



The College Board National Office for School
Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA)

School Counseling in New York

A College Board 2011 National
Survey of School Counselors
State Brief

**A Brief for the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center's
National Office for School Counselor Advocacy
by Civic Enterprises with Hart Research**

**John M. Bridgeland
Mary Bruce**



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America is facing a high school and college completion crisis. The most recent data reveal the important linkage of a strong college and career readiness agenda in secondary school to later college enrollment and completion. One in four public high school students and 65 percent of students of color fail to graduate from high school with their peers.¹ During high school, many students do not have the resources they need to succeed in college, including access to college-preparatory courses. This is particularly true in schools serving populations with traditionally low college enrollment rates: Less than one-third of high schools serving the most Hispanic and African American students offer calculus and only 40 percent offer physics.² Of all students who do complete high school, only a quarter (28 percent) complete an associate degree within three years and only half (57 percent) complete a bachelor's degree within six years.³

As a nation, we are falling far short of the College Board's goal of increasing the proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds with an associate degree or higher to 55 percent by 2025, with less than half (41.1 percent) with such a degree as of 2009.⁴ In order to support students in college and career success, and to regain our status as having the highest college attainment rates in the world, we must use all of the tools in our education toolkit — including our nation's counselors. School counselors are uniquely positioned to support student success because of their ability to understand the entire picture of individual students — their family circumstances, social and emotional development, academic progress and other issues related to their success in school.⁵ They also have the ability to follow students over time, unlike teachers, who have them for just one year and are often focused only on their academic progress in a single subject.⁶ Research indicates that a counselor's unique role coordinating expectations, academics and support systems across secondary and postsecondary programs helps to improve academic readiness and persistence for students.⁷

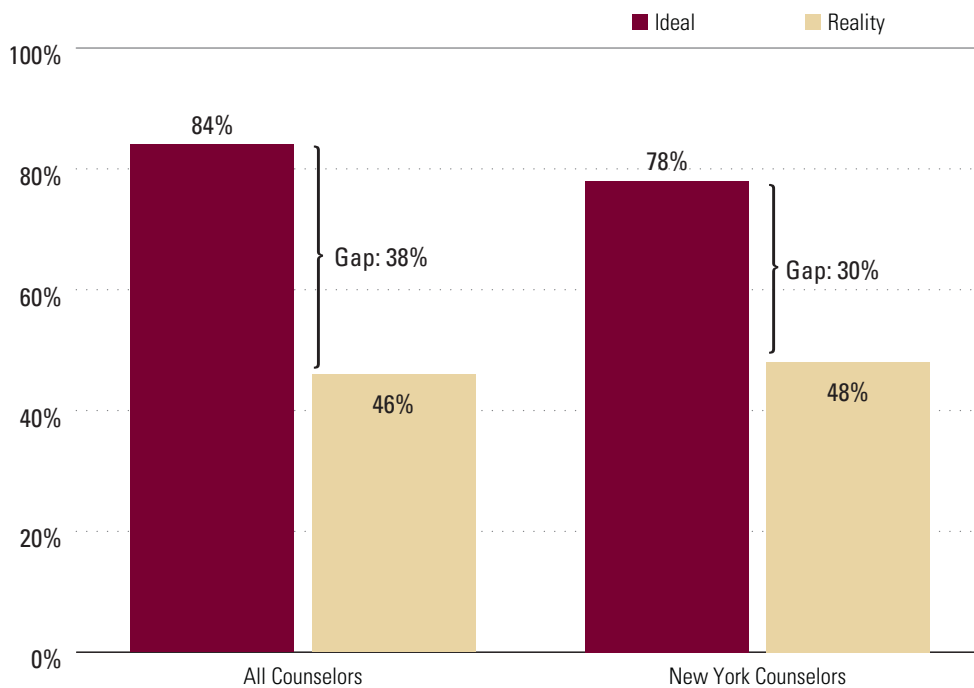
New York, like the nation, is facing a high school and college completion crisis. This brief, *School Counseling in New York*, focuses on the unique challenges and opportunities facing school counselors in the Empire State. It is a supplement to the *2011 National Survey of School Counselors: Counseling at a Crossroads* report commissioned by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy. The findings are based on one of the largest surveys of school counselors — a nationally representative sample of more than 5,300 middle school and high school counselors. The survey revealed deep concerns within the profession and shed light on opportunities to better utilize these valuable leaders in America's schools.

Key Finding: School counselors in New York believe that the mission of schools should be preparing students for college and careers and helping students stay in school through graduation, but few see this as a reality in their schools.

Like their peers around the country, New York counselors report a large gap between the ideal mission of schools and the reality. The vast majority (85 percent) of counselors in New York and nationally agree that the mission of the education system ideally be to “ensure that all students complete the 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers.” Far fewer counselors believe that this fits the mission of their school in reality, with only 23 percent of New York counselors and 30 percent of counselors nationally agreeing. This amounts to a 62-point gap for New York counselors and a 55-point gap nationally.

Counselors in New York report a smaller gap than counselors nationally between the ideal mission of the school counseling profession and its reality. When asked to reflect on the ideal and the reality for the mission of the school counseling profession to ensure that students are college and career ready, New York counselors expressed a smaller gap (30 points) than counselors nationally (38 points). Slightly more counselors from New York (48 percent) say “ensuring that students are college and career ready when they graduate from high school is the mission of counselors in their schools” is the reality, compared to counselors nationally (46 percent).

Figure 1: New York Counselors See a Smaller Gap in Graduating Students Who Are College and Career Ready



Counselors rating “To ensure that all students reach the end of the 12th grade and earn a high school diploma, ready to succeed in college and career” as a “9” or “10” for the mission of school counselors in their schools in the ideal and in reality.

Key Finding: School counselors in New York believe that reforms are needed in the education system. They also support certain accountability measures of counselor effectiveness and key elements of a framework for advancing college and career readiness.

School counselors in New York are more likely to support a major overhaul of the education system, but show similar levels of support for specific education reform proposals. In order to improve student success, 60 percent of New York counselors and 55 percent of all counselors say that major changes or a complete overhaul of the education system are needed. More than six in 10 counselors in New York support specific reforms such as collecting and disseminating data on the success rates of high school graduates (64 percent in New York, compared to 65 percent nationally). A smaller proportion, but still a majority, also supports the creation of measures of accountability and incentives for counselors (54 percent in New York, compared to 61 percent nationally).

New York counselors see certain measures of accountability as fair or appropriate, but less strongly than counselors nationally. Counselors in New York are the most likely to view transcript audits of graduation readiness as a fair and appropriate way to assess the effectiveness of school counselors. On a zero-to-10 scale on which a 10 means the measure is completely fair and appropriate, 61 percent of New York counselors rate transcript audits of graduation readiness as a 6 or higher, compared to 62 percent nationally. However, fewer New York counselors rate using high school graduation rates (44 percent, compared to 57 percent nationally), completion of college-prep classes (49 percent, compared to 61 percent nationally), or students' access to advanced course work (46 percent, compared to 60 percent nationally) as a 6 or higher.

Similar to counselors across the country, counselors in New York support components of a college and career readiness agenda, but only a minority of them think they have the resources needed to be successful. Counselors were asked to assess the College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy's "Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling," a counseling system that focuses on ensuring that all students are college and career ready when they graduate from the 12th grade. School counselors in New York and across the nation believe in the importance of each of these components; however, only a minority of school counselors see their schools as successful in accomplishing each component or believe that they have the resources and support necessary to accomplish each component. Like their national peers, nearly all counselors report being able to see themselves committing to the approach outlined in the items of the components (with 92 percent in New York, and 93 percent nationally rating these items a 6 or higher on a zero-to-10 scale). More than half strongly see themselves committing to the approach outlined by the eight components (with 58 percent in New York versus 57 percent nationally rating this a 9 or a 10 on a zero-to-10 scale), yet only a quarter thought that they had the support needed to be successful (26 percent and 27 percent, respectively).

Table : Proportion Rating Themselves as a 9 or a 10 in Relation to the Eight Components

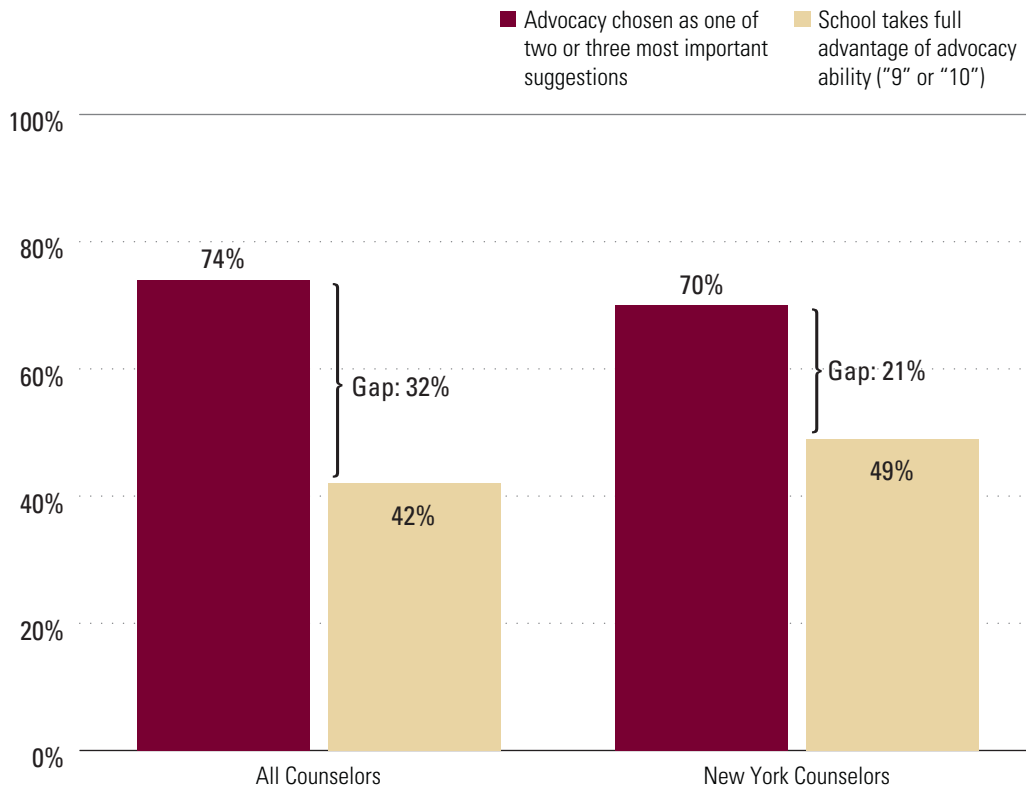
	You can see yourself committed to the approach outlined in these <u>items</u>	You have the training and skills needed to be successful in each of these <u>items</u>	You have the administration support and the resources needed to be successful in each <u>of these items</u>
	%	%	%
All Counselors Nationally	57	50	27
New York Counselors	58	51	26

Key Finding: School counselors in New York are more likely to believe that their schools take advantage of their ability to establish a relationship of trust with their students, but they do not believe their schools take advantage of other important attributes.

The connection counselors are able to forge with students is a priority for counselors in New York and they believe their schools recognize their ability. The counselors rated the ability to “establish relationships of trust with students and be another adult to talk to when they are in situations of conflict” as the highest of five options for the unique role of counselors. Three in four (76 percent) counselors in New York chose this suggestion as one of the most important for achieving the goal of an education system in which all students are college and career ready by the end of the 12th grade, compared to 65 percent of counselors nationally. More than half of New York counselors (56 percent) say that their schools take full advantage of this unique role, compared to 57 percent nationally.

Counselors in New York believe their ability to act as student advocates is important, but they do not believe their schools take advantage of it. Seventy percent of New York counselors believe that their ability to “work proactively as student advocates and actively intervene to create pathways and support to ensure that all students have opportunities to achieve their postsecondary goals” is important, compared to 74 percent nationally. However, less than half (49 percent) of counselors in New York say their schools take full advantage of it.

Figure 2: New York Counselors See Smaller Gaps Between Their Role as Student Advocates and How Much Their School Takes Full Advantage of This Unique Ability



Informed Decision Making with Graduate NYC!

New York counselors identify providing information to students so they can make informed decisions about college as a top priority, but most do not think that their schools are successful in this regard. Among NOSCA's eight components, "provide early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations" was the most highly rated (with 74 percent of New York counselors and 72 percent of counselors nationally rating it as important), yet less than one-third of counselors say their schools are extremely successful at accomplishing this component (with 31 percent of New York counselors and 30 percent nationally giving a rating of 9 or 10 on a zero-to-10 scale). One potential reason is a lack of tools to enable this information sharing. Only a quarter of counselors report they have the resources and the administrative support needed to be successful in promoting a college and career readiness agenda (26 percent in New York and 27 percent nationally).

The Graduate NYC! College Readiness & Success Initiative, a three-year project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is addressing this resource gap. The initiative aims to double the number of CUNY graduates by 2020 by combining the efforts of the New York City Department of Education, the Office of the Mayor, and other education institutions, agencies and local organizations. In its second year, Graduate NYC! continues to focus on initiatives to improve students' academic readiness for college attendance and completion, increase the availability and quality of college advisement and planning, and devise operations and sustainability measures that promote and support an increased college-completing population. Graduate NYC! recognizes that the role of high school counselors is important in achieving college completion goals. In line with this principle, several Graduate NYC! Year Two initiatives actively include counselors by increasing all counselors' access to the high-quality tools and training that have been proven to support students' enrollment in college. Graduate NYC! also aims to involve the wider education community in the college advising process to assist counselors with high caseloads, improving results for students and counselors alike. NYC College Line, slated to launch this fall, will further address resource inequalities between counseling programs in different schools. NYC College Line will be a resource for the entire New York education system, including resources for students and families such as a searchable database of college-related programming, access to advisers, and interactive features like forums and bulletin boards. It will also supply a much-needed professional development space for counselors and other faculty, offering a "crowd source" approach to sharing high-quality materials. By engaging counselors as part of the solution in New York, Graduate NYC! is supporting this critical resource in the education sector, ultimately ensuring that students and families have the resources they need to make informed decisions around college going.

Next Steps

The New York high school and college completion crisis comes at tremendous costs — to individuals, communities and the nation. School counselors are supportive of a college and career readiness agenda, and have indicated a desire to be leaders in supporting their students' success. School counselors are highly valuable professionals in New York's education system, but they are also among the least strategically deployed. This is a loss, especially given the fact that school counselors are uniquely positioned, in ways that many educators are not, to have a complete picture of the dreams, hopes, life circumstances, challenges and needs of their students. Counselors have both a holistic view of the students in their schools and the opportunity to provide targeted supports to keep these students on track for success, year after year.⁸ Now is the time to support school counselors in their efforts — to strengthen the New York education system and secure its future.

Notes

1. Robert Balfanz, et al., *Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic, Annual Update 2012* (Baltimore and Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises and the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, March 2012). Available at http://www.civicerprises.net/reports/Building-A-Grad-Nation-Report-2012_Full_v1.pdf.
2. *The Transformed Civil Rights Data Collection* (Washington, DC: Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, March 12, 2012).
3. National Center for Education Statistics, “Table 331: Graduation Rates of First-Time Postsecondary Students Who Started as Full-Time Degree-Seeking Students.” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2009). Available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_331.asp?referrer=report, in *School Counselors Literature and Landscape Review: The State of School Counseling in America* (New York: Civic Enterprises for the College Board, November 2011). Available at http://www.civicerprises.net/reports/school_counselors_literature_and_landscape_review.pdf.
4. Current Population Survey, 2000–2009 (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau).
5. John Bridgeland and Mary Bruce, *2011 National Survey of School Counselors: Counseling at a Crossroads* (New York: Civic Enterprises with Hart Research for the College Board, 2011). Available at http://civicerprises.net/reports/counseling_at_a_crossroads.pdf.
6. Bridgeland and Bruce, *2011 National Survey of School Counselors*.
7. *School Counselors Literature and Landscape Review*.
8. Bridgeland and Bruce, *2011 National Survey of School Counselors*.

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT[®] and the Advanced Placement Program[®]. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

For further information, visit advocacy.collegeboard.org.

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