

THE USE OF

# Data<sup>2e</sup> in School Counseling

## Hatching Results

*(and So Much More)*  
for Students,  
Programs, and  
the Profession

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Foreword by  
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CORWIN

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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *The Use of Data in School Counseling*, by Trish Hatch and Julie Hartline.

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# Introduction

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## PART ONE

### The Miracle Question

In solution-focused counseling, it's called the "miracle question." School counselors pose an exercise of imagination to students: "Suppose you woke up one morning and by some miracle everything you ever wanted, everything good you could ever imagine for yourself, had actually happened—your life had turned out exactly the way you wanted it" (Mason, 2008). Sklare's version reads, "Suppose tonight when you go to sleep, a miracle happens while you are sleeping so you are unaware the miracle occurred. However, when you wake up, the problem you identified earlier is no longer a problem. What would you notice you would be doing differently that would tell you this miracle had occurred?" (2014, p. 49).

Suppose *you*, the school counselor, woke up one morning, and by some miracle everything you ever wanted for your profession, everything good you could ever imagine for yourself as a school counselor, had actually happened—and your professional career had turned out exactly the way you wanted it. Imagine further that you woke up tomorrow and your day-to-day school counseling problems were solved.

*What would be the first sign that this occurred?*

*What might you do differently as a school counselor?*

*What else would be different after the miracle?*

Sklare (2014) describes a ripple effect that might occur in relationships and poses the following questions:

*Who would notice the change in you?*

*What might they notice?*

*How would they respond?*

*How would you then respond to them?*

Until quite recently, school counselors had been largely left out of educational reform. Not mentioned in Goals 2000 or No Child Left Behind, school counselors largely felt marginalized and ancillary in schools despite strong efforts by professional associations for inclusion (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). As a former school counselor, administrator, and counselor educator, one of Trish's miracles was to

imagine the school counseling profession legitimized by its consistent and accurate representation (program and student-to-counselor ratio) and inclusion in all state and national education reform documents. If school counseling were legitimized, the first sign would be more school counselors implementing programs and activities to benefit students rather than performing non-counseling activities. The school counseling program would be different because it would be seen as a *truly integral* part of the total educational program for students' success (ASCA, 2003, 2005, 2012a, 2019a). Teachers, students, parents, superintendents, policy makers, and legislators *would notice* the change in the performance of school counselors and in the outcomes of the students they serve. They would *respond* by holding school counselors, the school counseling program, and the profession of school counseling in such high regard that in classrooms, schools, districts, and states, stakeholders would *demand* legislation mandating school counseling programs.

### The First Miracles

In the introduction of the first edition of this text, Trish shared her excitement regarding several events she called small miracles that motivated her while she was writing the text. Each are examples of increased legitimacy within the profession. (Find the full introduction from the first edition in the online appendix.) A summary of these includes the following:

- Invited to a last-minute meeting of national educational leaders writing the *Building a Grad Nation* (2012) document, Trish heard multiple recommendations for systems, policies, practices, and people who should be included in the dropout prevention document, but no one had mentioned the role of the school counselor. At that point, she set out to lobby to ensure the words "school counselor" were included with teachers and administrators when the document was released. A small miracle occurred when she happened to be at a meeting a few months later with the editor of the document who happened to be doing a final revision that night! Unfortunately, she had only written "counselor." Undaunted, Trish advocated that she add the word "school" in front of "counselor," and she did!
- In 2011, Arne Duncan, U.S. Department of Education, called on school counselors to "Own the Turf" in a College Board YouTube video saying it was time to put school counselors in "real leadership positions." One might think it not special, but at the time, it was a small miracle to be legitimized by the secretary of education!
- In 2012, *Building a Grad Nation* (Balfanz et al., 2012) mentioned school counselors 33 times, positioning school counselors as "ready to lead." Stating "Educators, including Teachers, *School Counselors* and Administrators: Quality schools with engaged teachers, counselors, and other administrators are critical to children's education attainment" (p. 89), this publication called for the development and support of highly effective counselors and included counselor preparation and evaluation as an action item (Balfanz et al., 2012).
- On December 16, 2012, after the Sandy Hook tragedy, Randi Weingarten said on *Meet the Press*: "We can have more guidance counselors, we can have more social workers, psychologists" (Verdugo, 2012). Although today we would push for the term *school counselor*, even this mention of inclusion in the solution was a small miracle.

- On December 18, 2012, Achieve released *Implementing the Common Core Standards: The Role of the School Counselor*, noting, “As part of a school team consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, school counselors have a critical role to play in the successful implementation of the new standards. School counselors are uniquely positioned to influence and implement many of the schoolwide goals and initiatives to ensure that all students are college- and career-ready” (p. 7).
- On January 16, 2013, President Barack Obama announced his policy proposal to protect children titled *Now Is the Time* (2013). Among other actions, the plan called for funding to support the hiring of school counselors, social workers, and psychologists to implement evidence-based policies and to help create safer schools. Miracle!

Trish attributed these signs to the fact that the profession of school counseling was beginning to become more legitimized. But if this were true, one might ask: *What were school counselors doing differently? Has anyone noticed the change in the school counselor? What would be different because of these miracles?*

*Or, is it possible that these events are not miracles but rather simply the way these types of things play out in the political world of problems, policies, and politics?*

Before we celebrate/recognize more school counseling miracles that will hopefully bring confidence to the reader that we as a profession are headed in the right direction, let’s divert our attention to some political and theoretical considerations that will ground us in this conversation and help us better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by our profession.

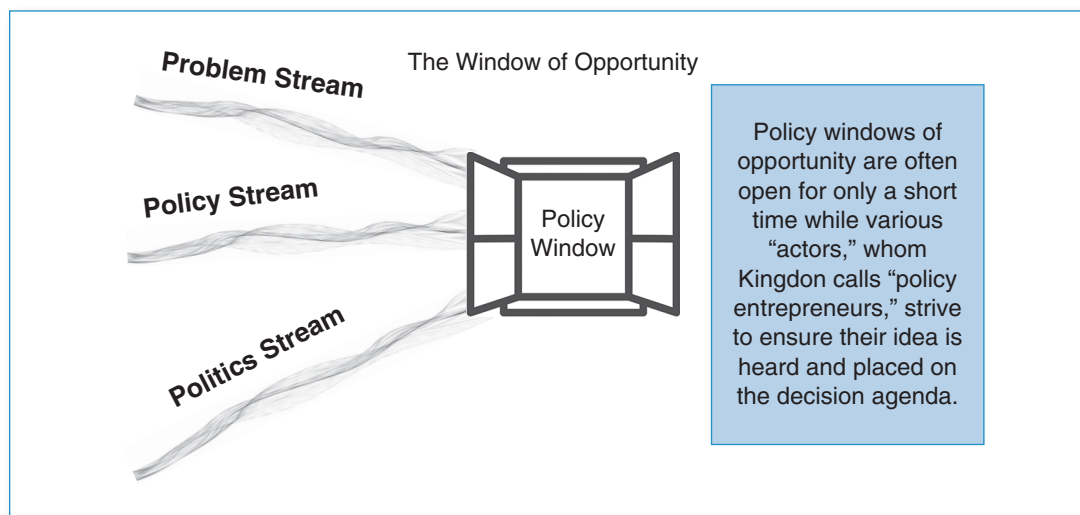


## PART TWO

### Problems, Policies, and Politics

John Kingdon’s (1984) classic political science text, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, describes an approach to policy formation as resulting from three “streams”: the *problem* stream, the *policy* stream, and the *politics* stream. When the streams “couple,” a policy window is opened, and policy change can occur (see Figure 0.1). *Problem* streams are often brought to attention when public matters, such as the Sandy Hook tragedy, require the attention of politicians. The *policy* stream consists of proposals for change (such as gun control legislation) that are waiting for the right time to be implemented. *Political* streams refer to the issues of those who garner the political clout or authority to make change at the opportune time (e.g., after an inauguration, when a war is won, or when an act of terrorism occurs). Typically, these streams run parallel to each other and are unrelated until a problem is serious enough to draw attention at the same time that a well-vetted solution or policy is available and the political climate is ripe for change. When the Sandy Hook tragedy occurred, a “policy window” or opportunity emerged. The policy window, according to Kingdon, is a dynamic time, with multiple policy solutions (e.g., *Now Is the Time*) waiting their turn for review.

Figure 0.1 Kingdon's Three Stream Policy Window Model



Source: Adapted from Thakur (2014). Image source: iStock.com/grafikazpazurem and iStock.com/Sylverarts.

Policy windows of opportunity are often open for only a short time while various "actors," whom Kingdon calls "policy entrepreneurs," strive to ensure their idea is heard and placed on the decision agenda. According to Kingdon (1984), if the problem, the policy, and the political climate do not come together at the precise time, the window may be lost as the streams begin to decouple. Therefore, he proposes that rather than lose the opportunity altogether, experienced policy entrepreneurs must become specialists in educating and preparing those with an interest in or a voice on these issues prior to decision-making time. Kingdon holds that successful entrepreneurs possess persistence, technical expertise, political know-how, and a willingness to invest the necessary resources to promote their solution. Likewise, in schools and with school boards, school counselors must possess the technical expertise to begin to educate and prepare those with decision-making power when the time comes for local funding allocations.

Let's imagine a miracle occurs and hundreds of millions of dollars are allocated for mental health supports and safer schools. What are the chances that school districts nationwide will actually choose to spend their funds on school counselors? *Are school counselors already doing things differently?* What do decision makers *notice and value* in the role and function of the school counselor over other choices? Is it *enough* for the profession to garner the soft money funding? Have school counselors *earned* this public endorsement, approval, and encouragement?

If the goal was for each district or state, one by one, to mandate school counseling, what technical assistance would be necessary for school counselors to begin the process of becoming policy entrepreneurs for funding or to align their responsibilities with the recommendations of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA)? What initial steps would school counselors need to take to begin the process of accountability to prove the role worthy of reduced ratios or more appropriately legislated responsibilities? How might school counselors overcome their

historical struggle with professional illegitimacy and become vital imperative leaders, advocates, and systems-change agents in schools across the nation and the globe?

If *this* miracle were to occur,

What would be the first sign that this occurred?

What might school counselors do differently?

What would be different after the miracle?

Who would notice the change in school counselors?

What might they notice? And how would they respond?

How would policy makers then respond to them?

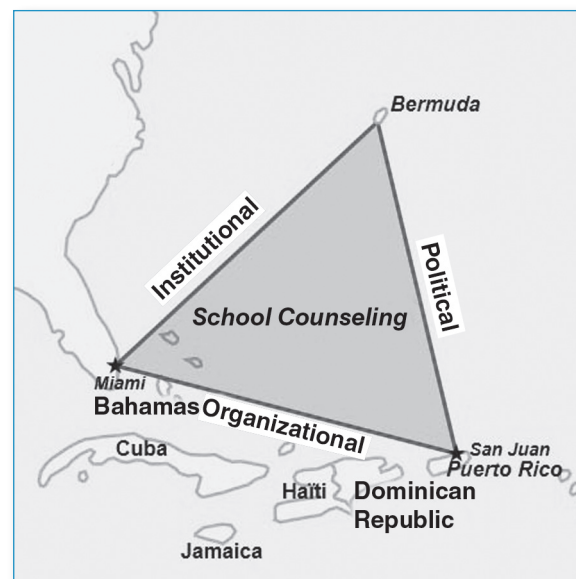


## PART THREE

### The Bermuda Triangle of School Counseling (Adapted From Hatch, 2002, 2008)

Throughout the history of the profession, school counselors have struggled to secure a legitimate position as being integral to the educational mission of schools, where their roles and functions are perceived as indispensable to the school system when budget cuts arise. School counselors are often excluded from meaningful conversations that impact students, systems in schools, the use of resources, or their own role (Hatch, 2002). In many schools, counselors are assigned non-counseling duties that detract from their professional work. This marginalization is in large part due to uncertainty about the value of school counseling, which is related to a lack of clear, compelling documentation of the impact of the school counseling program on student outcomes. Historically, it is widely accepted that teachers are central to achieving quality educational outcomes. Opinion has been less certain with regard to school counselors, although recent research has demonstrated a more positive shift in this perspective (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carey et al., 2012; Carrell & Hoekstra, 2014). Understanding the complexity of the counselor's role through the lenses of organizational, institutional, and political theories in school systems was the focus of Trish's dissertation (Hatch, 2002). Each of these three theoretical perspectives might compose one point of the triangle in what could be called the "Bermuda Triangle of School Counseling." What purportedly happens in the middle of the Bermuda Triangle (see Figure 0.2)? Things *disappear*.

**Figure 0.2** The Bermuda Triangle of School Counseling



### Organizational Theory— Efficiency and Effectiveness

*Organizational theory* concerns itself with how *effective* an organization is in accomplishing its goals and achieving the results or outcomes it intends to produce. Organizational theory is also grounded in *internal efficiency*. Rowan and Miskel (1999) theorize that organizational performance is often the main determinant of organizational survival. If a program is perceived as inefficient, it is often eliminated, or responsibilities of program personnel are shifted. Programs that are perceived as efficient, however, survive and frequently grow. Efficiency (2013) is the ratio of the amount of work performed to the amount of work or energy used.

Unfortunately, many school counselors still consider the use of data, collecting results, and reporting accountability as less important than other responsibilities. Many do not measure the impact of their activities and do not know whether or not they are achieving the desired outcomes of the school. However, this is not necessarily all the school counselors' fault. Despite historical trends to promote standards (ASCA, 2014; Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and accountability (Gysbers, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 2001), despite almost two decades of the ASCA (2003, 2005, 2012a, 2019a) National Model, and even despite the previous existence of a National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) at College Board, far too many school counseling training programs still vary in philosophy, program standards, use of data, and adherence to models, competencies, and outcomes (Hines & Lemon, 2011). Far too many train mental health workers who may have a class or two in school-based work rather than a program in school counseling. As a result, many school counselors are ill prepared to implement comprehensive programs, and this has resulted in little consistency or predictability in services for students site to site or district to district (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008).

Many of the organizational challenges in school counseling can be addressed by focusing on program evaluation and program improvement, including asking questions such as these: What is the most efficient and effective use of a school counselor's time when teaching high school graduation requirements? Is it seeing each student one-on-one? In small groups? In a classroom session? In a multipurpose room? How are these decisions made? Measuring the impact of curriculum delivery on students in a variety of settings provides important feedback concerning what works, what does not, and what can be done differently in the future. In this way, school counselors continually refine their activities and programs and become more time efficient in meeting their program goals and objectives. From an organizational theory perspective, when administrators have evidence of how the work of school counselors helps support the capacity of the school to attain important educational goals for students, they become stronger advocates for protecting the role and function of school counselors during budget cutbacks, and they are less likely to assign school counselors duties that detract from their appropriate professional work.

## Institutional Theory— Operationally and Socially

*Institutional theory* focuses on an organization's effort to gain legitimacy both operationally and socially (Ogawa, 1992, 1994). *Legitimacy* exists operationally when structural elements such as standards, policies, and procedures are in place to specifically delineate norms and routines. *Social legitimacy* exists when organizational members are contributing to the cultural pressures that lead to the creation of structural elements such as job descriptions or evaluation tools. When members are involved in decision making and are part of the influential policy-making team, they are considered socially legitimate.

Many school districts lack job descriptions, appropriate evaluation tools, policies, and procedure manuals for school counselors and/or language specifying student-to-school-counselor ratios in budget documents. This lack of structural inclusion in district policies is an example of the profession's need for additional social legitimacy from an institutional theory perspective. *Social legitimacy* is present when school counselors are an indispensable part of the policy-making team responsible for the decision-making process of creating these structures. If school counselors are seen as indispensable to the organization, it will be evident by their inclusion in the important conversations and in the structural elements mentioned previously. Thus, social legitimacy will lead to *operational legitimacy*.

Once school counselors earn social legitimacy as policy actors, they are more likely to be included in the process of decision making. Subsequently, school counselors can contribute to the *operational institutionalization* of the structural elements and processes of establishing new policies and procedures that support the appropriate role of the school counselor. When visiting a school site where school counselors have institutional legitimacy, one would find artifacts such as websites, brochures, pamphlets, school handbooks, accreditation reports, and other similar materials on display for parents and other interested community members, illustrating the important responsibilities of the school counselors and their vital role in the educational system. Statewide laws, education codes, and policies would also reflect the essential role and appropriate ratios for school counselors.

Imagine that the organization called "school" needs to test its students and therefore requires testing materials to be inventoried and collected. These are absolute priorities in the organization; they must be accomplished. The organizational leader needs to find someone dependable to complete this important and necessary task. It is reasonable to assume that the leader will scan the available faculty resources to determine which employee, if the current duties were reassigned, would be most able to take on this task with the least number of disruptions to the overall function of the organization. Might the leaders select the school counselor? If it is perceived by the leader that the testing needs outweigh the contributions that would otherwise be afforded the organization by the school counselor, it is reasonable that the leader selects the counselor for these tasks. If, on the other hand, the school counselor is performing duties that the leader determines are actively contributing to accomplishing the central goals of the organization (e.g., student achievement) such that lack of completion of these vital duties would negatively impact the goals of the organization, the leader will most likely utilize other faculty resources.



### Political Theory—Value Versus Resource

*Politics*, as defined by Wirt and Kirst (2001), is a “form of social conflict rooted in group differences over values about the use of public resources to meet private needs” (p. 4). Political decisions often hinge on two important weighted components: *value* and *resources*. When a program is highly valued, it is said to have earned *social capital*, and resources are more likely to be allocated to fund it year to year. However, when a program is not valued, it can easily be cut from the budget during a tough fiscal year. Each year, school districts must determine which programs to fund and which to eliminate.

Many stakeholders in education are vying for a limited allocation of resources. If school counselors share their program results strategically, they can begin to leverage the steady flow of support necessary to substantiate that their value is worth the school’s and district’s resources. This approach requires developing a marketing strategy—one that ensures school counselors are not only collecting and reporting student outcomes and results but also communicating them in a manner that improves their social capital.

The quest for political legitimacy within the school is an attempt to leverage the social capital necessary to obtain the resources, authority, rights, and responsibilities of a legitimate profession. The school counseling program will earn political legitimacy and social capital as the program’s value is believed to be worth the cost resource.

Many of the current professional challenges in the school counseling profession today are the consequences of organizational inefficiency, institutional illegitimacy, and subsequent political devaluing (Hatch, 2008). What steps are necessary within the profession to resolve these concerns and avoid the Bermuda Triangle of school counseling?

First, the school counseling programs must increase their internal efficiency and be respected for their accomplishments and efforts. The program must become increasingly aligned with the school’s educational goals, objectives, and outcomes, and school counselors must engage in a continuous, self-reflective process that will result in the adoption of effective interventions and practices and the discarding of ineffective interventions and practices.

Second, if the results are communicated accurately and well, the program will gain institutional legitimacy and be regarded as indispensable to the school, and the staff of the program will be increasingly regarded as professionals who are capable of self-direction and self-correction.

Next, the program will begin to attain political legitimacy with opportunities for school counselors to participate in leadership activities that establish the school’s policies, structure, and routines that define their role and work.

Finally, the program and its personnel will be regarded as essential to the work of the school, and their value will be worth *far* more than their resource.

What is to become of the profession of school counseling? Will we avoid the Bermuda Triangle? Will we become organizationally efficient, institutionally legitimate, and subsequently politically valued? In the end, we believe it will depend on the actions of school counselors and whether they *decide to act*.



## PART FOUR

### More Recent School Counseling Miracles

In 2014, the president and first lady announced a call to action on the President's College Opportunity Agenda sharing *100 new commitments to expand college opportunity*. More than 40 organizations announced commitments. President Barack Obama (2014a) called for "*an ambitious new agenda aimed at improving college value, removing barriers to innovation and competition, and ensuring that student debt remains affordable.*" Trish remembers being with her parents in Las Vegas celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary and watching TV while preparing to take them to see Celine Dion. She watched the press conference, anxiously awaiting the moment when the president would say "school counselors" (as certainly they were central to this work, correct?). But those words never came. Instead, he called on college advisors and teachers to support this initiative. She was hugely disappointed and felt like much of the work of passionate advocates to try to get school counseling "on the radar" had failed.

Trish's entire career had been focused on legitimizing the profession, and in this one moment (she feared) the president was eliminating the profession from its central role as though a college and career agenda could happen with or without school counselors—as if the school counselor role *didn't matter!* Institutionally, we were, she feared, "illegitimate." The Bermuda Triangle had happened, and we had disappeared! OK, that's dramatic, but it's also true!

When things happen that we don't like, we can complain or decide to take action. We can look to the left, to the right, or within. And so, although Trish was on sabbatical and had every intention of spending the time overseas, she felt the calling to serve and sent an email to Greg Darnieder at the United States Department of Education (USED) under Arne Duncan.

Good timing, since Greg was in San Diego the next week and wanted to meet with Trish! Another *miracle!*

Meanwhile, First Lady Michelle Obama continued the call for action by creating the Reach Higher Initiative with a focus on exposing students to college and career *opportunities*; understanding financial aid eligibility that can make college *affordability* a reality; and encouraging *academic planning* and summer learning opportunities.

As it turned out, several others besides Trish had connected with Greg as well: *Dr. Joyce Brown, Pat Martin, Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Dr. Mandy Savitz-Romer, Judith Lorimer, Dr. Laura Owen, Jasmine McLeod, and Dr. Alice Anne Bailey.* Over the next couple of months, these amazing school counseling advocates volunteered their time and committed to selflessly providing their knowledge, passion, expertise, and research. There were hundreds of emails, dozens of calls, and meetings with Greg Darnieder, senior advisor to the secretary of education on the College Access Initiative; Eric Waldo, executive director of the first lady's Reach Higher Initiative; Stephanie Sprow Owens; and others, which all led to an incredible opportunity. Senior White House staff convened a Listening and Learning Session on School Counseling to examine the *challenges and opportunities* for school counselors to support students' college aspirations. The meeting was held on May 7, 2014 (see Figure 0.3). In advance, these experts from the field and higher education as well as Jill Cook from ASCA and two

practicing school counselors, Homero M. Magaña (a former student of Trish’s from SDSU) and Hae-Kyung Choi from Massachusetts, were asked to write three pages each answering the following questions:

- 1) What are the *challenges and barriers* that school counselors face to accomplish these goals?
- 2) What *resources, training, and support* do school counselors need to meet these expanded expectations?
- 3) What are *some recommendations* for how the College Opportunity can support the work of school counselors?

**Figure 0.3** White House Listening and Learning Session on School Counseling



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Jill Cook, Judith Lorimer, Dr. Trish Hatch, Dr. Joyce Brown, Hae-Kyung Choi, Dr. Alice Anne Baily, Dr. Mandy Savitz-Romer, Eric Waldo, Pat Martin, Greg Darnieder, Dr. Laura Owen, Homero M. Magaña, and Jasmine McLeod

*The quest for political legitimacy is an attempt to leverage the social capital necessary to obtain the resources, authority, rights, and responsibilities of a legitimate profession.*

Imagine being asked this question. What might you, the reader, say? It was important to consider what they could and “should” ask the White House for! It’s not like the federal government could mandate school counselors at a 250:1 ratio. The federal government can’t control what states do, but they could and do influence what state departments of education do. Also, research supports that although ratios are important, they are not as important as the appropriate role of the school counselor (Mulhern, 2020)! Someone could have a caseload of 100 and still not be performing the correct duties. So, they

focused on educating them about school counseling and to ask for school counselors to be included in the conversation as central players in getting students college- and career-ready.

As they prepared for the meeting, they were told that if they didn't garner interest within the first 15–20 minutes and saw those listening on their cell phones, then they had blown it and would have wasted the opportunity. No pressure! Although those listening did get on their cell phones, it was luckily to get others to join them for the discussion. As more people entered the room, those seated got up and took a step back, and the new (more important) people sat in the chairs. *Win!*☺ They had a captive audience for more than 2 hours, explaining challenges, answering questions, and offering suggestions, such as revising policies and blueprints to include school counseling, improving pre-service training programs, having the School Counselor of the Year (SCOY) honored like teachers of the year in the White House, and revising policy language to ensure “school” was before counselor. At the end, Trish recalls they *all* beamed with excitement because they were *heard!*

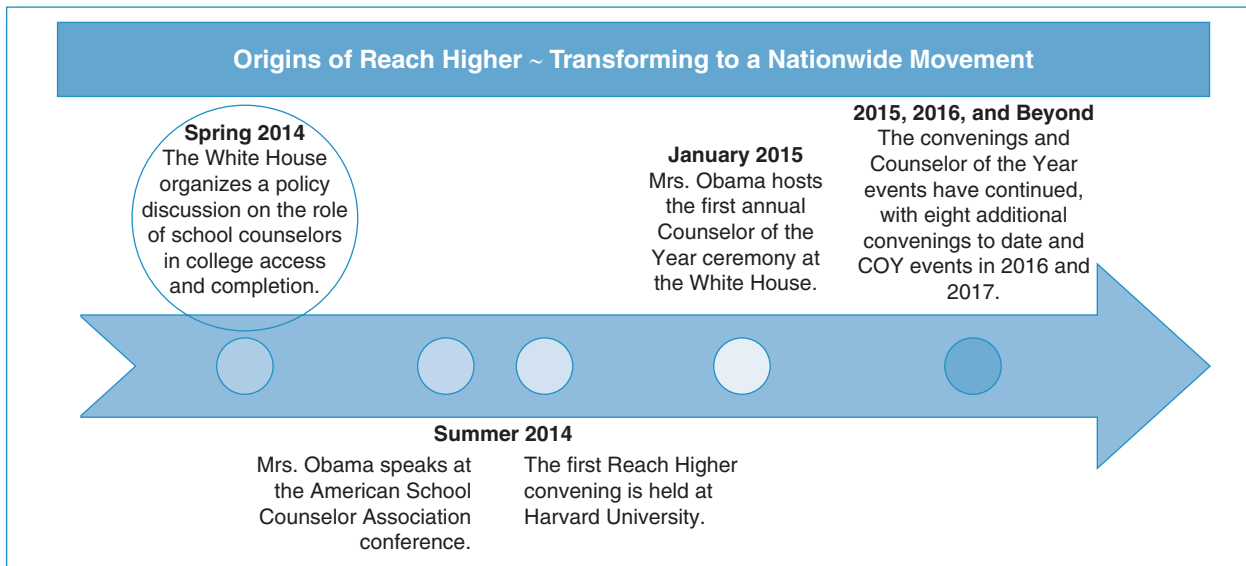
Soon after that meeting, a fourth focus was added to First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative: *Supporting high school counselors who can help more kids get into college*. Plus, they wanted to know what venue the first lady should speak at to move the effort forward, and it was clear that the ASCA National Conference was the most appropriate choice. Although they had little time to prepare, the ASCA staff pulled it off, and First Lady Michelle Obama spoke at the conference on July 1, 2014. Her speech was incredible! She offered the following quote that sums it up beautifully:

School counseling should not be an extra or a luxury just for school systems that can afford it. School counseling is a necessity to ensure that all our young people get the education they need to succeed in today's economy. (Obama, 2014b)

The meeting had *made a difference*; school counselors were now *included* in the conversation and *socially legitimate*. Having the first lady speak at the ASCA National Conference and invest her social capital in supporting school counselors was a first step to obtaining the *resources, authority, rights, and responsibilities of a legitimate profession*. But there was more work to do. The staff asked those school counseling advocates if they were “all in,” and they said yes. And so, it began.

The National Consortium for School Counseling and Postsecondary Success (NCSCPS) was formed by Pat Martin, Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Dr. Mandy Savitz-Romer, Judith Lorimer, Dr. Laura Owen, Jasmine McLeod, Dr. Joyce Brown, and Trish to support the momentum of Reach Higher. They coordinated four national White House convenings across the nation (Harvard University in July 2014 with 140 leaders and advocates; the second at San Diego State University in November 2014 with more than 369 school counselors, administrators, counselor educators, legislators, policy makers, and other educational leaders from 33 states; the third at the University of North Florida in November 2015 with teams from 37 states; and the fourth at American University on October 28–30, 2016, with approximately 250 attendees from 30 states). A series of state and regional events also took place around the country (see Figure 0.4): Colorado (June 2016), Washington State (June 2016), Oregon (July 2016), the Midwest (August 2016), and New England (August 2016).

**Figure 0.4** Origins of Reach Higher



Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/reach-higher-progress-report.pdf>

**Figure 0.5** Members of the National Consortium for School Counseling and Post-Secondary (NCSCPS)



Pictured left to right, top row: Dr. Trish Hatch, Dr. Laura Owen, Jasmine McLeod, Dr. Joyce Brown, Judith Lorimer, Pat Martin, Bottom row: Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy and Dr. Mandy Savitz-Romer

From this initiative, Better Make Room was launched as well as College Signing Day and Up Next. The final Reach Higher national convening was held in Arizona in March 2017. In less than 3 years, the convenings brought together teams of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers from 42 states to identify and seek to resolve improvements in the field. Following the convenings, the members of NCSCPS collaborated on research, surveys, and focus groups culminating in several reports to inform future directions regarding policy, practice, research, credentialing, and pre-service and in-service training.

Throughout this time, the members of NCSCPS (see Figure 0.5) were also meeting regularly and attending other events to promote school counseling and the president’s College Opportunity Agenda as well as the Reach Higher Initiative. At one meeting, they met with John King and Arne Duncan at the

United States Department of Education (USED) and were invited to bring three requests for institutionalizing school counseling, revising and updating policy and legislative regulations, and supporting research.

Consistent with their goal of improved legitimacy, they wanted to institutionalize school counseling by requesting an Office for School Counseling and College Advisement in the U.S. Department of Education. They wanted policy statements and blueprints revised that perpetuated the marginalization of school counseling. They wanted to ensure that we were called “school” counselors and positioned as critical partners in education, and they wanted support, on a larger scale, to receive dedicated federal funds through IES for research on the impact of school counseling and college advising models and practices.

The profession also began to experience several other *miracles* between 2014 and 2017 as a result of all the hard work and advocacy efforts happening by NCSCPS and so many others. For the first time in history (that we know of), a sitting president used the words “school counselors.” In his October 31, 2014, proclamation for National College Admission Month, President Obama stated, “We honor the teachers, school counselors, and parents who help students apply to college.” Again, school counselors were *socially legitimate*.

The ASCA School Counselor of the Year was celebrated at the White House beginning with Cory Notestine in 2015! This was particularly exciting as the request had been for school counselors to get the same treatment as teachers (lunch at the White House), but this was even better! Cory and the state finalists were honored at the White House by First Lady Michelle Obama and actor Connie Britton, who played a school counselor on the television series *Friday Night Lights*. This event continued annually for the next 3 years while the Obamas were in the White House.

President Obama’s College Opportunity Message the next year changed from its introduction in 2014. On September 14, 2015, he said,

If you have a school and it doesn’t have enough counselors, and so comes time to apply to college—there are not enough to go around, the kids aren’t getting the best advice that they need, they may end up selling themselves short in terms of their ability to go to college. So, resources *do matter*.

Once again, school counselors were being *socially legitimized*.

**Figure 0.6** School Counselors in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

1. SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL; SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES—
  - A. SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL—the term “specialized instructional support personnel” means—
    - i. school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists; and
    - ii. other qualified professional personnel, such as school nurses, speech language pathologists, and school librarians involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services (including related services as that term is defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [20 U.S.C. 1401]) as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs.
  - B. SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES—the term “specialized instructional support services” means the services provided by specialized instructional support personnel.

(Continued)

Figure 0.6 (Continued)

- (8) SCHOOL COUNSELORS—The individual—
  - (A) is employed full-time as a school counselor who has documented competence in counseling children and adolescents in a school setting and who—
    - (i) is licensed by the State or certified by an independent professional regulatory authority;
    - (ii) in the absence of such State licensure or certification, possesses national certification in school counseling or a specialty of counseling granted by an independent professional organization; or
    - (iii) holds a minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling from a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs or the equivalent; and
  - (B) is so employed in a school that qualifies under section 465(a)(2)(A) for loan cancellation for Perkins loan recipients who teach in such a school.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was released in December 2015, and school counselors were specifically mentioned as “specialized instructional personnel” (see Figure 0.6) and, for the first time, defined as those with documented competence, licensed and certified, and having a master’s degree. Yes! It might seem small, but until this happened, there was no minimum requirement to be a

school counselor. ESSA also included new data, accountability, and transparency requirements for states, including post-secondary enrollment rates for every high school in state report cards. These serve as structural elements that support institutional legitimacy.

At an NCSCPS national convening at American University in October 2016, two exciting announcements were made. First, John King, U.S. secretary of education (at the time), shared they would be expanding (for the first time ever) the opportunity for the School Ambassador Fellows Program to include school counselors (see Figure 0.7). School counselors were getting a seat at the table!

Figure 0.7 School Ambassador Fellow Program Includes School Counselors

U.S. Department of Education

Student Loans Grants Laws

ARCHIVED INFORMATION

**U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. Announces Expansion of School Ambassador Fellows Program to Include School Counselors at White House Reach Higher Convenings**

NOVEMBER 1, 2016

Contact: Press Office, (202) 401-1576, [press@ed.gov](mailto:press@ed.gov)

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. announced today that school counselors will have the opportunity to apply for the School Ambassador Fellows program starting with the 2017-18 cohort of ambassadors. The program currently includes the [Teaching Ambassador Fellows \(TAF\)](#) and [Principal Ambassador Fellows \(PAF\)](#). Including the voices of teachers, principals, counselors and other education professionals who do meaningful work with students and other educators each day, will bring important perspectives to discussions of federal policy and programs.

“School counselors fill many roles by helping students work through serious social, emotional, academic and personal challenges, while also guiding them along a path to college and career readiness,” said King. “There was one very important counselor who had a deep impact on me: my mother. She passed when I was just 8 years old, but knowing the critical role she had played in helping students overcome personal and academic challenges has always inspired me. School counselors, like my mother, are an inspiration to students, teachers, parents and community members to enlarge their vision of what is possible and take advantage of educational opportunities.”

Source: U.S. Department of Education.

The second piece of good news was the addition of school counselor language in another presidential proclamation. That might not seem like a big deal, but it was huge for school counselors who are traditionally left out of these statements, unlike teachers. The legitimacy of inclusion of our profession in language matters.

On January 6, 2017, only a short time before the Obamas left the White House, First Lady Michelle Obama hosted the 2017 ASCA School Counselor of the Year event in the White House for her final public appearance (see Figure 0.8). This was a momentous occasion, particularly because the first lady identified herself as “School Counselor in Chief” during this event. As the ceremony was broadcast on news stations across the country, Mrs. Obama shared her support of school counselors as critical stakeholders in increasing students’ college and career readiness and her commitment to continuing to engage school counselors as a part of this work in the years to come. Terri Tchorzynski was the ASCA School Counselor of the Year that year (see Figure 0.9), and she spoke passionately about our profession and introduced the first lady during this ceremony. (On a side note, how cool is it that she now works for Hatching Results and we get to train with her? Trish actually gets to train currently with *two* national school counselors of the year—Terri and Julie.)

**Figure 0.8** Invitation to the 2017 ASCA School Counselor of the Year Event at the White House



**Figure 0.9** Trish and 2017 ASCA School Counselor of the Year Terri Tchorzynski (photo bomber—Dawn Mann, 2017 ASCA School Counselor of the Year Finalist)





Institutionally, *operational legitimacy* exists when structural elements are in places such as standards, policies, laws, procedures, and so on. *Social legitimacy* exists when organizational members (policy actors) contribute to the cultural pressures that lead to the creation of these elements.

In May 2017, the members of NCSCPS announced they had completed their initial mission, although they recognized there was still much work to be done in each of the main areas—*policy, practice, pre-service and in-service training, credentialing and standards, and research*—and that this work would necessitate their focus both individually and potentially collectively.

### Lots of Cool Stuff Continues to Happen!

In recent years, states have begun to revise and improve school counseling education laws and codes!

- Arkansas, through Act 190, established the School Counseling Improvement Act of 2019 to allow school counselors to spend 90% of their working hours in direct and indirect service to students.
- Illinois enacted ILHB 3652 in 2019, which requires that school counseling services include a discussion of all post-secondary education options.
- In Michigan, 50 hours of training in college and career readiness are now required as part of the 150 hours required to renew their licenses every 5 years.
- In Arizona, the board of education awarded school safety grants, approving 400 public schools to hire school counselors, social workers, and police officers. The \$20 million has helped hire 148 counselors.
- In Minnesota, \$12 million was earmarked for school counselors, social workers, and psychologists in schools.
- Missouri passed MSIP 6 on February 11, 2020, that will roll out over 2 years and will carry a 250:1 student-to-counselor ratio!

There have been so many bills enacted in the last few years supporting school counselors, and these are just a few. It's amazing! *Have you researched your state?* The education commission of the state tracks education policy on many topics. Readers are encouraged to research their state for new and pending legislation (<https://www.ecs.org/state-education-policy-tracking/>). Here is a snapshot of what we found when we searched for school counseling (see Figure 0.10).

Figure 0.10 School Counseling Legislation

Click the arrow to view bill details

Issue Areas	State	Bill Number	Status	Last Action	Title	
Career/Tech Ed	MI	HB 4421	Enacted	12/20/2018	School Counseling and Substitute Teaching Requirements	➔
Counseling/Guidance	AR	SB 199	Enacted	2/21/2019	School Counseling Improvement Act	➔
	CT	SB 956	Enacted	7/1/2019	Development of Comprehensive School Counseling Program Guidelines	➔
	ID	H 632	Enacted	3/26/2018	Increases appropriation for school counseling	➔
	IL	HB 3652	Enacted	8/9/2019	School Counseling and Academic Planning	●
Task Forces and Commissions	OR	HB 2876	Enacted	6/17/2019	Requires School Districts to Provide a Coordinated School Counseling P..	➔
Teaching	MI	HB 4421	Enacted	12/20/2018	School Counseling and Substitute Teaching Requirements	➔

Source: <https://www.ecs.org/state-education-policy-tracking/>

*Nonetheless, challenges still exist.* Despite the amazing forward progress, much work is still to be done. We still have national concerns such as the following:

- 19 states do not require school counselors.
- Seven states have no Individual Learning Plans (ILPs); 10 states have ILPs, but no mandate for students to get them.
- 38 states are short-changing their students of color, students from low-income families, or both by not providing ample access to a school counselor.
- Many school counselors receive little or no training in college counseling, and many graduate programs in counseling still don't offer any classes on college admissions.
- Political intensities that rose during the 2020 election and the Black Lives Matter movement call for anti-racist education, requiring school counselors to equip themselves with the tools and strategies they need to lead challenging conversations and develop policies and practices to address and resolve institutional racism.
- COVID-19 has tremendously impacted the role and function of school counselors. Now more than ever, people are calling on counselors to assist with student engagement, fears, grief, and anxiety. Fortunately, there is a great deal of funding coming to states to provide for school counselors and others in supporting mental health and learning loss as well as in receiving more professional development.

### Moving Forward—Now Is the Time

As this text goes to press, many states are hiring more school counselors as funding has increased due to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). The Biden education agenda calls for doubling the number of psychologists, school counselors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals in our schools so that our kids get the mental health care they need. *Yahoo! Another miracle! The policy window is now open—again.* The Biden administration put school counselors inside its platform. Never before has our profession been so validated! A new secretary of education, Miguel Cardona, EdD, currently the education commissioner of Connecticut, is President Biden's nominee to run the Department of Education, and educational groups have applauded Biden's choice, praising Dr. Cardona's experience in public education. *Now is the time* to learn how to use data to become more efficient and effective, to measure impact, and to share results far and wide. Now's the time to become a policy entrepreneur at your school, in your district, and within your state association in any way you can to support this forward progress.



## PART FIVE

### Your Charge

Part One introduced the miracle question and asked what might happen if you woke up and your day-to-day school counseling problems were resolved. Well, miracles *are* and have been happening! It's been truly incredible to see the outpouring of

support, policies, legislation, and funds targeted to support school counseling programs for students all around the country. ASCA's work to create *institutional* structures has gone a long way to unify the professional role. Research has shown that the work of school counselors *does* make a difference, and school counselors have used what they learned in the first edition of this text and others to collect data, share results, and improve programs for students. *Our hope* is that there will be even more miracles. *Our fear*, though, is that some will take for granted the increase in hiring school counselors and assume that they don't have to collect data or be accountable for results. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Now more than ever, school counselors must hold themselves accountable for measuring the impact of their programs and services. Their value *must* be worth the resources, or they risk becoming expendable or marginalized. We must take seriously the call to action so this does not happen. *Now is the time for school counselors to show that what they do makes a difference!*

Whether you are currently a practicing school counselor or you are learning about school counseling in your first graduate-level course, this text was written to provide you with detailed technical support to become the best school counselor you can be for the students you serve or will serve each and every day. If you are an administrator, this text is written to assist you as you ensure the students in your school or district are provided the school counseling program they so deeply deserve and desperately need. If you are a counselor educator, school counselor leader, legislator, or anyone else with political clout you can leverage, please utilize this text and the many resources shared within it and in the online appendix to support and promote the profession of school counseling and hold each school counselor accountable.

Throughout this text, we share stories from our experiences as school counselors and administrators as well as examples from graduate students, practicing school counselors, and district school counseling leaders. Each chapter will walk the reader through the steps of the process and is filled with up-to-date samples. We have provided multiple examples in the text from counties, districts, and schools that have made a huge difference (if you don't want to wait to read about them, then head right now to Chapter 13, where stories of success are told).

We hope the content, stories, and strategies in this text will assist, support, and motivate you to *take action*—to become a policy entrepreneur promoting the results of your program and the value of school counseling to your stakeholders. We also hope your advocacy and the advocacy of others will support the vision that each and every student deserves access to a school counselor, a safe climate in which to learn, and guaranteed equitable opportunities for a rigorous education leading to the post-secondary option of their choice. The students you serve deserve nothing less—especially those with far less opportunities and privilege, those who are innocent victims of institutional racism, and those who are marginalized. *Every student* having access to a school counselor would be a true miracle! So, let's get started on the journey of using data and measuring results to ensure the profession of school counseling is legitimized *organizationally, institutionally, and politically.*

*Because every child deserves the miracle of having access to a qualified school counselor . . . now, let's get to work!*



Visit the companion website at  
<https://www.hatchingresults.com/use-of-data-online-appendix>  
for downloadable resources.