "aiming high" in the college selection process: access to world-renown professors, better facilities, more diverse and stimulating student body, and better job prospects post-graduation to name a few. There is also the very sober truth, as indicated by the University of Chicago study cited previously, that students with the same entering qualifications have dramatically higher college graduation rates when their abilities are matched to the selectivity of school. Chicago high school graduates with a 4.0 high school GPA had a 97% probability of graduating from highly selective Northwestern University within six years, but the same level of students had only a 29% probability of graduating from the less selective Northeastern Illinois University. The same study noted that approximately

two-thirds of Chicago students attend a college that is less selective than their achievement would have otherwise permitted. This is true for lower-performing students as well as high-performing students. Counselors must be vigilant in encouraging students to pursue a college that fits the true level of their abilities, and discourage the population from simply defaulting to a small group of local colleges. The research indicates that a default approach is sure to result in lower college graduation rates for both high-performing and low-performing students.

16. *Provide parents and students an estimate of the true net cost (i.e. total cost to attend minus typical grant money received) of various colleges to enable a fair comparison between public and private college options.*

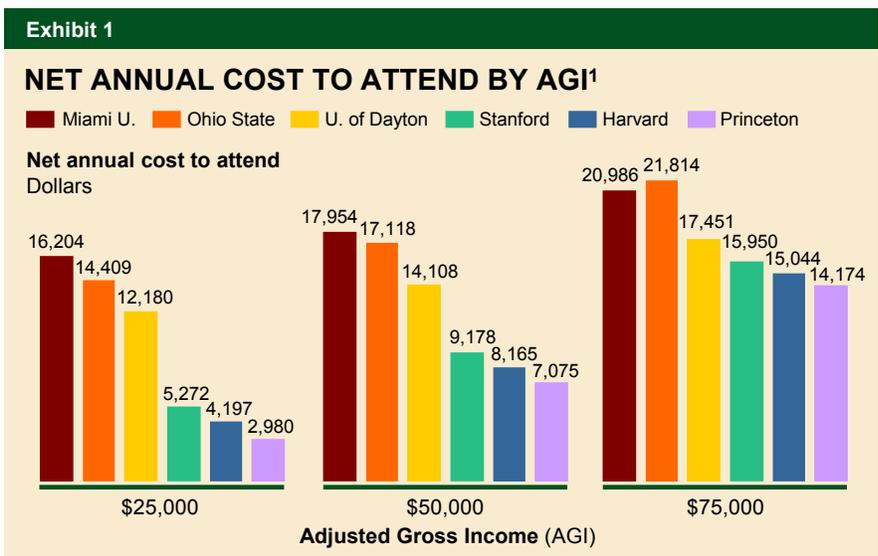
The survey, as well as counselor interviews, indicated that parents and students seldom analyze or understand the true net costs of colleges and universities. Because of the interplay between Expected Family Contribution (EFC), expected student work contribution, loans which must be paid back, and grant money which does not need to be paid back, the high “sticker

price” of an institution is often a poor reflection of the real out-of-pocket costs to students and parents. Many counselors rightly encourage students to apply to colleges independent of financial means and “see what happens.” However, counselors should also present fact-based examples of typical financial aid packages from various schools in their initial meeting with parents and students.

Below is an example of the estimated net cost (total cost including tuition, room and board, and other costs minus expected grant money) of various public and private colleges in Ohio, as well as three private out-of-state schools for families with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of \$25,000,

\$50,000, and \$75,000. Counter to the assumptions of most parents and students, the three private out-of-state schools with high “sticker prices” are significantly less expensive to attend than the in-state alternatives. This is due to these institutions’ large endowments, which afford them the opportunity to offer generous needs-based financial aid awards. Parents and students should be presented with these facts early in the college selection process, so the range of colleges considered by students is not narrowed by perceived financial constraints.

17. *Encourage academic programs during the summers following 10th and 11th grades for the most promising students.*



1 Source of net college calculation is CollegeData (www.collegedata.com). Net Cost = Cost of attendance – Estimated needs based grant award. Cost of attendance includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and other expenses. Net Cost estimate does not include possible merit-based awards. Expected family contribution based on a family with the listed AGI, 1 child, and no savings.

The most promising and highest-achieving high school seniors in the State face an even tougher task than other students. The most selective colleges and universities in the United States, not just Ohio, represent legitimate alternatives for these students, and are increasingly affordable to all families of students who are admitted. One of the best ways to learn more about these options is through summer programs following high school students' sophomore and junior years on college campuses. Numerous scholarships are available for summer academic programs. Those students that do not attend summer academic programs should be encouraged to use their summers to expand their horizons in other ways. College admissions officers typically ascribe to the old motto that "whatever is rightly done, no matter how humble, is noble." High school students can also illustrate their ambition, interests, and leadership qualities through something as "common" as volunteering for a non-profit organization or taking a job at a local store.

18. *Seek to provide opportunities for students to visit college campuses, and bring back young alumni who are attending college to speak to current students about their experiences.* The cultural shift to college life can be a source

of great anxiety for students, especially for those students without friends or siblings that have attended college. This anxiety increases for those attending geographically distant colleges that require separation from existing family and friend networks. Panels of recently-graduated high school alumni attending distant colleges, or students from nearby colleges that are themselves far from home, are useful in helping students understand the college transition process. In addition to speaking with peers about college life, visiting nearby campuses, or taking a road trip to visit colleges, is a very effective method of generating excitement in high school students. Ohio has recently implemented the Seniors to Sophomores program (<http://uso.edu/opportunities/seniors2soph/index.php>), a dual-enrollment program that allows high school seniors to take classes at Ohio universities for free, receiving up to a year of high school credit and college credit, as well as a valuable insight into the college experience. Additional, similarly focused programs that give Ohio high school students first hand exposure to college should be encouraged.

19. *Evaluate greater coordination among the multiple school counseling and*

postsecondary associations in the State to provide a stronger voice for legislative and reform efforts. The Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC) and the Ohio School Counselors Association (OSCA) are both active in promoting the value high school counselors provide to the State's students. While their individual actions and initiatives are commendable, the missions of these organizations overlap: OACAC seeks to "assist students in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education through articulation among the counselors," and OSCA seeks "to empower, unite and support professional school counselors in their role to promote student success." In addition, the activities of the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA) and the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) are also working toward better college access in the State of Ohio. The leadership of each of these organizations should convene a joint working group to evaluate how the goals of their respective organizations can be better served through increased coordination of the lobbying, program, training, and volunteer activities undertaken by each organization.

High School teachers should:

20. *Encourage students to begin the post-high school decision process early in their junior year, at the latest.* While much of the focus of this report has been on high school counselors, teachers are also significant influences on post-high school planning. High school teachers should reinforce in the fall of junior year that the college process is already upon the students. At that time, students should be engaged in a post-high school planning process that will require time, energy, and teamwork between the students, their parents and their counselor. Teachers should encourage students to take the planning process seriously and to prepare for their college search with commitment and ambition.

21. *Orient class assignments to promote post-high school decision making and planning, particularly taking a lead role in assisting with the assignment of classroom essays that can serve double duty as college application essays and encouraging students to take Advanced Placement and SAT Subject Tests immediately after relevant classes have been completed.* Many postsecondary institutions require essays and writing samples. The most selective

colleges and universities require multiple essays. These essays typically require thoughtful reflection and cannot be easily produced in a short period of time. To ease this burden, teachers can gear class assignments, particularly writing projects, to double as essays to be submitted on college applications, all without the loss of the normal pedagogical value of classroom instruction and while still addressing the Ohio Content Standards. In addition, students typically perform best on Advanced Placement and SAT Subject Tests immediately after taking the subject of the test, regardless of the students' year in high school. Teachers should make certain that students take these tests in the relevant years, even if this means taking the test during a student's sophomore year.

Ohio colleges and universities should play a role in improving the quality of decision-making by Ohio high school students:

22. *Join and support the use of the Common Application or an Ohio-state equivalent.* As detailed above in the recommendations for state government action, Ohio high school students deserve a common application for all colleges in the State. The largest and most influential

postsecondary institutions in Ohio should initiate action in this area, and move to quickly adopt either the Common Application accepted by hundreds of colleges—including every Ivy League college and university—or an Ohio-specific version of ApplyTexas, used by the largest and most prestigious Texas postsecondary institutions. This initiative by Ohio institutions will help Ohio high school seniors free up valuable time.

23. *Introduce in their Schools of Education curricula a greater emphasis on college admission counseling for those studying to become school counselors, and require continuing education credits in changes to college admissions, standardized testing, and financial aid processes for secondary school counselors.* High school counselors enter their profession with little formal training in the core task of post-high school career planning. As the world grows more complex, this guidance task requires more sophisticated knowledge, tools, and techniques. Ohio postsecondary institutions can help prepare the high school counselors of tomorrow with more inclusive career counseling courses that offer detailed information on this subject. In addition, the college admissions process is in constant flux. To ensure counselors

are up-to-date with the latest changes, the State should mandate that some portion of continuing education credits for secondary school counselors address changes to college admissions, standardized testing, and financial aid processes.

Parents must also be a full participant in the post-secondary planning process, as they are the natural fulcrum among all of the adults involved in a high school senior's decision-making. Parents are not professionals, however, and should not be expected to provide technical assistance. Instead, parents should:

24. *Manage the timeline and assume a quarterback role in the overall process, beginning no later than January of 11th grade and continuing until the final application is submitted.* This quarterback role includes ensuring that their child is registered for standardized tests well in advance, is prepared to take those tests, is visiting colleges and universities prior to November of senior year, and is completing the various applications by the end of December of their senior year. For students interested in attending the most selective colleges, parents should begin the process no later than sophomore year, ensuring students take appropriate

standardized tests, and also are participating in activities where they will have opportunities to assume active leadership roles. In the best of circumstances the student would play this quarterback role, and some extraordinarily motivated students will be able to do so, but it would be unfortunate if students with less foresight were not given structure and encouragement during this vitally important process.

25. *Ensure email and phone access to their child's high school counselor.* The school counselor is the professional in this process. Parent and student alike should have ready email and telephone access to the counselor, and should not hesitate to ask for professional assistance including seemingly "less important" questions. High-performing professional counselors will appreciate the parent's attention to detail.

26. *Understand the true net cost of various colleges and universities, and be open-minded about potential opportunities and choices for their children.* The "sticker price" of a college, especially private colleges, is seldom an accurate indicator of the "net cost" of attendance. Parents should learn the basics of calculating this net cost to fairly anticipate financial aid packages. Fee waivers for

applications and standardized tests are also available for lower-income students, and therefore money should not be a reason for parents to limit students' choices.

Students, of course, must retain primary responsibility for a successful post-high school career or education search. Inattention to the task early in the process typically results in a poor match between a student's abilities and opportunities. Students must accept responsibility for this decision and should:

27. *Develop a college-going mentality starting in 9th grade, and realize that choices in Freshman year (e.g., courses, grades) may have an impact on available post-high school opportunities. Early in their junior year, students should work with their counselors and parents to develop a clear college application timeline that they own and understand.*

28. *Familiarize themselves with both the Common Application (or Ohio equivalent) website as well as the Statewide data tool (currently the OCIS database) prior to the start of their 12th grade year. For colleges that do not accept the Common Application, students must familiarize themselves with the individual*

applications of each institution to which they will apply.

29. Investigate spending time at an on-campus academic program at a college or university in the summers following sophomore or junior year. Many postsecondary institutions throughout the United States offer academic programs ranging in length from one week to eight weeks. These programs expose students to academic life and allow students early insight

into whether they enjoy a particular campus. The shorter summer programs allow for students to sample more than one campus, or to simply augment a summer job or sports experience that may be the main focus for the student.

30. Review the State database of scholarships available to high school seniors. The financial burdens of attending postsecondary educational institutions can be significant,

which is why it is imperative that students access the full set of resources available. Students should take it upon themselves to review the full offering of scholarships in the State of Ohio. Currently, the Ohio Board of Regents provides information on State sponsored grants and scholarships (<http://regents.ohio.gov/sgs/index.php>), and we recommend a similar repository for all other scholarships be developed (see Recommendation #10).

* * *

Taken together, these actions can substantially improve the quality of decisions high school seniors and their families make. Improving the alignment between student abilities and post-high school opportunities also improves the likelihood of success in that post-high school pursuit, whatever it may be. Most of the suggestions made in this report do not require significant additional financial investment by schools, but they do require thoughtful allocation of current resources, energy, and time. Improving student postsecondary decision making is foremost a matter of getting the right information in the right hands at the right time, and subsequent execution of a well-drawn plan. Meeting this challenge will maximize students' opportunities, and Ohio should aim for no less.

SECTION 3:

Detailed Survey and Interview Findings

The Joyce Ivy Foundation surveyed high school counselors in the State of Ohio from November 2008 to January 2009 through an online survey, and supplemented this survey with in-depth one-on-one interviews with counselors representing a wide variety of tenure, school sizes, and communities. The findings in this report are based on those interviews and data from surveys filled out by over 630 high school counselors in Ohio from more than 535 high schools. Counselors in the survey represent more than 32% of the high school population in the State, as well as a diverse range of urban, rural, and suburban schools and private and public institutions. The Ohio School Counselors Association (OSCA) and the Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC) assisted with the distribution of the survey to their members.

Overall Findings

Counselors report that a majority of students continue with educational programs

after high school: 58% of Ohio high school students matriculate to four-year programs, 19% continue on to two-year programs or community colleges, and 6% pursue a trade school program. Only 16% of Ohio high school students forego postsecondary education altogether and enter the workforce (Exhibit 2).

Of those students who continue on to four-year programs, 65% remain in-state and attend Ohio colleges and universities.

The most common counseling model for high school counselors in the State is a

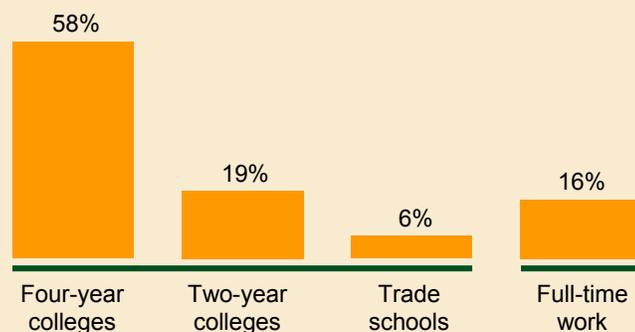
generalist model. Only 7% of counselors specialize in counseling only one class of students. Fifty-six percent of all counselors are responsible for 9th through 12th grades in their high school.

Ohio high school counselors are experienced, averaging a little more than ten years of counseling experience; nearly one in four has more than 16 years counseling experience.

Counselor workloads are high and growing. The average public high school counselor in Ohio is currently responsible for 354 students. More than one

Exhibit 2

WHERE OHIO STUDENTS HEAD AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



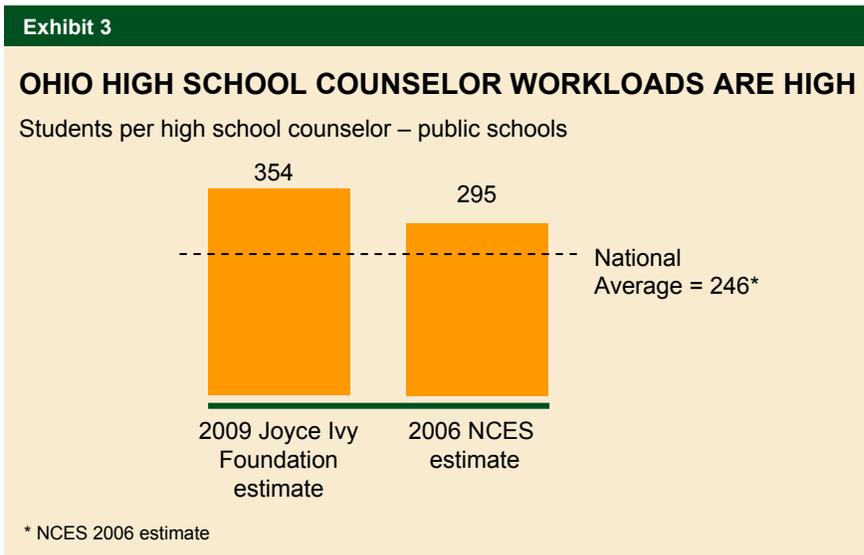
Source: Joyce Ivy Foundation 2009 Counselor Survey

out of every four high school counselors in Ohio carries a workload of more than 400 students; one out of every twelve counselors serves more than 500 students. Among the State’s largest high schools, those with over 2,000 students, the average high school counselor is responsible for 400 students. This survey data from the Joyce Ivy Foundation 2009 Ohio Counselor Survey is consistent with 2006 survey data published by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), drawing on data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In 2006, the NCES estimated the average student caseload of an Ohio public high school counselor to be 295 (Exhibit 3).

Workload is increasing

As if current workloads were not already enough, the trend continues upward. Thirty-four percent of Ohio counselors today report a higher student workload than three years ago, confirming today’s higher workloads versus the 2006 ASCA data. Only 11% of counselors report a reduction in the number of students counseled relative to three years ago.

With the ASCA data as a starting point, the Joyce Ivy Foundation data indicates an approximate 6% per annum increase in



average counselor workload over the past three years. More concerning, of course, is Ohio’s perpetually low investment in counseling resources compared to the rest of the United States. The 2006 NCES data ranks Ohio 40th out of 50 states in average high school counselor workload. These workloads prevent counselors from providing the one-on-one guidance students need in deciding how to match their abilities to postsecondary opportunities.

Little time spent on postsecondary planning

A shockingly small percentage of school counselor time is devoted to postsecondary planning for individual students: counselors report spending an average of 29% of their time working on plans with individual students and their families. Instead,

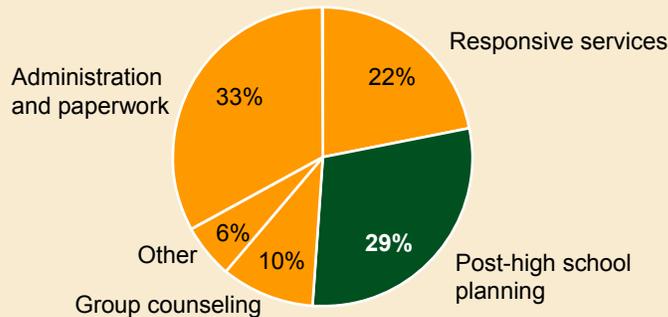
33% of counselor time is absorbed with administration and paperwork, much of it attributable to counselors’ increasing role in administering tests and curriculum changes. “Responsive services”—reacting to crisis incidents and immediate needs among their student caseload—are 22% of counselors’ time. The remainder of counselor time is spent in broad-based guidance such as group counseling (10%), and a grab-bag of other activities (6%) (Exhibit 4).

Not surprisingly, with all these other activities weighing so heavily on Ohio’s counselors, only one in ten reports spending more than 60% of his or her time counseling students on their plans to attend four-year universities or colleges. The vast majority, more than 70% of counselors,

Exhibit 4

LITTLE TIME IS SPENT ON POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

How Ohio counselors spend their time



Source: Joyce Ivy Foundation 2009 Ohio Counselor Survey

spend less than 40% of their time counseling students on their plans to attend four-year colleges or universities.

Counselors also indicate that students at both ends of the achievement spectrum suffer from lack of attention to post-high school plans. Thirty-eight percent of all counselors disagree with the statement “I have adequate information and time to work with the most gifted students as they apply to the most selective colleges and universities in the United States,” while 41% of counselors disagree with the statement “I have adequate information and time to work with the least talented students” on their postsecondary school plans. In their efforts to reach students earlier in their high school careers, just 37% of all counselors agree with the

statement “I have adequate information and time to work with sophomores and juniors to find summer academic programs if they are so interested.”

Confirming state and national statistics that point toward higher matriculation rates for female students to four-year colleges and universities, 27% of counselors report that greater proportions of female students continue on to four-year programs than do male students. Only 2% of counselors report higher matriculation rates for males.

Postsecondary options outside Ohio not well understood

Counselors state their students are well informed about higher education choices within the State of Ohio, but these same counselors struggle when

trying to provide information about colleges and universities outside Ohio. Only 7% of all counselors disagree with the statement “Students in our high school have access to adequate information about colleges and universities throughout the state of Ohio.” But for schools outside Ohio, only 65% feel their students are adequately informed about educational options outside the State. Given that nearly one in five Ohio seniors matriculates to a postsecondary institution outside Ohio, this information gap is likely impairing the quality of decisions made by these students.

Yet, for all of their current challenges, when asked about the longer-term trends in Ohio, high school counselors are more upbeat. Forty-seven percent of all counselors believe the quality of high school counseling in Ohio has improved over the past decade, 36% believe it has stayed the same, while 17% feel the quality of counseling has deteriorated.

Postsecondary Preparation Varies by Region and Public-Private Status

The Joyce Ivy Foundation Counselor Survey also illustrates differences in preparation for postsecondary education between suburban,

urban, and rural schools as well as between private and public schools. The survey identified several important differences in high school counseling among these populations.

Rural schools provide fewer services than urban and suburban schools

Stark differences emerge in the high school counseling provided at Ohio’s urban, suburban, and rural schools. Workloads are highest for rural school counselors and lowest for urban counselors. The average counselor in a rural school is responsible for 349 students, versus 334 students for counselors in suburban schools and 311 students in urban schools. On the other hand, workloads are increasing in urban schools at a higher rate than suburban and rural schools, with 42% of urban counselors reporting an increase in workload over the past 3 years vs. 33% of suburban counselors and 29% of rural counselors.

Counselors in urban, suburban, and rural schools do allocate their time in relatively similar proportions, however. The average counselor in all three of these categories spends between 27 and 30% of his or her time on postsecondary planning for individual students.

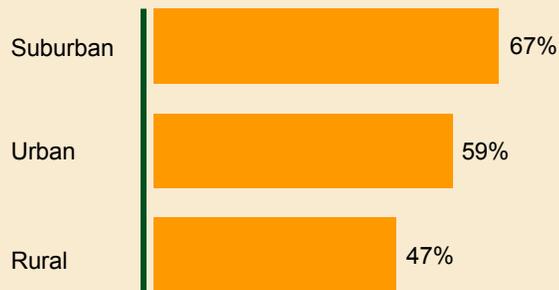
Nonetheless, rural students continue on to four-year colleges at a lower rate than the 58% state average and lower than their suburban and urban counterparts. Rural counselors report just 47% of their students continue on to four-year postsecondary programs, compared to 58% of students at urban schools, and 66% at suburban schools. Conversely, fully 30% of rural students choose to enter the workforce or attend a trade school after high school, versus 22% of urban students, and just 16% of suburban students (Exhibit 5).

are less academically qualified, thus justifying these lower rates of matriculation to four-year colleges? Or is it that these students are less aware of post-high school opportunities to match their abilities? Stronger ties to agricultural careers that may not necessarily demand postsecondary education could explain lower matriculation rates for rural students, but lower investment in school counseling in rural schools—and the commensurate lack of education on the postsecondary planning process—may also suppress the number

Exhibit 5

FEWER RURAL STUDENTS CONTINUE ON TO FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

Percent of students matriculating to four-year colleges



Source: Joyce Ivy Foundation 2009 Ohio Counselor Survey

These numbers raise substantive questions about the nature of academic training at rural schools, and more importantly, how rural schools are matching their students’ abilities to opportunities. Are we to presume that rural students

of rural students pursuing postsecondary education. Rural counselors in the survey make clear they do not have adequate resources to allow them to sufficiently counsel students on their postsecondary education plans, and this

ultimately leads to less adequate counseling for students. Seventy-two percent of rural counselors believe they have adequate resources versus approximately 82% of urban and suburban counselors. Sixty-six percent of rural counselors believe their students receive adequate counseling, as opposed to approximately 75% of urban and suburban counselors. While the numbers indicate rural schools have the least adequate resources, in the end 1 in 4 urban and rural counselors also do not believe their students receive even adequate counseling on postsecondary plans.

Rural students also less informed

While the vast majority of counselors feel they have access to adequate information regarding in-state colleges and universities, counselors differ as to whether students have adequate information regarding out-of-state colleges and universities. Sixty-six percent of urban counselors and 71% of suburban counselors believe students have adequate information about out-of-state options, but only 57% of rural counselors agree.

The most gifted students appear to get more attention in urban and suburban schools. Fifty-three percent of urban counselors believe they have adequate

information and time to work with the most gifted students as they applied to the most selective colleges and universities across the country, while 51% of suburban counselors share that opinion. Only 36% of rural counselors believe they are providing adequate information and time to their most gifted students (Exhibit 6). Overall, rural students receive less counseling than other students in the state, and may

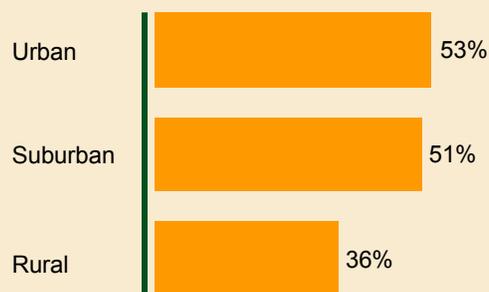
Private high schools provide more postsecondary counseling

Private high schools in the State outperform public high schools on every aspect of school counseling. Private schools in the State provide their students with more counseling resources: school counselors in public high schools on average are responsible for 354 students, while school counselors in private schools carry a

Exhibit 6

GIFTED RURAL STUDENTS RECEIVE LESS COUNSELING

Percent of counselors that believe they have adequate time to spend with gifted students



Source: Joyce Ivy Foundation 2009 Ohio Counselor Survey

be suffering the consequences in lower matriculation rates to two-year and four-year postsecondary programs. This is in spite of numbers indicating that counselor experience across the State's regions is relatively uniform. Urban counselors average 10.2 years of experience, versus 10.5 years for suburban counselors and 9.2 years for rural counselors.

workload of just 207 students. The difference in this ratio is significant: each student in a private high school in the State receives approximately 70% more time and attention from counselors than a student in a public high school in the State. This gap widens further when it comes to counselor time devoted to post-high school planning for individual

students. Burdened with greater administrative and incident-response duties, public school counselors devote just 27% of their time to postsecondary counseling as compared to 42% for their private school counterparts. Thus, the combination of these two factors – 70% greater available time, and fewer administrative and incident response duties – *allows private school counselors to commit 2.7 times as much time to the postsecondary planning process for each student as do public school counselors* (Exhibit 7).

This private school versus public school college planning gap in the State inevitably leads to less informed and lower quality decision-making on the part of public school students and their families. Eighty-

six percent of private school counselors said they have adequate resources to counsel students on post-high school plans, while 78% of public school counselors indicated the same. Forty-six percent of private school counselors in the State report having adequate time to work with sophomores and juniors to find summer academic programs; only 36% of public school counselors agreed.

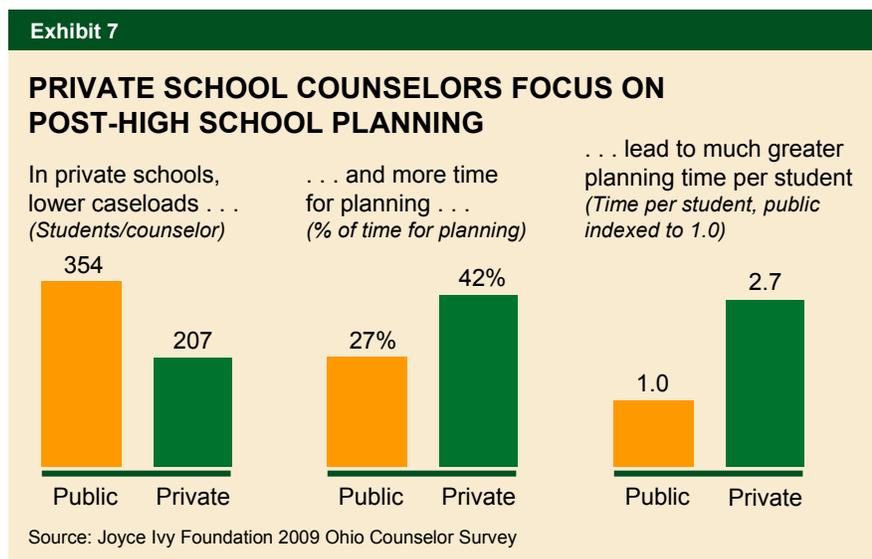
Private-public counseling gap exists for both high performing and lower performing students

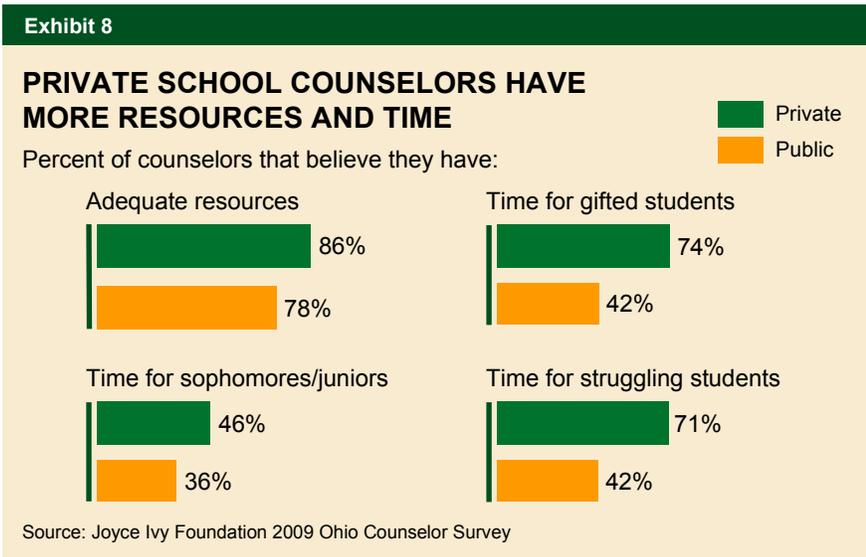
This gap in postsecondary planning between public and private high schools extends to the full range of students. In private schools, 74% of counselors report adequate time and information to help gifted students to gain admission to the most selective colleges and

universities in the United States; only 42% of public school counselors agreed. For the least talented students in their schools, the gap is similar: 71% of private school counselors report having adequate time for these students versus only 42% for public school counselors (Exhibit 8).

Public and private counselors report their students are similarly informed regarding postsecondary opportunities within Ohio, but report a large divide on their students' knowledge of college and university choices outside Ohio. Only 63% of public school counselors believe their students are adequately informed about colleges and universities outside of Ohio, while 85% of private school counselors agreed. This distinction affects students' overall understanding of their opportunities. Eighty-four percent of private school counselors believe their students receive adequate counseling about post-high school education plans; only 71% of public school counselors make the same statement.

These public school-private school counseling differences, while stark, also reflect the differing student populations that attend these two types of schools. Ninety percent of private high school students continue on to four-year colleges





or universities with less than 2% choosing work or a trade school. This allows private high school counselors to devote greater time and attention to assessing and advising on four-year college and university options. Public school counselors encounter a more diverse range of students: 19% of public school students enter the workforce directly from high school, 28% attend a trade school or community college, and 53% continue on to a four-year postsecondary institution. Thus, the public school counselor is required to develop expertise on a wider variety of postsecondary paths than his or her private school counterpart.

Counselors Define Barriers to Better Postsecondary Planning

Ohio school counselors of all backgrounds assert one factor

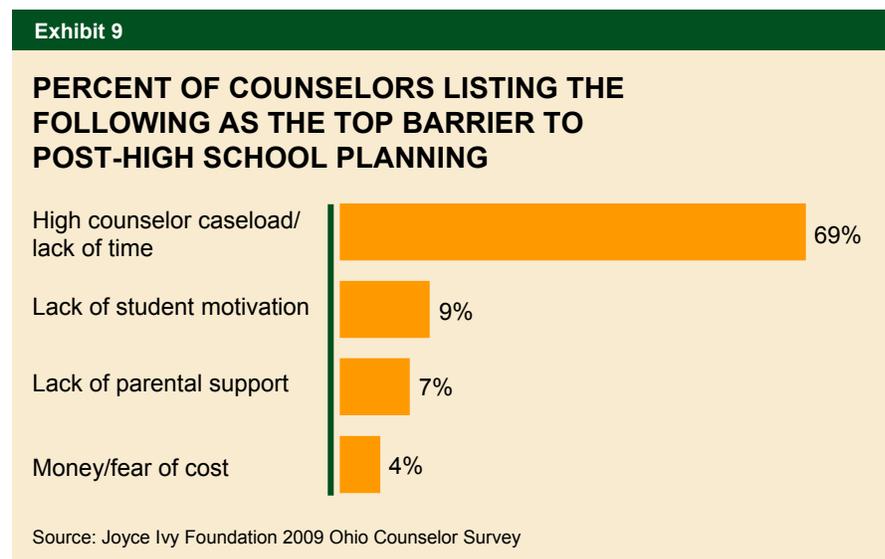
above all other that prevents Ohio high school students from receiving the best possible post-high school counseling: high workload and the resulting lack of time available to spend with students. In fact, 69% of respondents cited this as their top answer to an open ended question asking them to list the three top barriers or challenges

preventing Ohio high school students from receiving the best possible counseling with regard to post-high school education plans (Exhibit 9).

“Time is the biggest barrier”

Among the many remarks by counselors related to lack of time both in the survey and in interviews, three specific causes were mentioned most often: “high counselor / student ratio,” “the disparate roles we are asked to play,” and “a significant increase in administrative duties.” (See the Appendix for verbatim responses of all survey respondents to this survey question).

The counselor / student ratio was mentioned numerous times as being too high, and often on an upward trajectory. “Personal



relationships cannot be formed with a caseload of 375 students!” wrote one counselor. “We used to have five counselors for 1,200 students. Now we have three. Every time someone retires, they aren’t replaced,” stated another.

Counselors also struggled with the jack-of-all-trades role they are often asked to play, and the resultant fragmentation of purpose and lack of focus this creates. “Our contract leaves counselors wide open to assorted assignments by stating as part of our job ‘anything your principal asks you to do,’” wrote one counselor. Another remarked, “Counselors often become the dumping ground for things. Consequently, our time becomes fragmented and we cannot deal with the students and issues that need our attention.” One counselor offered this suggestion: “Right now there is no job description. Use the ASCA National Model as a framework, even if one can’t implement every aspect of the Model. Have a well-negotiated job description that is fully supported by the district and the building administration.”

Specifically when talking about roles, the increased emphasis on administrative duties was highlighted as the most demanding and hindering of the non-counseling roles counselors are asked to play. “In most high

schools in Ohio, the guidance counselors are looked at as additional administrative help instead of student oriented help. Taking the graduation testing, AP testing, etc. away from the counseling office would be a tremendous help,” said one counselor. Another remarked, “Since I began working as a school counselor, the duties have gradually shifted from counseling to secretarial. Without a secretary, I spend most of my time on the computer trying to keep up with all of the paperwork required. I believe most guidance counselors, including myself, have a hard time saying ‘no’.”

“Student lack of motivation and initiative also a significant factor”

Students lack of motivation and initiative was the second-most cited barrier to better postsecondary planning, although it was a distant second to time and workload issues. Nine percent of counselors listed student motivation and initiative as the primary barrier. In particular, counselors are frustrated that available information is not utilized.

“We have the information, I just don’t have the time to meet with students individually and they don’t come to the office on their own,” cited one counselor. “I

list every scholarship I receive online and in a book in our office. Most students never look at either,” replied another. A third mentioned that “We have a lot of information but don’t have time to individually meet with everyone, so we rely on students taking initiative, which they don’t. About 30 [out of over 100 seniors] actually seek out help and 15 at the most really use everything we offer.”

Other counselors focused on a general lack of follow through and commitment from students: “Students want me to essentially apply for them. They aren’t motivated – they just aren’t thinking about a year in the future.” “We can show them a schedule to follow, but the student has to make the commitment to follow-up and hit the deadlines. Not many do.”

“Parental support needed”

Counselors also indicated that lack of parental support was at times a large barrier to successful post-high school planning. “Parents need to get involved in this process. The applications and deadlines are a lot to handle [for students] without any support,” explained one counselor. Another counselor thought that parents were indeed involved, but not really supportive, in student

choices: “A lot of students want to please their parents and grandparents and this limits their choices. Some go to the family alma mater despite the fact that it is clearly not a good fit, and end up taking years to graduate, if ever. Some don’t consider out of state options even if it might be a great opportunity.”

“Perception that cost of college is out of reach still exists”

Despite a wide variety of college choices and financial aid options available, many parents and students still feel like the cost of college is prohibitive. “Getting parents to realize the financial aid options out there is key. This is by far my biggest problem. Parents won’t let the students apply to certain schools thinking they will be discouraged when the parents can’t pay,” said one counselor. “I wish people would stop talking about tuition and fees. That is just not a good representation of the true cost of college to a student. It really distorts things,” remarked another.

Counselor Absence from the Education Reform Agenda

In its work to conduct the survey and supporting interviews, the Joyce Ivy Foundation found a concerned population of Ohio counselors that at times felt disconnected with the current education reform agenda in Ohio.

One counselor summed up their frustration this way: “I have never seen any emphasis whatsoever about the value of professional school counselors from the state board of education, the Ohio legislator or the Governor’s office. We are seldom, if ever, included in any discussions about improving the state of public education in Ohio. There needs to be improved status, and respect, of professional school counselors and the value that they can have on a student’s personal, academic and career decisions.” Similarly, another counselor felt a low level of understanding from other school leaders about the counseling

profession: “We need help, support, and leadership at the state level. There is no one at ODE that represents School Counselors. We are lumped in with teachers. Even at the high school level, we are lumped in with teachers. Our administrators, superintendents, and principals do not understand the function of School Counselors. They do not receive any training in the state of Ohio as to our function and role in the school building.”

While communication and ties appear to be improving, The Joyce Ivy Foundation strongly encourages a stronger collaboration between the State and its counselor community to address the current gaps in perceived and real understanding. Such a collaboration would be a strong start toward aligning the whole team—counselors, teachers, parents, and students—on the tasks outlined in this report, and important to matching high school achievement to long-term adult opportunities.

Appendix

The following list includes the verbatim survey responses of high school counselors when asked to identify the top barrier or challenge that prevents Ohio high school students from receiving the best possible counseling with respect to their post-high school education plans (one response per counselor):

- Motivation
- Time within their school day
- Money
- Hands on experiences about careers
- Limited counselor time
- Lack of time to focus on post high school counseling
- Lack of time (counselor)
- Time
- Time
- Too many students per counselor
- Time
- Paper work
- Not Interested
- Time
- Counselor to student ratio is extremely poor
- Time
- Lack of having a designated college counselor
- Too heavy a counselor caseload
- Spending adequate time doing the necessary research
- Counselor case load
- High Counselor/student ratio
- Lack of knowledge of schools outside Ohio
- Ill informed guidance staff
- I do too many schedule changes
- Time for individual counseling
- Community mindset about higher education
- Cost
- Apathy
- Students don't ask for help
- Time restraint
- Lack of timeliness and follow-through
- Time spent on testing
- Time for counselors to work with students
- Counselors responsible for too many students
- Parents
- Student interest
- Too much testing by the counselors
- Too many students in caseload
- Not enough counselors time
- Student counselor ratio too much
- Paperwork-no secretary
- Time Factor
- Lack of counseling services - counselor availability
- Lack of parental support/experience
- Time, block schedule limits counselor access
- Personal crisis for them
- Time to work with them
- Students don't understand the need for understanding the process
- Large caseload for counselors
- Finances
- Time
- Limited Direct Counselor Interaction
- Counselor load
- Too large of a case load in public schools/ lack of information and help for students
- Student is not interested
- Time constraints on counselors
- Lack of information from colleges regarding their programs and expectations in the application process

- Completing paperwork
- Parents can't afford school, so kids don't want to discuss it
- Not enough time in the day
- Time
- Counselors don't have enough time
- Caseload is far too large-375 students
- Kids do not seek or value assistance until they come to the dead lines!
- Advising/Counseling time is limited
- Counselors with limited time to devote to post high school plan
- Lack of time for one-on-one counseling
- Number of Students in caseload
- Time
- Time
- Too much paperwork
- Counselor-student ratio
- Uninformed parents-they don't value post secondary ed.
- Time
- Parents lack of encouragement in pursuing four year degree
- Counselors spend large percentage of time with problem students
- Available professional staff
- Time
- School size
- Number of students per college counselor
- Parent and student avoidance
- Time
- Counselors who do not understand the process
- Not enough time to see all the kids needed-underclassmen especially
- Students do not know what their post high school choice is.
- Too many students in caseload
- Indifference
- Time
- They don't ask the correct questions.
- One counselor with many roles so I can't devote as much time as is necessary
- Initiative of student to seek out resources
- Economic/financial status
- Not knowing where to begin
- Student: Counselor ratio
- Too many students
- Counselor/student ratio
- Too few counselors
- Counselors not having enough time in the day to counsel students
- Counselors are overwhelmed with paperwork
- Their lack of planning
- Burden of Clerical tasks and testing
- School schedule does not allow adequate time
- Money to achieve post-high plans
- Lack of resources
- Excessive Paperwork
- Too many students assigned to each school counselor
- Counselor time available for 1:1 meetings
- Time/too many students to provide individual attention
- Too many students per counselor
- Counselor time spent on administrative/clerical tasks
- Time
- Testing Coordination duties
- Counselor load
- Time to meet with students
- First Generation College Student !!
- Time
- Not enough time!
- Dinosaur counselors who haven't kept up
- Time with each student
- Time
- Time constraints in school day
- Time that counselors have available
- Clerical Duties
- Time
- Counselor limited time
- Influence of others telling them where they "must" attend
- Time restraints
- Too many students, too little time
- Lack of planned programming by counseling staff
- Not enough time

- counselor availability
- The amount of paperwork
 - Lack of parental support
 - Lack of resources for guidance offices due to financial limitations
 - Student to counselor ratio
 - Time Limitation
 - Too high a counselor student ratio
 - Family expectations
 - Time
 - Too big of case loads time
 - Counselor time constraints
 - Too much paperwork and insufficient time to see everyone
 - Lack of access to adequate technology
 - Fewer number of Counselors
 - Counselor student ratio
 - Administrative duties
 - The students are given the resources yet will not do the work without someone sitting right next to them helping them with every step.
 - Paper work from Administration
 - Too many clerical duties assigned to counselors
 - Do not follow through in college search.
 - Time
 - Not enough time to work with all students
 - Time constraints of counselors' duties
 - Student apathy
 - Counselor has too big of a case load
 - Too many other jobs I have to do so I'm unable to give them my full attention
 - Size of counselors caseload
 - Lack of staff to support the need
 - Case loads - way too many kids
 - Counselors do too many clerical duties
 - Family-lack of knowledge/interest
 - Lack of effort
 - Insufficient time
 - Time
 - Unrealistic expectations
 - Time
 - Family history/support
 - Time - counselors doing many other duties
 - One Counselor for 450 kids
 - Time spent on dealing with crisis w/freshmen, etc.
 - Resources
 - Time
 - Changing attitudes for first generation students
 - Time Limitations students not taking the time
 - To much clerical and administrative work.
 - Internet access in rural community
 - Lack of Motivation
 - Not enough funds
 - Student load of counselor
 - students' fears that can't afford school, then don't try to learn
 - Counselor's keeping updated with latest info – colleges change stuff all the time
 - Time constraints of counselor(s)
 - Paper work
 - Information about colleges not readily available
 - Time
 - Time taken away spent on testing (OGT)
 - Student lack of knowing what direction they want to head
 - Counselors' lack of time to work with students individually
 - Not enough time
 - Many students requesting assistance with plans (time)
 - Lack of motivation
 - Students very last minute
 - Special Education Meetings and Paperwork limit time
 - Counselor time - too large number of students
 - Disinterested parents
 - Counselor to student ratios
 - Counselor/Student Ratio 1 counselor to over 530 students
 - No support at home for
 - Furthering their education
 - Time during the day- Students are taking academic classes, and don't take the time to make an appt. for

- post-high school education plans
- Counselor student ratio mine is 1:470
- Limits on counselors time because of other assigned duties
- Counselors have too many students and can't meet with each student often
- Parents understanding of how to finance college
- Time
- We are required to do duties.
- When receiving passes for the guidance office students do not always come to the guidance office
- Counseling load and responsibilities
- No help from home, can't follow through with our help here at school
- Lack of time
- Counselors are swamped
- Disinterest
- Student apathy
- Counselor work load
- Other distractions
- Not keeping appointments
- Too large of case load
- Too many other demands on our time
- Numerous schedule changes that must be made on timely basis
- College counseling is not a part of graduate programs
- Counselors are unaware of the intricacies of the process especially at selective schools
- More pressing needs of students in crisis.
- Paper work
- Time
- Available time for the counselor to help each student
- Ability to visit colleges/ universities prior to applying
- Lack of student initiative
- Not starting early enough (informing freshman)
- Time
- Lack of time
- Administrative duties
- Time
- Time
- Time
- Time spent attending to other assigned duties
- Student/counselor ratio counselor has too many students
- time problem
- Counselor has too many administrative duties.
- Too Many Students
- Information
- We have too many other duties
- Motivation
- Students' lack of urgency to follow through
- Student lack of motivation to think about future
- Time constraints
- Time
- Time from counselors
- Parents ideas is 2 generations old
- Lack of support from family
- Too few counselors
- Too many children
- Counselor time
- Shortage of counselors
- Missing class time
- Lack of this being a priority from politicians and school administration to provide time for counselors to provide this service
- Too many students for one person to counsel
- Time available during the day
- Not ready to hear the message
- Large student per counselor ratios
- Motivation Techniques to motivate the unmotivated learner
- Time
- Lack of parental support
- Caseloads for counselors are too large.
- Family support
- Time for counselors to present the information
- Lack of family support
- Early deadlines
- Time
- Counselors are required to spend much of their time on administrative duties.

- Attitude that things just come to good students; no effort on their part
- Number of counselors - not enough of them
- Limited time on the part of the counselor
- Limited time and large number of students
- Timing/Scheduling
- Counselors other duties, for example, testing
- High School Counselors have many other duties/tasks
- Counselor's lack of time
- Lack of time
- Number of counselors per school
- Finances
- Time
- Time
- Too few counselors to meet needs of students
- Other counselor job responsibilities.
- Lack of funds
- Time outside the classroom
- Time constraints/paperwork placed on guidance counselor
- Time in counselor's schedule
- Time for counselor to work with them
- Time constraints
- Time available for counselors to give one on one attention to students
- Work overload for counselors (especially paperwork)
- Case Load
- Counselors having the time to spend with students
- Too much paperwork
- Non-supportive parents
- Money
- Lack of future focus by students
- Lack of time with the school counselor due to caseload balance
- I don't have the time to spend on it
- Lack of time
- A majority of counseling time is spent on administrative duties
- Time to work with each student
- Counselor are limited and have many other duties
- Counselors don't take the time
- Lack of time by counselors
- Too much paperwork involved with job
- Student does not seek help
- Lack of time from counselor
- Lack of supportive parenting
- Career role or path confusion
- Counselors are giving tests instead of counseling.
- The student is undecided with their post-high school plans
- Insufficient opportunities for scheduled classroom time
- Administrative duties of counselors
- Other duties
- Counselor to student ratio
- Time to see student
- Not at school: Post Secondary, Tech Prep out of building
- Time with counselors
- Limited time of counselors
- Available due to large caseload
- Counselor's time
- inadequate counseling
- Staffing
- Time
- Lack of information provided to newer High School counselors about post-secondary options
- Time restraints
- Time while at school to consult and plan with the right people
- Lack of parental support
- Family value about the importance of higher education
- Student counselor ratio
- Time they have to pursue top colleges and their development
- Time
- Listening to the wrong people, poor advice
- Time
- Time
- Caseload
- Too many counselees

- excessive case load
- Lack of personal interest
- Too busy with administrative duties to meet with students 1 on 1
- Time
- With decreased funding in Ohio Schools, there are not enough counselors for the amount of students.
- Funding
- Paperwork - filing and records - do not have a secretary
- Counselor too busy doing paperwork
- Parents do not want them to talk to authority figures
- Counselors are too busy working on administrative stuff
- Try to do it on their own
- Scheduling/time
- Too many students assigned to each counselor
- Large caseloads counselors responsible for
- Lack of time
- Counselor/student ratio
- The unknown
- Overworked counselors
- Time to do enough research and time to meet w/counselors
- Time
- Lack of staff
- Lack of time from the counselor (too much on their plate or too many crisis)
- Counselors' administrative and paperwork duties
- Case load
- Desire/willingness on the part of the student to want to get information
- Time
- Parent encouragement, lack of involvement with grades
- Counselor time
- One counselor per school who does it all and is overloaded
- Counselor has so much paper work and "testing" to do.
- Lack of convenient times to work with students
- Counselor overload--counselor has too many responsibilities to adequately counsel all students
- counselor lack of time
- Students have trouble thinking in the future, so they don't seek counselors out for help early enough.
- Don't visit the counselor
- Adequate time from counselors
- Limited time counselor has to present information
- Parental attitudes toward post-secondary education
- Lack of time by guidance counselors
- Too many students per counselor.
- Limited contact time with students
- Not enough counselors on staff
- Our time
- Ratio of 1 counselor to over 500 students in grades 9-12
- Inadequate prep of people helping
- I have nearly 500 students- That's just too many!
- Not enough counselors
- The notion that they cannot afford it or general
- Concern of cost
- Lack of time to meet individually with all students throughout high school
- Time constraints to meet with students individually
- Inadequate number of counselors in high school
- Not receptive to or do not use available resources
- paper work
- The volume of info we receive is so high we can't get it to all kids
- Parent lack of understanding and support
- Time
- Lack of parental support/encouragement time
- Lack of hands on experiences
- Ratio counselor to student is too high
- Counselor loads

- Too much administrative work and testing for counselors
- Time
- Time I have to work individually with students
- Counselor :student ratio
- Too many students
- Understaffed Guidance Offices
- Lack of time with counselor
- To few counselors
- Academics
- Lack of qualified counselors
- Time most of their day is taking with academic courses
- Reduction of trained school counselors in our school
- Lack of maturity or initiative on behalf of the student
- Lack of time for adequate services to students due to # of counselors.
- Time
- Lack of interest/motivation on student part
- Counselors doing too much clerical work and not enough time devoted to students
- To many administrative work
- Time
- Not enough school counselors
- Resources
- Lack of time during the school day to meet with counselor
- Counselor overload (over 600 students each)
- Time Constraints
- Students do not seek it out on their own-have no plans
- Little or no support from parents (i.e. don't attend presentations by counselors)
- Lack of parental interest
- Ratio of students to counselors
- Counselor to student ratio
- Large caseloads
- Counselor caseload/overload
- Financial limits
- Too many students to juggle
- Time to work with them and their parents
- Lack of time counselors can spend with them
- Cost-families can't afford college cost
- Inability to self evaluate
- Not enough professional guidance counselors in our district
- Time during the school day is limited
- Case load is too high
- Over worked counselors
- Counselor has too much administrative or clerical responsibility
- Counselor time consumed by testing-related tasks
- Time and support given to counselors
- Student maturity/Interest/Motivation
- High school counselors required to do too much paperwork
- Students have difficulty communicating their needs
- Money
- Time
- Counselors have too many duties to give much individual attention

The Joyce Ivy Foundation is a non-profit public charity, incorporated in the State of Michigan with tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, dedicated to the improvement of educational opportunities for young women. The Joyce Ivy Foundation's mission is to encourage, support and motivate young women to realize their educational dreams. Its current scholarship programs focus on assisting high school students in their transition to higher education. More information is available at www.joyceivyfoundation.org or by calling (734) 661-0229