

Connected Counseling: Connecting Students to Success

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Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis

“Helping students to succeed academically and graduate with the knowledge and skills for higher education and/or high-skill jobs.”



Multi-year project (2002-2009)

- Project funds made available through generous financial support of the Archibald Bush Foundation.

<http://www.bushfoundation.org>



Goals of Connected Counseling

- Goal 1: School counselors accept a new vision of comprehensive standards-based school counseling program and assume new roles.
- Goal 2: School counselors design guidance curriculum and new initiatives.
- Goal 3: School counselors and advisors effectively guide students and support them.
- Goal 4: Implementation of the Six Year Plan for all students to complete.
- Goal 5. Expand College Access.



Guiding Principles

- Primary:
 - Increase high school graduation rates for all student groups.
 - Connect students to rigor, relevance, and relationships.
 - Redesign high school counseling programs by implementing the ASCA (American School Counselors Association) National Model to ensure equity and access for all students.



School counselors are:

- Partners in ALL students' academic achievement.
- Challenging each other to answer the question:
 - How are ALL students better as a result of receiving the services of school counseling programs?



School Counseling Programs are about:

- Developing leaders
- Using technology
- Fostering collaboration
- Advocating for ALL students
- Making data-driven decisions
- Helping all students achieve academically
- Promoting systemic change



Phases of the grant:

- Phase I: (2003-'05): “Begin the Course”
- Phase II: (2005-'07): “Staying the Course”
- Phase III: (2007-09): “Getting Results for ALL Students”





Phase One: (2003-05) “Begin the Course”



- Counselors learn/implement the ASCA (American School Counselors Association) National Model.
- Develop collaborative teaming with monthly meetings to share best practices.
- Guidance technicians are added to each school to handle noncounseling duties: administration of tests and clerical duties.
- Six Year Plan: Web-based tool launched for students to record four years of high school and two years beyond.



Phase II: (2005-2007) “Staying the Course”

- Counselor monthly meetings continue.
- Career Resource Centers expand.
- Focus on developing Action Plans using templates from the national model:
 - Guidance curriculum for all students
 - Closing the Gap activities for students needing more support.



Phase III: (2007-09)

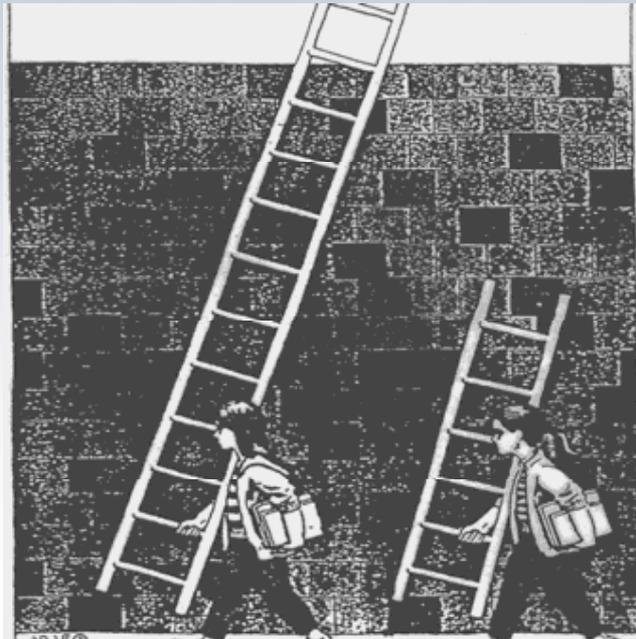
“Getting Results for ALL students

- Six Year Plan becomes a graduation requirement (2008).
- Next generation of the Six Year Plan added:  NAVIANCE



“How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?”

(ASCA National Model 2003)





Six Year Plan:



“Live Tomorrow What You Dream Today”

www.6yearplan.spps.org

- A few goals of the Six Year Plan:
 - Motivate students to become engaged with their career and life planning beginning in the ninth grade.
 - Increase the relevance of what students are doing in high school with their future.
 - Increase graduation rates.
 - Increase each student’s knowledge of career options.
 - Increase the number of students who go on to higher education after high school.
 - Increase all stakeholders’ involvement with students career and life planning.



Some results summarized by our external evaluators:

the CAREI Team (Jan. 2007)

<http://cehd.umn.edu/CAREI/Reports/Connected>

- CAREI: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement: University of MN:
 - **Graduation and Dropout Rates:**
 - Despite increasing number of students receiving free/reduced price lunches and receiving ELL services, graduation rates are increasing.
 - Saint Paul school counselors have ***accepted the vision of the ASCA National Model for school counseling programs.*** The CCIT (Connected Counseling Implementation Team) members were proud to be following ASCA standards and said, “Not many districts can say that.”
 - ***College and Career Resource Centers*** have been expanded in most schools where students can check their academic progress on the web-based Student Portal or explore college and career options.
 - The ***Six Year Plan graduation requirement*** for the Class of 2008 provided the motivation to create web-based resources and to explore appropriate curriculum to meet the requirement.



Concluding Comments

- Systemic change of school counseling programs and personnel takes time, patience, and resources.
- Challenging students to complete their Six Year Plans could lead to life-long learning as they learn how to navigate the career planning process.



Concluding comments

(continued)

- Learner engagement and motivation are essential components of high school reform movements.
 - Six Year Plan engages and motivates students to learn more about the subject they know best: themselves.

