Connected Counseling: Connecting Students to Success

Kitty Johnson
St. Paul Public Schools
“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)

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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.