A Qualitative Study of the Attitudes of Supervisors/Directors Toward the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs in Selected K-12 School Districts

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF SUPERVISORS/DIRECTORS
TOWARD THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
PROGRAMS IN SELECTED K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

BY

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The demand and expectation imposed by society on our public schools sent all educators grappling and exploring to find educational policies and programs to enable our students to acquire and achieve the necessary skills and knowledge base that the citizens deemed necessary to prepare our young people to function and be successful in today's world. Although education plays an important role in shaping the world of tomorrow, it is also shaped by current and future economic, social, demographic, and technological forces (Parkay & Haas, 2000).

Student achievement is the gauge by which school's performance is judged by the public. A critical dimension of curriculum planning and teaching, then, is the continuous reconsideration of present social forces and future trends (Parkay & Haas, 2009). The country in general, and the state of New Jersey in particular, have experimented with numerous educational programs and paradigms to enhance student experience. One of these programs that evolved from the New Jersey Department of Education is the adoption of N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2 in April of 2000. The code requires all districts to develop and implement a comprehensive guidance and counseling system providing for career awareness and exploration for all students (New Jersey Department of Education, 2000). The administrative code further states, that a comprehensive developmental counseling programs take into consideration the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. The emphasis is on development for all students. An effective school counseling program begins when
student enter the school system and continues as they progress through the educational process, and it should be an integral part of the total educational process, according to Campbell and Dahir (1997). These programs will help students make and carry out informed education and occupational choices; increase student awareness of the relationship between personal qualifies, education, training and the world of work; and acquaint students with the relationship between achieving standards and the attainment of career goals.

Research and literature support the necessity, benefit, and efficacy of a comprehensive guidance and counseling school program. Hawley, McWhirter, Rasheed, and Crothers (2000) state that comprehensive guidance curricula were designed to increase students’ awareness of themselves (example: interests, skills, values) and the world of work (vocational possibilities, work behavior) as well as to develop vocational relevant skills in a manner consistent with their developmental level. According to the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) (1998), (as cited in Dahir, 1998), the purpose of a counseling program in a school setting is to promote and enhance the learning process. Ellis (1990) stated that the purpose of the model (comprehensive guidance program) is to help districts develop a comprehensive and systematic developmental programs in kindergarten through grade 12.

In a study done by Carns and Carns (1991, as cited in Whiston and Sexton, 1988), a study skills guidance program resulted in dramatic increases in students' standardized achievement test scores. As early as 1947, educators recognized the need for an organized developmental guidance program when Strang (1947) of the Teachers College of Columbia University wrote that developmental guidance is a process which
aims to help every child grow in his/her own best way.

In 1970, after 10 years of planning and conferencing, Normal C. Gysbers, a professor of the University of Missouri in Columbia, a strong proponent and one of the founders of the comprehensive school counseling, stated that the program's content focus on student competencies, it is developmental (links the elementary, middle and high school). A recent review school counseling research drew two major conclusions: (a) school counseling interventions substantially impact student academic and personal development, and (b) specific interventions such as small group counseling, class room guidance, and consultation activities seem to contribute directly to student success in the classroom (Borders & Drury, 1992) as cited in Campbell and Dahir, (1997).

Interpreted from another perspective, guidance and counseling's main contribution should be the enhancement of human development (Sprinthal, 1985).

Numerous research and literature suggested that a comprehensive guidance and counseling model is good for the school and students according to Gysbers, in an interview published in 1994 by Good, Fisher, Johnson, and Heppner. According to Dahir (1998), the purpose of a counseling program in a school setting is to promote and enhance the learning process. But as schools move to the twenty first century, they face the considerable challenge of educating a growing population of students at risk for school failure (Keys, Bernak, & Lockhart, 1998).

Relatively few studies of how implementing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program affects student outcomes have been undertaken. Establishing the benefits to students as a result of the district's implementation of a comprehensive guidance program is an important question (Carey, Bowers, & McGannon, 2003).
When a school district invest valuable resources of time, money, and human capacity, it is only fitting that the benefit to the students should be explained. School counseling programs like every aspect of public schools, are receiving close attention from the public and calls for accountability and evaluation of the programs can be expected to increase according to Curcio, Mathal and Roberts (2003).

Researchers have attempted to measure the relationships between school counseling related expenditures and student achievement because, as Jacques and Brorsen (2003) state, the student performance is the ultimate return on school district spending. Although the establishment of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs nationwide is reported to have advance significantly during the past two decades, according to Sink and McDonald (1998 as cited in Sears & Granello, 2002), currently little research is available to support the efficacy of comprehensive school counseling programs. According to Brown (1989, as cited in Borders & Drury, 1992, p.487), "some programs seem to have evolved with no particular plan in mind."

The most significant and urgent need, relative to having such effective guidance and counseling program in every school in the nation, is to establish highly trained and experienced guidance leadership at the state level. The presence of experienced, professionally trained district and especially state-level guidance supervisor is perilously low. Guidance functions are assigned to those (administrators) who already have numerous other roles. It is important to recognize that without leadership, any program is fragile and subject to the shifting whims of time, place, and personnel (Gysbers & Jensen, 1999).
Significance of the Study

Rapid social changes is challenging American education to undertake systemic reform. In responding to calls for reform, education must engage in a re-conceptualization of the entire educational enterprise, including guidance and counseling services in the schools. Such reform requires a movement from a crisis-oriented delivery of guidance services to comprehensive developmental counseling programs that are equal partners with instructional programs (Lusky & Hayes, 2001). This call for reform is nowhere more evident than in the state of New Jersey. The New Jersey Counseling Initiative requires all school districts to implement a comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. Fellen and Stiegelbauer (1991) warned that "educational change is technically simple and socially complex" (p.65). They further stated that implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change.

On April 6-7, 2000, a symposium was held in Washington, D.C. entitled the "Role of School Counseling in Preparing Students for the 21st Century." One of the questions posed during this conference was, "Is there a need for counseling research?" There was little research found that examined school counseling programs, and that the majority of the research studies examined responsive services activities. Furthermore their findings indicated that there was no compelling evidence regarding guidance curriculum interventions which are proposed to be the major component of most comprehensive school counseling programs (Whiston, 2001).

The primary goal of the school counseling program is to enhance student
achievement and accomplishment. The National Standards for School Counseling Programs established similar goals, expectations, opportunities, and experiences for all students. School counseling supports the educational mission of school by assisting all students to become effective learners and achieve the high academic expectations established by national, state, and local standards according to the American Counselor Association (as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Campbell and Dahir further stated that the implementation of standards for school counseling programs should be a joining of powerful educational forces such as teachers, administrators, parents, politicians and all the stake holders in the community.

The National Standards for School Counseling proposed by the American School Counselor Association (as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997) provide the model followed by the State of New Jersey. It stated that a comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs must incorporate three major components. They are academic, career awareness and personal/social development.

*Academic Development*

Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.

Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and the community.
Career Development

Student will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.

Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

Personal/Social Development

Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Purpose of the Study

"The primary goal of the guidance and counseling program is to enhance students achievement and accomplishment" (ASCA as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p.4).

The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative in cooperation with the New Jersey School Counselor Association, in conjunction with the American School Counselor Association launched the implementation of the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs which should take into consideration as its main components the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students (New Jersey Department of Education, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the
district Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive
guidance and counseling programs. These three major components are academic,
career, and personal/social developments (ASCA as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997).
Examing their attitudes and perceptions will help explore and verify if the three
major areas are fully implemented, and if they are, what are the implications to the
school policy of the district, or is the implementation of a comprehensive school
guidance and counseling program reflective of the school district’s policy and culture.
This study will also investigate the motivating factors of a successful implementation
of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program. A qualitative research
method will be used in this study. Grounded theory will be the technique used and
interview will be the means by which data will be collected after which, interview
transcript will be analyzed.

Research Questions

This research will focus on the three major components of the comprehensive
school guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social) and
the Supervisors/Directors perceptions and attitudes on how they impact the school
district policies and practices.

These research questions are:

1. What are the school districts’ specific outcome expectation from the counseling
program?

2. Of the three major components of the counseling programs which one does a
particular school district consider a priority? And why?
3. How does the DFG influence the implementation of the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs?

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is the possible bias on the part of the researcher. The researcher is a member of the counseling profession and formerly held a director’s position. The district where the researcher was formerly employed is not represented in this study. The other limitation of the study is the possibility that some of these districts implemented a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program so as to comply with the state requirement as stated by N.J.A.C.6A:8-3.2 instead of viewing it as good educational policy. Another limitation in this study is the exclusion of the school counselors. This researcher feels that the school counselors are the driving force in any school counseling program.

Definition of Terms

Comprehensive school guidance and counseling program: Program that takes into consideration the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. It is an organized developmental program rather than an ancillary set of student services (ASCA, 1997, as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Counseling: It is a process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behaviors (ASCA, 1997, as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

District Factor Group (DFG): Developed first in 1975 for the purpose of comparing students performance in statewide assessment across demographically
similar school districts. Besides analyzing test results, it established the determination of the Abbott schools (as in Abbott v. Burke), SES (Socio-Economic Status), and school funding formula. The SES is indicated by letters A, B, C, D, DE, YG, GI, I, J. An "A" being in the lowest socio-economic level, and "J" the highest (New Jersey Department of Education, 1990, 2000).

Grounded Theory: Espouses the philosophy that human behavior is not random or idiosyncratic, but rather the basic premise of all social science (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Guidance: Is primarily concerned with dispensing information to students to help them in personal planning and decision making. Emphasis is on presenting educational and vocational information of a personally relevant nature in an interesting manner (Trotzer, 1997).

Interview: Is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Qualitative Research: Is a method designed to observe social interaction and understand the individual perspective, provides insight into what people's experiences are, why they do what they do, and what they need in order to change (Rewan & Hustoo, 1997).

School Counseling: Is a profession that focuses on the relationships and interactions between students and their school environment with the expressed purpose of reducing the effect of environmental and institutional barriers that impede student success. It fosters conditions that endure educational equity, access and academic success for all
students K-12 (The Education Trust, 2003).

School Counseling Program. A comprehensive school counseling program is
developmental and systematic in nature, sequentia, clearly defined, and accountable. It
is jointly founded upon developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and
counseling methodology (ASCA, 1994, as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Organization of the Study

Chapter I gave an overview of why there is a need for school districts to have
guidance and counseling programs and also provide a description of the three major
components of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program. The
following are the six areas in Chapter I: Introduction, Significance of the Study,
Purpose of the Study, Research Questions, Limitations of the Study, and Definition of
Terms.

Chapter II is a review of related literature. The chapter presented a short historical
background of the inception of the movement to institute school guidance and
counseling as a part of the educational process. It described the evolution of the
movement from the national level and the birth of the initiative in the state of New
Jersey. It presented the benefits that students gain when the three major components of
the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (namely academic, career,
personal/social) are implemented as part of the curriculum of the schools. The chapter
also addressed organizational and leadership aspects of the guidance and counseling
program. Also in this chapter was a brief discussion of why it is vital for the counseling
program to have an accountability system. The investigation of the attitudes and
perceptions of these leaders toward the three major components of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs was the topic of this study.

Chapter III described the methodology of this research; how the data were collected, the technique used in data collection, the research design, the setting of the study, and the population of the study.

Chapter IV is a detailed analysis of the data collected, the transcript of each interview and how it was treated.

Chapter V summarized the research study, and it also included the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

The final part of this research paper included the list of references and appendices.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The nature of educational and social change must be first understood in terms of its sources and purposes according to Fulla and Stadler (1991). While the trajectory of institutional change tends to be more gradual in American education, elementary and secondary schools have not been immune to the accelerating pace of societal evolution such as socio-technological advances or changes in the family structure.

Children and adolescents growing up in the world of today are facing a bewildering array of new and old challenges. A rapidly changing work world and labor force, violence (in the home, school, and community), divorce, teenage suicide, substance abuse, and sexual experimentation are just a few examples. These challenges are real and they are having substantial impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of children, according to Gysbers and Henderson (1994, as cited in Gysbers, Lapan, & Blair, 1999). In order for school reform to be deemed efficacious, student performance in a variety of areas must demonstrate real improvement. Leading scholars in the field of counseling profession argued that this improvement must be in the domains of academic, career, and personal/social (Sink & Stroh, 2003).

Counseling and guidance is a distinct, and comprehensive program, rather than a set of loosely related services according to the Commission on Pre-college Guidance
counseling program should be sequential and developmental in its organization.
According to Gysbers and Henderson (1988, as cited in Borders & Drury, 1992),
comprehensive guidance and counseling as an educational program has a curriculum
which is grounded in a philosophy or mission statement that is consistent with other
school level. Gysbers and Henderson further state, that the counseling program is both
an integral part of an independent component of the total educational program and
central rather than peripheral to teaching and learning in the schools. School
counseling is now positioned to be one of the national and international forces to help
shape more effective school environments and provide students unique development
enhancing opportunities (Lapan, 2001). However, according to Gysbers et al. (1999)
because of the many barriers to full implementation, it is not an overstatement to say
that there are more written guidance programs in school districts across the country
than there are fully implemented ones.

To fully understand the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs,
one must re-trace its national history, and also include the state of New Jersey’s
requirement for the school districts to implement the New Jersey School Counseling
initiative otherwise known as N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2 (NJDOE, 2000). There is a brief
overview of N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2 in this chapter. This chapter also reviews related
literature that supported the importance of the incorporation of the three major
components (academic, career, personal/social) of the guidance and counseling
programs in the school district curriculum.
As previously stated, the purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of the district Supervisors/Directors toward the aforementioned three major components of the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs, therefore a portion of this chapter includes the profile of the leadership of the program.

National History

On July 1, 1971, the University of Missouri-Columbia, was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education a grant to assist each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, to develop guides to implement career guidance, counseling, and placement programs in their local schools. This project started the development and implementation of the K-12 comprehensive guidance program. During the 1980's through the 1990's, the state of Missouri and about 25 to 30 other states and many school districts developed their guidance program based on the Missouri Model (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997).

In 1981 Norman Gysbers and Carl Moore wrote a book titled, "Improving Guidance Programs" which described the model and how to implement it according to Good, Fisher, Johnston, and Heppner (1994). In 1984 the state of Missouri developed a statewide model for guidance. From 1984 to 1988 75 high schools in Missouri implemented the program and in 1988, the model became a full K-12 (Good, Fisher, Johnston, & Heppner, 1994).

School counseling in the United States gradually evolved in stages. From 1910s to the 1950s guidance personnel, who were mostly vocational and classroom teachers,
dispensed vocational and career information to high school students with the purpose focused largely on job preparation and maintenance. Around the 1960s to the 1980s a "services" or "pupil personnel" model was instituted. Secondary level counselors and guidance personnel such as nurses, attendance officers and teachers provided psycho-educational support and reactive services to students at risk for school failures or those experiencing personal/social difficulties. School counselors also offered education and career guidance to college bound students.

By the early 1970s and early 1980s several prominent school counseling and career educational researchers such as Norman Gysters, Donald Dinmayer, and Edwin Herr, maintained that a philosophical reorientation in the profession was badly needed, thus, as a result the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs movement emerged as a viable alternative to a "services" orientation" (Sink, 2002). This Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program according to Johnson and Whitefield (1991 as cited in Sink, 2002) is a competency-based programmatic approach which attempts to be multi-systemic, collaborative, developmental, prevention-minded and educational. By the late 1990s the CGCP had become the most widely used organizational framework for the profession and endorsed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and numerous state counseling organizations (Sink, 2002).

From the national data of the Department of Education, in a survey conducted by the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), it found that in 2002 helping students with their academic achievement in high school was the most emphasized guidance goal,
whereas in 1984 a survey called "High School and Beyond" found that the primary goal of the high school counseling program was helping students plan and prepare for work roles after high school National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1990). Federal support for improving or expanding the guidance counseling programs in elementary and high schools is reflected in several pieces of legislation under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 2001. The elementary and secondary school counseling programs under Title IV, Part D of the ESEA is a grant program that provides local agencies with the federal funds to establish or expand elementary and secondary school counseling programs.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 also known as Public Law 105-332 offers federal grants to help provide vocational-technical education programs and services to youths and adults (NCES, 1990). Paisley and Borders (1995 as cited in Keys et al. 1998) state that the focus of school counseling through the years has shifted at different points in response to the changing social, economic, and political environment.

The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative

According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2000) the purpose of the New Jersey Counseling Initiative is to develop a program of education, development, and support for school districts that will maximize the implementation of N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2 otherwise known as Career Education and Counseling. N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2 provides for the development and implementation of a comprehensive guidance and counseling system to facilitate career awareness and exploration in fulfillment of the
Core Curriculum Content Standards. The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative will ensure the delivery of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program for Grades K-12.

The New Jersey School Counseling Initiative evolved from the adoption of N.J.A.C.6A:8-3.2 in April 2000 in cooperation with the New Jersey School Counselor Association. The implementation of this administrative code began in September 2000 with the launch event and regional training (NJDOE, 200). The National Standards for School Counseling Programs endorsed by American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the State of New Jersey for every school districts focus on the three widely accepted and interrelated areas. These areas are academic, career, and personal/social development according to ASCA (as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Campbell and Dahir are two leading proponents of the National Standards for School Counseling Standards. The ensuing research literature are supporting documentation that will show how students can benefit from the implementation of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. The related literature will also show how these three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, once integrated with the school curriculum can have a positive impact on students achievement. These three major components are academic, career, and personal/social development.

Benefits of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs

**Academic**

In a statewide high school evaluation study by Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997), of
236 high schools in the state of Missouri, the result suggested that comprehensive
guidance and counseling programs can become a central contributing factor to student
academic success. According to the ASCA (2002) school counseling programs are
important to the school climate and a crucial element in improving student
achievement.

Studies conducted by Hadley in 1988 and Lee in 1993 as cited in Whiston &
Sexton, 1998), found that students who participated in a program that incorporated
curriculum resources from several sources had higher reading and math scores than
those students who did not participate in the program.

A longitudinal study was conducted by Trusty (2004) to examine the effects of
several middle school and high school variables on completion versus non-completion
of the bachelor’s degree. Fifty three percent of the research population completed eight
years after their senior year. The number one variable attributed to this success;
according to Trusty is the taking of intense academic courses such as Math and
Science. Trusty further stated that most likely this success is the result of career
planning which has a pervasive and lasting effect.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2003), between
1984 and 2002, the proportion of public high schools indicated that helping students
with their academic achievement was the most emphasized guidance goal. In 1987,
Myrick (as cited in Borders & Drury, 1992) stated that although the program
(comprehensive counseling) has its own distinct curriculum, its underlying purpose is
to facilitate the instructional process and students’ academic success.

“An expanding body of research affirms that teaching and counseling students
with interventions that are congruent with the students learning style preference result in their increased academic achievement and more positive attitudes toward learning” (Griggs & Dunn, 1988, p. 1). Furthermore, Griggs and Dunn stated, that for Hispanic adolescents with identity-related problems, group counseling with peers who are experiencing similar conflicts can be helpful. To address these problems, educators can plan interventions that acknowledge and celebrate diversity when teaching and counseling Hispanic youth.

A research study conducted by Sink and Stoh (2002), indicated that children benefit academically whether they are economically disadvantaged or not by remaining in schools for multiple years (at least 3 years) with a well-established comprehensive school counseling program.

In 23 “racially isolated minority schools” in a large urban school district in Southern California, the Supplemental Counseling Program was implemented. According to Ortiz, Tidwell, and Wiltz (1982 as cited in Tidwell, 1988), “racially isolated minority school” is defined as a school with at least 70% of the students are Asian, Black, or Hispanic. According to Ortiz et al., the primary goal of the program was to provide additional counseling and to maintain individual contact with the students for three years of their high school experience. The program’s main goal is to implement the development of the “whole child” philosophy through counseling. The students were afforded an intense academic and career counseling. The researchers concluded that the program was effective in bringing students regularly scheduled counseling.

Twenty five percent of our nation’s youth between 14 and 16 years of age drop out
of high school before graduation according to Brodinsky (1989 as cited in Edmonson & White, 1998), Canfield (1992), Waitey (1987), Brodinsky (1989), all state that there is a strong evidence that repeated failure in school leads to more failure and finally to dropping out of school. There is a general agreement that underachievement and low self-esteem are the primary reasons for dropping out of school. Edmonson and White (1998), concluded that a comprehensive drop out prevention program involving counseling and tutoring can assist at-risk students in improving their self-esteem, school achievement and classroom behavior.

In order for school reform to be efficacious, student performance in a variety of areas must demonstrate real improvement. Similarly, leading scholars in the school counseling profession have argued that counselors must show student growth across the three developmental domains which are academic, career, and personal/social. To realize this goal, schools need to realize their counseling interventions and services within the context of a comprehensive school counseling program (Sink & Stroh, 2003).

Sink and Stroh (2003) concluded that elementary-age students enrolled for several years in schools with well established Comprehensive School Counseling Programs produce higher achievement test scores over and above those continually enrolled children in non-CSCP schools.

Students enrolled in schools with a more fully implemented guidance program reported earning higher grades (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997).

Borders and Drury (1992) note that several empirical studies verified the positive effects of group counseling intervention where the students have shown significant
increase in academic persistence and achievement, school attendance, classroom behaviors, self esteem, and self concept.

Evans and Burek (1992 as cited in Lapan et al., 2001) argued that the infusion of career education guidance activities into the academic curriculum led to even greater gains for high school students.

Nelson and Gardner (1998), as cited by Lapan et al., found that students in Utah high schools with more fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling programs rated their overall education as better, took more advanced mathematics and science courses, and had higher scores on the ACT entrance examinations.

Career

Career development is a lifelong process that can be fostered through educational programs at all levels. It is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical and economic change factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in the total life span of any given individual (Maddy-Bernstein, 2000).

According to Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) students attending a school where counselors indicated that a more fully implemented counseling program was in place more career and college information was made available to them.

Herring (1998) investigated the effects of career intervention on academic achievement in Grades 1 to 12 students. He found that career education intervention had a positive impact on student achievement.

National workforce development policies have been described as subject to the whims of political and social agenda according to Heo (1995, as cited in Lapan and
Kosciulek, (2001). Furthermore Herr noted that the lack of omnibus piece of legislation to clarify and integrate career counseling services has led to the current situation in which the administration of, and funding for career guidance services are diluted and fragmented across many federal and state agencies.

In 1994, Hoyt (as cited in Lapun & Kosciulek, 2001) suggested that the failure of career development services to become an integral piece of each school's educational mission results in large part from federal policies and initiatives that, in essence, are not connected to current national educational reform movements. To remedy this dilemma Lapun and Kosciulek suggested that an evaluation framework must be developed and implemented by local community career system partnerships and policy makers.

According to Bandura (1995 as cited in Kraes & Hughey, 1999) the new realities of the information era requires advanced cognitive and self-management competencies to fulfill complex occupational roles and to manage the maze of demands of contemporary life. Few studies investigating the career decision-making self-efficacy of high school students have been reported (Kraes & Hughey, 1999). According to the researchers providing career guidance activities as part of the school counseling program is a way to help students learn career decision-making skills and career indecision. The researchers further stated that the development and implementation of career guidance activities as part of a school's guidance program is essential to facilitate the career development of students. The researchers also noted that career development activities and learning experiences should begin at an early age and continue into high school and beyond.
One of the most common practices in preparing grade 8 students in their transition to high school starts with course scheduling. According to Peterson, Long, and Billups (1999) these grade 8 students do not have knowledge or understanding of how their high school course selection choices affect their future plans. Peterson et al. stated that the level of career intervention administered to students had a direct impact upon students' abilities to understand the importance of their educational choices related to post-secondary education and future career choices. The researchers further stated that it appears that the implementation of classroom career intervention by the school counselor has the potential to help students start thinking about the importance of the choices they will be making related to their course selections and how these choices will impact on the rest of their life.

School-to-Work initiatives dovetail naturally with comprehensive guidance and counseling programming at the elementary and secondary levels because the goals of the guidance programs are included within School-to-Work objectives according to Gysbers (1997 as cited in McWhirter, Rashod, & Crethers 2000).

In a study on the effects of career counseling on gifted high school students who have multi-potentiality, it was found that there is a strong positive response among the students (Kerr & Ghrist-Fribele, 1988).

Bandura (1997, 1986), Harter (1983), (as cited in Lee & Cramond, 1999), state that human performance is influenced by one's perceived competence, positive expectancies, perceived control, and will power. Based on the aforementioned philosophy formal mentoring programs have been developed according to Lee and Cramond. The researchers indicated that participation of economically disadvantaged
students in a formal mentoring program improved their aspirations in terms of future
career awareness, increasing years of education, and understanding career options.

**Personal/Social**

A study conducted by Lapan, Gysbers and Pewoski (2001), found that students who attended schools where a fully implemented counseling program was in place consistently indicated that the students have a better relationship with teachers. Furthermore, the study indicated that a comprehensive counseling program was of benefit to seventh graders regardless of the socio-economic level of their school. The study also indicated that a more fully implemented guidance and counseling program were related to greater student feelings of both safety and success in poorer as well as wealthier schools.

Preventive and developmental programs seem to be the most promising and cost effective approaches to counseling with adolescents. Such programs are likely to help young people satisfactorily address the question of "Who am I?" (Gerler, 1991).

Afraid of ridicule and fearful of physical attacks resulted in frequent absences and academic failure among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, according to Gibson (1989, as cited in Muller & Hartman, 1998). The researchers reported that group counseling may be the best way to break through the barrier. Such program was set up in suburban public high school in Maryland.

In a study done on the benefits of the counseling students with a "range of exceptionalities such as minority students, learning disabled, and gifted students" (Whiston & Sexton, 1998, p.423), the study indicated that guidance and counseling
have a positive impact. Dunn and Vollman in 1989 (as cited in Whiston & Sexton, 1988) conducted a study where they blended academic, career exploration and job shadowing. The study found that Grade 9 students of Hispanic origin who participated in the program had less gender stereotype than those who did not participate.

According to Verduyn, Lord, and Forrest (1990), the importance of friendship and social interactions in children's development is well known and has been documented by numerous research studies. Furthermore, Verduyn et al. stated that social skills which enable children to interact with others in acceptable ways, are the foundation of these important relationships. The researchers concluded that social skills training is an effective school-based intervention.

A planned program of individual and small group counseling enables students to learn to deal with the stressors resulting from today's changing society. Research findings indicate that student counseling improves school attendance and school behavior, increases student achievement, and boosts student's levels of self-esteem and attitudes toward school according to Schmidt (2003, as cited in Beal, 2004).

The primary purpose of public high schools is education; yet increasingly schools are becoming the site of initial intervention for at-risk students, and as economic resources to support intervention and treatment services at the federal, state, and local levels have continued to decline, school systems have, out of necessity, assumed greater responsibility for developing comprehensive counseling programs according to Miano, Forrest, & Gustaf, 1997).

Adolescents continue to use and abuse alcohol in spite of the proven link between problem drinking and serious health, social, and behavioral problems in adolescents.
These behavioral problems result in negative consequences such as teen pregnancy, delinquency, aggressive and impulsive behavior and dropping out of school (Coker & Borders, 2001). Coker and Borders believe that through individual and group counseling adolescents may be helped to identify and form positive and supporting relationships.

In a study conducted by Myrick and Dixos (1985, as cited in Bramley, Bramley and Baeley-Barkley, 1996), the researcher found that in inner-city elementary schools, students who received group counseling improved their classroom behavior significantly more than those who did not receive group counseling.

Prejudices and racial misconceptions continue to be a problem in today's society and it is mirrored in school settings (Reeder, Douzenis, & BERGIN, 1997). In a series of small group counseling to improve racial/ethnic relationships in the school, there was evidence that there was a change of attitudes after the counseling sessions, according to the aforementioned researchers.

Urban high school youth, particularly minority youth face increasingly severe obstacles in pursuing their educational goals and career aspirations, and they are less likely to receive a post-secondary degree and are more likely to drop out of high school, stated (Kenny, Blustein, Chavez, Grossman & Gallagher, 2003). According to these researchers, urban youth would benefit from interventions (individual and group counseling) that would help them to access their social supports, both within their broader context as well as within their families.

In 1997 Grossman, Neckerson, Koepsell, Liu, Asher, Beland, Frey and Rivara conducted an evaluation of Second Step, a violence prevention curriculum. The
researchers stated that using classroom-based interventions that are driven by standardized curricular materials is an effective and efficient method of providing school counseling interventions to all students. Grossman et al. concluded that the Second Step violence prevention curriculum does have a measurable effects on behaviors. According to the researchers students who participated in the program showed evidence of pro-social behaviors and fewer negative behaviors as per their observation in the playground and cafeteria settings.

Students who attended schools with more fully implemented guidance programs rated the climate in their school as being more positive (Lapan, Gybes, & Sun, 1997).

Leadership of the Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Programs

Who will lead the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs? According to Cuban (2004), deciding what is important and how to achieve organizational and personal goals fall into the purview of the political role. Cuban further states that, rhetoric about leadership often obscures the fact that school leadership is rooted in the realities of places, roles and resources.

Discussion began in the 1980s of what should be the nature, structure, position, and leadership of guidance. How should it be organized and where: building/district? Who should manage the program? What title best identifies the program leader? One hundred years later titles continue to vary in educational administrative structures (Gybes, & Henderson, 2001).

In New Jersey, this researcher observed that the leaders of the counseling and guidance department may be the Director of Student Personnel Services for the district
but is also in-charge of other departments. This person may be the district director or supervisor of guidance and counseling, or in the case of a fragmented counseling program, this person may be the Principal or Assistant Principal of the school building. Sometimes the high school alone may have a counseling supervisor or director, in the middle school and elementary schools, the school counselors are supervised by the building principal. By the 1970s, it was clear that for the most part, building principals left guidance programs unattended, but at the same time were reluctant to relinquish authority, Cutar (1977, as cited in Gysbers & Henderson, 1997). For some leaders of the guidance and counseling programs, collaboration with and confrontation of building principals was too difficult, given no clear agreement regarding the rationale and definition of guidance programs or school counselors' roles (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997).

Collaboration is very important between the leader of the guidance and counseling programs and the principals of the different buildings within the district, and other administrators. Collaboration produces an organizationally competent school wherein everyone has a role that defines his or her obligations and everyone is part of a reciprocal relationship that spells out mutual obligations according to Sergiovanni (2004).

Discussion regarding the leadership of the counseling programs appeared in professional journals as early as the 1920s and 1930s. The question that was posed then according to Henderson (1997), was who are these leaders, what titles should they have, what are their jobs, and where do they fit organizationally in the district.

The researcher, being a member of the profession, can attest to the fact that up to
now, in the year 2005, these same questions still plague the counseling organization. Up until now the leadership of the guidance and counseling profession still has no clear definition, neither does the authority and the nature of the job, and the duties they are to perform. According to Carey, Harrity, and Dimmitt (2005), one of the requirements for a school district to be successful in the implementation of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program is to have a full-time, district level guidance program director who is respected by the superintendent, principals, and counselors.

Accountability

Robert Evans (1993) warned that accountability assigned to the schools is clear but excessive. The Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program is not immune to the call of accountability that is demanded from the public school system. Demonstrating accountability through the measured effectiveness of the delivery of the guidance program and the performance of the guidance staff helps ensure that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the general public will continue to benefit from quality comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, according to Gysbers and Henderson (1982), as cited in Gysbers et al., 1992. Gysbers and Henderson went on to say that to achieve accountability, there is a need to evaluate the programs according to the nature, structure, organization, and implementation. Gysbers and Henderson suggested that the guidance (and counseling) program evaluation asks the following questions: Is there a written guidance program in the school district? Is the written guidance program the actual implemented program in the building of the district?

In an evaluation conducted by Taylor and Henderson, (1991) of the guidance and
counseling services in a small rural school district in Texas, they concluded that based on the result of the surveys of parents, students, administrators, and teachers, the majority of those surveyed believed that counseling services were beneficial to students and were an important component of the educational process (Taylor & Henderson, 1991).

According to Carey and Dimmitt (2004), the school counseling profession is suffering from an evidence gap that is limiting practitioners' abilities to identify best practices and demonstrate accountability. The researchers further stated that, this evidence gap is damaging the credibility of the profession and hampering advocacy initiatives, and that the school counseling profession needs to earn credibility by demonstrating its firm commitment to the use of evidenced-based best practices and to local accountability.

Why is accountability a recurring question or concern? According to Gysbers (2003), accountability is not a one-time phenomenon, instead it is an ongoing responsibility of the profession at the national, state, and local levels. Gysbers also said that accountability is never over.

Summary

This chapter addressed several aspects related to the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, such as its history, both in the national and state level, its major components, its leadership, and finally the accountability issue.

At the national level the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program started with the leadership of Dr. Norman C. Gysbers, then to the states, including the
District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

In the State of New Jersey, the CGCP movement for the year 2000 was part of the educational reform in fulfillment of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2 otherwise known as the New Jersey Counseling initiative, was born out of the mandate of the aforementioned administrative code. With the cooperation of the New Jersey School Counselor Association, and endorsement by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the CGCP was launched. The comprehensive guidance and counseling program has three major components, which are the academic, career, and personal/social development for all students.

Chapter II included literature that addressed the impact of CGCP on the academic, career, and personal/social development of all school children. Also included in this chapter is a description of the leaders or administrators of this program. The aforementioned are the subjects of this research. The last item in this chapter dealt with the accountability system of the program, and why there is a need or demand for it.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter described the research methodology. The chapter is divided into six sections. They are the Introduction, Research Methodology, Research Technique, Research Design, Setting of the Study, and Population. Each of these sections will have a broad description so as to provide a better understanding of the design and the purpose of the study.

The purpose of the study is to investigate through qualitative method the attitudes and perceptions of the district Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive school counseling programs which are academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

Dr. Susan C. Whiston (2000), one of the nationally known leading proponents of the counseling programs, stated that, "currently, the little counseling research that is conducted is done on a piece-meal basis, which does not promote the empirical evidence that is needed to today's educational environment" (p.15). It is the hope of this researcher that the result of this study will help explore the motivating factors and characteristics of the districts that are successful in implementing a comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, which will serve as a model for other school districts to follow. This qualitative study employed the grounded theory technique. Grounded theory employs theoretical sampling and substantive questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).
Qualitative Research

Qualitative methodology in the broadest sense is research that produces descriptive data: peoples' own written or spoken words and observable behavior according to Taylor and Bogdan, (1994). According to Taylor and Bogdan the following are the descriptions of qualitative methodology: Qualitative research is inductive. The studies begin with only vaguely formulated research questions. In qualitative methodology, the researcher studies people in the context of their past and the situations in which they find themselves. Qualitative researchers are described as naturalistic. They sort of “blend into the woodwork.” Qualitative researchers try to understand people from their own frame of reference. They tend to identify with people they study. To qualitative researchers, seek not “truth” or “morality” but rather a detailed understanding of other people’s perspectives.

Qualitative research is designed to observe social interaction and understand the individual perspective, provide insight into what peoples’ experiences are, what they do, and what they need in order to change (Rowan & Huston, 1997).

Qualitative researchers in education can continually be found asking questions of the people they are learning from to discover “what they are experiencing and how they interpret their experiences, and how they themselves structure the social world in which they live” Paatsas (1973 as cited in Bogdan & Biklen 1998, p.7). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), qualitative research is descriptive; the data collected take the form of words and pictures rather than numbers. Bogdan and Biklen further state that the qualitative research approach demands that the world be examined with the
assumption that nothing is trivial, that everyting has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. In this study, the purpose is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the district Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs namely: academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, documents, and participant's observations. This data is used to understand and explain social phenomena (Myers, 1997). The motivation for doing qualitative research comes from the observation that, if there is one thing which distinguishes humans from the natural world, it is our ability to talk (Myers, 1997).

The researcher deemed it necessary that the qualitative research approach being utilized in this study must be explained. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) explained that qualitative research in education take many forms and are conducted in many settings. The data collected have been termed soft, that is, rich in description of people, places, and conversations and not easily handled by statistical procedure. Research questions were formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity, in context. They are concerned with understanding behavior from the subjects' own frame of reference. They tend to collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where subjects normally spend their time.

Qualitative research is concerned with properties, the state, and the character or the nature of the phenomena. Qualitative implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are rigorously examined. It produces a wealth of detailed data about a
much smaller number of people and cases. Qualitative data provide depth and detail through direct quotation and careful description of situations, events, interactions, and observed behaviors (Labuschagne, 2003).

The analysis of the data collected by means of the qualitative research involves the organization of the data to discover patterns and themes (Labuschagne, 2003). Writing up a qualitative study, according to Spradley (1972, as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), is called “translation”, where the researcher takes what they have seen and heard and writes it down on paper so that it makes as much sense to the reader as it did to the researcher.

Qualitative research involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that are not easily reduced to numbers. These data relate to the social world and the concepts and behaviors of people within it (Murphy, Dngwa, Greatbatch, Parker, & Watson, 1998). Further more Murphy et al. stated that qualitative work is often identified with idealism in the social sciences where qualitative study is more popular, what people perceive or believe is the basis for their actions rather than what an impartial observer might think was actually true. The authors also stated that qualitative research is particularly useful to policy makers and planners by providing descriptive information and understanding of the context in which policies will be implemented.

Qualitative research is likened to the metaphor of the lantern. Lanterns are used to allow to illuminate dark areas so that we can see things that previously were obscure. Once we shed light on things we see better (Shank, 2002, as cited in Shank and Vilella (2004)).
Qualitative research is based on the theoretical assumptions that meaning and process are crucial in understanding human behavior, that descriptive data are what is important to collect, and that analysis is best done inductively on data collection traditions (such as participant observation, unstructured interviewing, and documented analysis) and on generally stated substantive questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1988). Bogdan and Biklen further state that researchers bring their own specific background to a study. This is true in this particular research. The researcher is a member of the profession being studied and had held the position as that of the participants. While some qualitative research is unstructured, drifting through data without even consciously formulating a plan or question, some are structured, such as this particular study. The researchers may choose questions, who to interview, where and when to observe, prepare interview schedules prior to doing the field work (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Commonly a qualitative research is flexible, however in this case the researcher planned the questions, and selected the participants. Still Bogdan and Biklen continued to say, that qualitative researchers assume that human behavior is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs, and whenever possible, they go to that location.

Research Technique

The Interview

Interview is the favored “digging tool” of sociologists, this is according to Benny and Hughes (1970, as cited in Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). According to Benny and Hughes, the most important characteristic of interviewing is learning the meanings, perspectives and definitions of the participants view of the world. The interviewer
according to Taylor and Bogdan must create an atmosphere where people can talk freely.

Weisner (Third International Dictionary, 1993), defined interview as a private conversation to obtain information. According to Morgan (1988, as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people or more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other. The open-ended questions were meant to provide a forum for explanations, meanings, and new ideas (Labuschagne, 2003).

In an interview, the interviewer orally asks respondents a series of questions and records responses. The advantages of an interview are the following: (a) more interaction with participants; (b) during the interaction, questions that the respondents do not understand may be clarified; (c) ambiguous and interesting responses can be followed up; and (d) personal touch may increase the response rate (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Interviews create two major problems. First, interview bias, the interviewer may influence respondents’ answers by verbally or non-verbally encouraging and rewarding “correct” responses. Second, because the participants are interviewed by the investigator, they may be more apt to give socially desirable responses than if they were merely writing their answers anonymously (Mitchell & Jolley, 1993)."The goal of understanding how the person you are interviewing thinks, is the center of the interview. An approach to open-ended interviewing is one in which the person being interviewed is treated as an expert" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, pp.97). A good interview is when you look at the transcript and the parts labeled “Participant” are very long.
and those designating the "Researcher" are short. This indicates a good interview according to Bogdan and Biklen (1998).

Research Design

There are two kinds of design methods according to Bogdan and Biklen (1998). They are analytic induction and constant comparative. In this study the researcher is employing the analytic method. It is an approach to collecting and analyzing data as well as a way to develop test theory. It is used when some specific problem, question, or issue becomes the focus of research. Data are collected and analyzed to develop a descriptive model that encompasses all cases of the phenomena. This procedure is used extensively in open-ended interviewing (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996).

Qualitative research like other studies must have well-defined research questions. Clear expectations must be set up for the readers. Research questions are usually framed in terms of discovering, exploring, explaining or understanding, according to Rowan and Husten (1977). Participants in this research project were chosen from the list of school districts obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education website. These districts are known to have a comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. The participants represented different counties in the State of New Jersey and from varied DPG (District Factor Grouping), as identified by The New Jersey Department of Education. Identification of participants was not random. Instead purposeful sampling was used when choosing subjects because it is believed to facilitate developing theory which is consistent with the analytic induction method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).
A letter of intent and solicitation was sent to the superintendent of the school districts (See Appendix A). Some of the participants were contacted by telephone prior to the sending of the letter of intent and solicitation to verify if they were willing to participate in the study. Some of the participants were identified by the district's central office in cases where there were recent changes of personnel.

Individual interview was the technique used in the collection of data. The participants were informed prior to the interview that it would be tape recorded, but their identity would remain anonymous. When the interview reached its conclusion, data was transcribed. The participants were informed that the transcript of the individual interview will be made available for his/her review. Coding was used to analyze the data that were collected.

Since the purpose of the study is to discover and understand the attitudes and Perceptions of the Supervisors/Directors of the district's school counseling program, the ensuing questions are framed in terms of discovering, exploring, explaining or understanding. The aforementioned criteria are consistent with Rowan and Huston's (1997) descriptions of research questions. The interview questions will address the three major components of a comprehensive school counseling programs namely: academic, career, and personal/social. As to the respondents, the gender, the educational degree, certificate, and years of experience were not pre-requisites for participation in this research study. On March 2, 2005 a copy of the interview questions was sent to the president of the New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) to review the validity of these questions. Prior to the mailing date, the president was contacted and asked if she and the officers of NJSCA will serve as a
Jury of Experts, to which she agreed.

Since the purpose of the study is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the District Supervisor/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive school counseling programs which are academic, career, and personal/social therefore the interview questions will reflect these three major components.

The following are the interview questions:

*Interview Question 1:* Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability”. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

*Interview Question 2:* In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

*Interview Question 3:* In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

*Interview Question 4:* Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

*Interview Question 5:* In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why

*Interview Question 6:* Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up? Can you explain?

*Interview Question 7:* What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement in your district? Please explain.

*Interview Question 8:* What programs in personal/social development does your
district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

**Interview Question 9:** To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

**Setting of the Study**

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984), the interviewer must create an atmosphere in which people feel comfortable to talk freely about themselves. The researcher attempts to construct a situation that resembles those in which people naturally talk to each other about important things.

The study was conducted in the school district of the individual participants. The interview took place in a chosen location by the participants. The researcher suggested that the interview should take place in the offices of the participants. The office of the Supervisor/Director of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program may be located in the district’s central office or in one of the buildings designated for him or her. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), usually qualitative researchers go to where the people they will study spend time. These people’s territory can be a school, a playground, their hangout or their home. Bogdan and Biklen further stated that the places where these people do that they normally do is the natural setting to conduct a study.

**Population**

In the field of organizational development, leadership is defined as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation, according to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnsen (1996, as cited in
Dollarhies, 2003).

The questions that were asked about the nature, structure, position, and leadership of guidance (counseling) in the early 1900s are still being asked today, almost 100 years later. However, given the evolution of the program over the years from position, to a set of services, to a program, there now is a clear answer to the questions. For the purpose of clarity for this research population, the term Director/Supervisor of the district comprehensive guidance and counseling program will be defined by the following description: The comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in a school district are comprised of the work of all the school counselors, as well as paraprofessionals and other staff members in the department. The organizational structure of the district-wide guidance and counseling department is headed by a district-level administrator who provides district leadership building level guidance and counseling program staff leaders who, in turn, lead the school counselors and other building-level department staff members. They provide district leadership to other district-based program staff leaders who may be responsible for multiple buildings or for special elements of the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs such as substance abuse prevention specialists, school social workers, and so forth (Cysbers & Henderson, 1997). The definition of the kind of leadership that is required of a school counseling program is related to this research.

The participants of this study (supervisors/directors of the district comprehensive school guidance and counseling program), represented school districts from different counties within the state of New Jersey. These districts also represented different socio-economic status as defined by the state at District Factor Group.
Summary

Chapter III described in detail the methodology of the research project. The qualitative research as a process was defined and explained basing from the works of several authors, and the reason why it was selected by this researcher for this particular study. The research design was also explained.

The chapter described who the participants were, how they were selected, and why they were selected. The participants of this research project are the leaders of their district’s comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, therefore, their leadership roles are very important to the educational process as it equates to students’ achievement.

Included in this chapter are the nine interview questions that were asked of the participants. Some of these questions delved into how the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social) are perceived by the participants. The rest of the questions were technical as they pertained to the school policy. The participants' answers to these questions were analyzed and summarized, the results of which appeared in Chapter V.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the district supervisors/directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. These three major components are academic, career, and personal/social development for all students. The population of this research project are Supervisors/Directors of K-12 school districts with a comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. In this particular research study, the gender, age, years of experience, degree or certificates of the participants are not pre-requisites. However, from the informal, pre-interview conversations with the participants, the researcher learned that all participants were school counselors prior to becoming Supervisor or Director of a district school counseling program. One aspect of the study that the researcher aimed to achieve is to identify the common characteristic or characteristics of these districts which enabled them to successfully implement a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. This research study delved into the organizational structure and policy of the school districts where the participants are employed. This information can be used by other districts which are planning to establish a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. This study is guided by the following three research questions: (a) Do the school districts have a specific
outcome expectation from the counseling program? (b) Of the three major components of the counseling programs which one does a particular school district consider a priority? and (c) Does the DFG (District Factor Group) influence the implementation of the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs? From these research questions, the following interview questions were derived:

Currently, one of the trends in education is "accountability". In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for students achievement?

In what way is this reflective of the school district's policy?

In what way do the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

Of the four major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic make-up? Can you explain?

What program(s) are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement in your district? Please explain.

What program(s) in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.
To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Data Collection Process

Eight supervisors/directors from selected K-12 school districts agreed to participate in this research project. These supervisors/directors were from school districts that were identified as those with a comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. Fifteen school districts were identified initially. Upon further inquiry 11 school districts informed the researcher that they have created and implemented a guidance and counseling model based from ASCA (American School Counselor Association) as endorsed by the NJSCA (New Jersey School Counselor Association, 2000).

A letter of solicitation was sent to each of the superintendent of the eleven school districts. The researcher followed the protocol in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University. Eight superintendents gave approval for their districts to participate in the study. One school district has the policy that all research to be conducted in their district must have a request be sent at least one year in advance. Due to time constraint, the researcher was not in the position to comply with the policy. Two school districts elected not to participate.

The participants came from school districts that are urban, suburban, and one rural. In terms of socio-economic category, the school districts ranged from an Abbott district according to the State of New Jersey District Factor Group
(DFG) to a 3 district. An Abbott school district is a "poor" district, a "3"
district means that the school district is affluent.

Prior to the interview, the Supervisors/Directors were contacted. The
researcher explained to them that the date, time and place will be at their
convenience. The interviews were conducted during the months of June and
July. All the interviews occurred at the office of each of the participants. It was
explained to each participant before the interview commenced that it would be
tape-recorded to which they all agreed. Each participant was asked to review,
sign and date the Informed Consent Form, and was given a copy and they were
also given a copy of the interview questions.

The process is followed exactly as Mitchell and Joiley (1992) described it,"the investigator orally asked respondents a series of questions and the
interviewer recorded responses" (p. 458). "In studies which rely predominantly
on interviewing as a means of collecting data, the subjects are usually
strangers" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.94). This is partially true in this research
study. Six participants in this study were strangers to the researcher. The two
other participants were acquainted with and had met the researcher in
a professional capacity prior to the time of the interview.

The nine interview questions addressed three different perspectives in an
educational environment related to the comprehensive guidance and counseling
program of a school. Two questions were based on whether the
Supervisors/Directors believe that the comprehensive guidance and counseling
programs of the district can be directly related to student achievement. Three
questions were based on the perceived relationship (if any) of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs to the district policy. Four questions are directly related to the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs which are academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. The Supervisors/Directors were asked whether the district gives a specific emphasis to a particular program component.

The interview questions are categorized as "formal theoretical", which according to Bogdan and Bislen (1998), are questions that are not focused on a particular setting or subjects the researcher is studying. In this particular study the setting changed because the participants came from different work environment or in this case, from different school districts.

The nine interview questions were directed to each participant in succession. The researcher asked each question and the participant answered. The questions and answers were oral in nature, with the researcher and participants sitting across from each other.

Mentioned earlier in this chapter is the process by which the participants were selected for this research project. The participants were contacted to verify if they were still willing to participate in the study as per their response to the letter of solicitation sent by the researcher to the School Superintendent. During the course of the conversation, the date and time of the interview were agreed upon and at the participant's convenience. The researcher suggested that the interview occur at each of the participant's office. This arrangement was for
the convenience of the participant, and also, as deemed by the researcher that
the environment familiar to the subject is conducive for a qualitative study.

The interview sessions averaged 29 minutes. Prior to the asking of the
formal interview questions, an informal exchange of greetings transpired
between the participant and the researcher. The researcher had no pre-
determined expectation concerning the result of the interview sessions. As
mentioned in the early part of this chapter, the researcher was acquainted with
two participants. During the course of the informal conversation, the researcher
realized that she had seen some of the participants in state sponsored
workshops. One of the participants made a presentation entitled the
"Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Initiative" of the school district
where he/she worked.

In all instances, as this informal conversation progressed, a rapport was
established between the participants and the researcher. The participants
eagerly asked what the study is all about and why. To these concerns the
researcher read to each participant the purpose of the study which was in the
possession of the researcher during each interview session. It was also
reassuring to the participants when they realized that the researcher is not an
outsider, but instead, not only is a member of the profession, but actually had
held the position of director of a district guidance and counseling program.

Also during this informal pre-interview session, the issue of confidentiality
and anonymity was discussed. The researcher initiated the discussion by
bringing to the participants' attention the provision of the Informed Consent
Form. To this, the researcher sensed that this is not a major issue with the participants.

The rest of the interview process was a true revelation of how these Supervisors/Directors view their jobs and their attitudes and perceptions of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program of their school district. The participants exhibited a thorough knowledge of the program, a testimony to their experience, since all of them have been a counselor before becoming a supervisor or director. The researcher sensed their enthusiasm and for the care they have for the true recipients and beneficiaries of the program which are the students.

The following is the guide followed by the researcher as part of the data collection process:

A short background description relevant to the participant served as an introduction, followed by the participant’s responses to the questions. For the purpose of clarification, letter “P” indicated the participant and letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H will be the code for their identity. The pronouns He/She or His/Her or Him/Her (whatever the case may be) were used so that any reference to the gender of the participants were not indicated. For the sake of brevity and to avoid redundancy, references to the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs may be abbreviated to CGCP some of the time.

Participant A

The first interviewee is Participant A. Participant A works for an urban school district. His/Her office is housed in the high school. The building is
quite old. It is not a spacious office. It has a big window that gives the room an airy feeling. As the researcher was ushered to the chair by the table, the participant informed the researcher that one of the duties of the supervisor is to construct the Master Schedule for students and teachers for the high school. (This remark by the participant was precipitated by the obvious stack of paper on the table. These papers are part of the Master Schedule.) Participant A is one of the two participants with whom the researcher is professionally acquainted. After a brief exchange of miscellaneous information, and after he/she gave a brief overview of the student population, the first interview question was asked.

**Interview Question 1.** Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability”. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

Participant A believes that the school guidance and counseling program should be held accountable but not totally, only a certain percentage. Testing, testing-taking strategy must be looked at in concert with other departments. According to Participant A accountability can not be fully placed in the guidance department. He/She said that guidance counselors look at issues like chronically failing students, and other chronic issues.

**Interview Question 2.** In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

Participant A’s answer was very abrupt. “Not in this district” was his/her comment. According to him/her the district policy does not relate to
accountability.

*Interview Question 3:* In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the district?

Participant A said that the programs addressed the whole student by looking at the three aspects of the CGCP to teach skills that promote lifetime learning.

*Interview Question 4:* Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, which are academic, career, personal/social. Please tell me how would you prioritize it?

Participant A answered that the priority is determined by the presenting issues at a given time. According to him/her, personal/social or issues at home are hampering the education of the students. He/She said that the priority issue, is the student. Planning ahead, the academic part is what the students need to master in order to fulfill the goals of the (classroom) teacher.

*Interview Question 5:* In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

The participant answered that exposure to colleges, vocational and employment, is the order in which the district prioritizes its career development program. He/She said that the abilities of the students should be a factor.

*Interview Question 6:* Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make-up? Can you explain? He/She said that it is. Participant A told the researcher that the district has a career counselor that works with the community businesses to give
employment to the students. She commented that this satisfies the needs of the community.

To pursue the issue of relationship and community, the researcher asked the participant what the DFG of the district, and the demographic composition. Participant A said that he/she believes that the district is a B/C and added that the student population is composed of 80% African-American, 15% Latinos (or Hispanics), 5% Asians of Indian descent.

Interview Question 7: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote student achievement in your district? Please explain.

Participant A said that there is a pamphlet that addresses how to get good grades. The participant also informed the researcher that the district celebrates career day in all grade levels and it is unified in the sense that the whole district is actively participating in this activity.

Interview Question 8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive?

Participant A said that the district has a proactive program. At this junction, the researcher sensed that the participant was not about to expand his/her answer. To pursue the line of inquiry, the researcher asked the participant if the district has a “Anti-Bullying” program. Participant A answered “yes” and that he/she added that it is in its second year, and it has earned state recognition. He/She encouraged all the counselors to implement the program.

Interview Question 9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district
influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant A said that the DFG has an influence, but it's not a district policy. She also made a comment to the effect that, "when you look at the total child, you can see that the DFG has an influence."

Participant B

Participant B works for one of the Abbott school districts. An Abbott school is defined by the State of New Jersey as one of the 30 poorest school districts in the state. It is also one of the school districts labeled as "State Take Over", meaning, the school district's operation is controlled by the Department of Education. The participant's office is located in the building that housed the district's administrative offices. Participant B was very pleasant and very accommodating. After glancing through the questions, the interview started.

Interview Question 1: Currently, one of the trends in education is "accountability". To what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

Participant B stated that counseling should be like other disciplines, therefore it should be held accountable. He/she stated that the job of education is to get students ready for the future.

Interview Question 2: In what way is this reflective of the school district's policy?

Participant B said that the main goal of the school district is student
achievement because this will have an impact on the district's states as a state run district.

Interview Question 3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the district?

According to Participant B the programs provide a systematic way of giving students guidance in academic, career, and social/personal issues. He/She said that before the district had a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, the district was crisis oriented.

Interview Question 4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

Participant B explained that the main goal of education is to help students to achieve. Personal/social is the district's number one priority, academic second. He/She said that we really have to get students ready to become productive citizens. He/She said that career education should start in elementary (grades). He/She further stated that you have to like what you’ll do to be happy.

Interview Question 5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

Participant B explained that although the district is designated as Abbott, according to him/her the district's reputation is based on how many "kids" go to college. Small learning community, career cluster, work or college or university, according to the participants, these are some of the programs the
district offers to the high school students. According to Participant B, 60% to 65% percent of the graduates of the high school go to college.

Interview Question 6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic make-up? Can you explain?

The district is middle and lower-middle class in terms of socio-economic, predominantly immigrants from all over the world. He/She said that about 30 languages are spoken in the city. Furthermore, he/she explained that the career development program is consistent with what immigrant parents want for their children, "Parents want better jobs and better life. People want more for their children", he/she said.

Interview Question 7: What programs are you implementing or have been implemented to promote student achievement in your district? Please explain.

Participant B told the researcher that at the top of the priority list of the district is student achievement. One of the measures that the district instituted to track student achievement is for school counselors to analyze the data from the results of all state tests, identify the students who need to be placed in the supplemental program. Because parent resources are limited, the districts have several supplemental programs for Math, students are enrolled at the Huntington Learning Centers (paid for by the school district), and a Language Arts program called "Hooked on Phonics," and an SAT preparatory program that is part of the high school curriculum.

Interview Question 8: What programs in personal/social development does the district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.
Participant B answered that it is proactive. He/She said that school counselors visit the classrooms and conducted lessons on character education. The district offers social skills lessons such as How to Avoid Confrontation, and Overcoming Obstacles, Decision Making, and also Peer Tutoring.

Interview Question 9: To what degree does the DFG of the school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant B answered that the DFG has no real effect (influence) since it is a state operated school, the counseling program is mandated by the state.

Participant C

Participant C was one the most articulate and one of the most enthusiastic (about the comprehensive guidance and counseling program) of all the participants. He/She is very inspiring. Participant C works for a district which is considered rural. However, according to him/her the district is fast changing from rural to suburban. His/Her office is new and spacious with matching furniture. As a matter of fact, the whole guidance suite is large and the most modern that the researcher have seen. Participant C is very excited with the newly proposed state model of the comprehensive guidance and counseling model which is endorsed by both the New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) and the American Counselor Association (ASCA). After about five more minutes of discussing a few miscellaneous topics, the first question was asked.

Interview Question 1: Currently, one of the trends in education is
"accountability". In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

Participant C said that since the guidance and counseling program in the school is an integral part of the educational system, therefore it should be held accountable. He/She further stated that individual counselors per se should not be held accountable. Counselors collaborate with teachers and administrators. Participant C also stated that in his/her school district the guidance and counseling programs make a difference in student achievement. In the middle school where there is a "Team Structure", counselors and teachers analyze the child’s problem. He/She said that counselors and teachers cooperate to investigate why the student is failing and that the responsibility for student achievement is no more or no less for both teachers and school counselors.

Interview Question 2: In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

He/She stated that the district is very supportive, in spite of the budget, the district added a counselor to the department. He/She stated that the Board of Education adopted the Guidance Curriculum, and is being implemented by teachers and counselors.

Interview Question 3: In what way do the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the district?

Participant C said that the programs create an environment where counselors affect change. According to Participant C, the programs asked of what change or changes happen because of what they have done. Participant C
said that comprehensive guidance and counseling is a program with a structure so you can see progress.

*Interview Question 4:* Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program (namely, academic, career, and personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

Participant C said that to prioritize, first the needs of the district, the needs of the building and the need of the students have to be considered. He/She also said that because of the demographic of the district which is Rural/Suburban, students have less exposure to career. He/She said that career is important. He/She also said that priority is different from each grade level. Participant C said that in the middle school, social skills is the priority. Participant C made the comment that these days school is substitute for home.

*Interview Question 5:* In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

Participant C answered that equal time is given to all. In the middle school the emphasis is to help students recognize their style of learning. In the high school, because the community is changing (socio/economic), demanding courses for college, hands on courses for non-college students should be offered. According to Participant C in the past the population of the community was predominantly Blue Collar worker with no college education.

*Interview Question 6:* Is the career development of the district consistent with the district’s demographic make-up. Can you explain?

Participant C stated that the high school counselors are using the
“analytical” approach to career counseling with Grade 9 students to recognize the student's strengths and weaknesses. Participant C further stated that the district plans to hire a career transition counselor to facilitate this initiative and so that the other school counselors can devote their time to personal/social issues.

*Interview Question 7*: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students' achievements in your district? Please explain.

According to Participant C, he/she initiated an Intervention/Referral workshop for K-12 team members of the Intervention, and Referral Services and all school counselors. This program addressed severely at-risk students. The focus of the workshop was to look at behavior and its causes; to look at the cause of the deficit that prevents the children from learning.

According to Participant C, there is no study hall in the high school, instead there is a building-wide peer tutoring program. The peer tutors are Grades 11 and 12 students as part of their community service. At the end of the school year, Participant C evaluates the program, thereby, he/she uses data as part of her report to the district School Board.

*Interview Question 8*: What program/s in personal/social development does the district have? Is it proactive or reactive?

He/She answered that it is proactive in the middle school because it is part of the building curriculum. The school counselors went to the classrooms and
conducted classes. In the elementary school the program is being implemented with both classes and groups conducted by the school counselors. An example of these programs according to Participant C is bullying prevention. He/she commented that in the K-8 grade level the program is good, but in the high school level it is difficult to organize small groups, “it's a challenge.” One of the groups in the high school, (to avoid the stigma), is called “Book Club”, when in reality it is a group for students with personal/social issues. The group actually read related books like Reviving Ophelia which deals with a young girl’s journey through adolescence. Then according to Participant C, the group members discussed the book. Participant C also said that the district presented a workshop for parents, through an outside agency, dealing with anger and conflict management.

**Interview Question 9:** To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant C's answer to question #9 was short, direct, and blunt. According to him/her “DFG has nothing to do with it”, that money should not be a factor in the implementation of a Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program.

Participant D

Participant D works for an affluent suburban school district. In terms of school buildings and facilities, this district has the best in the county.

Participant D told the researcher that the school district does not rank their high
school graduating class because in their grading system with a Grade Point Average range of 0 to 4.0, a student with a GPA of 3.75 can be in the 50th percentile. Participant D was very enthusiastic about the comprehensive guidance and counseling program of the district. According to him/her, the program has the full support of the school administration. After brief exchange of our professional experiences, the formal interview session started.

Interview Question 1: Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability”. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for students achievement?

Participant D answered that it should be. According to him/her the program is part of the equation. He/ She said that the bottom line is student achievement. The program should support students who are in the bottom of the achievement scale. According to him/her all the things we people who are involved with the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, do contribute to student achievement.

Interview Question 2: In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

Participant D remarked that, not a whole lot in terms of policy on accountability.

Interview Question 3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of students in the school district?

He/She said that in the elementary level, yes. Participant D alluded to the curriculum that will be worked on this summer.
Interview Question 4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social), please tell me how you prioritize it?

Participant D's answer was interpreted by the researcher as philosophical. He/she said that in the ideal world, he/she wanted them to be equal, however, he/she picked academic as the number one priority, then, personal/social. He/She made a comment that it is a struggle to provide a meaningful career component because of the history of the counseling department. He/She brought to the attention of the researcher that he/she just completed a year in this position in this district.

Interview Question 5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training, or employment? Why?

He/She answered, college, because of their clientele, however according to him/her vocational and employment options are not neglected.

Interview Question 6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic make-up?

He/She said, yes. According to Participant D the focus is absolutely on college because of high achieving parents and high aspiring parents.

Interview Question 7. What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement in your district? Please explain.

According to Participant D, the school counselors have not done a whole lot. He/She mentioned mentoring program, plus I and RS (Intervention, &
Referral Services). He/She added that students in the district achieve from family initiatives.

Interview Question 6: What program(s) in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

Participant D said that the district’s personal/social development program is proactive in the elementary school and middle school. Elementary and middle school counselors go to the classrooms and run groups, however in the high school, it is reactive. Participant D said that school counselors see students for different reasons.

Interview Question 7: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant D said that he/she is not sure if he/she can answer the question. All he/she said is that the school district has a higher level DFG.

Participant E

Participant E works for a district with a very diverse student population. The district is suburban and affluent. Participant E was very articulate. Although he/she agreed to be interviewed, the researcher sensed some suspicion in the beginning. After about ten minutes of casual conversation about the research study, and after he/she learned that the researcher is a member of the profession, his/her demeanor changed. Participant E told the researcher that he/she was a school counselor and director in another state.
before coming to New Jersey.

Participant E was very proud of the accomplishments of the students who graduated from the high school. He/She mentioned that a bulletin board bore the list of top colleges and universities where some of this year’s graduates will be attending in the fall. After a few more minutes of unrelated information, the formal interview commenced. Participant E’s answer to the interview questions were short and very specific, and direct.

*Interview Question 1:* Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability”. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

Participant said that the counselors should not be responsible for the day to day activities. He/She said that teachers are responsible for getting the information to parents. In his/her opinion, counselors are responsible for scheduling the students for the right classes and courses.

*Interview Question 2:* In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

The participant said that this is consistent with the school’s policy, that the teachers are the “first line of defense.” According to him/her the teacher sees the specific problem and the counselor sees the whole picture.

*Interview Question 3:* In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling program contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

Participant E replied that the CGCP helps the students set goals. He/She
added that the programs look at the global picture for the student and help the student to have a plan.

*Interview Question 4:* Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

Participant E said that it is difficult to prioritize because you have to look at the global picture, however, he/she said that personal/social should be the priority.

*Interview Question 5:* In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

The participant told the researcher that he/she didn’t like the question, but she said that the district places emphasis in college. However, the participant believed that if the career program is developmental, then the child should set the goal.

*Interview Question 6:* Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up? Can you explain?

Participant E said that the district is very diverse in its student population.

The participant said that that goal setting begins at Grade 9. Participant E told the researcher that the district use the COIN (Career) computerized program.

*Interview Question 7:* What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement in the district? Please explain.

The participant said that with the advent of the NCLB (No Child Left
Behind law, their district has to offer Lab courses (basic skills courses) in Math and Language Arts. The participant also said that the district offers a wide range of courses and encourage the students to go as far as they can.

Interview Question 8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

Participant E said that the district provides a variety of support services personnel such as the Student Assistance Counselor, Psychologists, and Social Workers. As added information, the participant told the researcher that the high school has a program called TNT (Technology and Technique for Student Success), an extra-curricular program where counselors go to the classroom and conduct a lesson for Grade 9 students. He/She said that the community is involved with this program.

Interview Question 9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

The researcher sensed that the participant was having difficulty answering the question. The researcher explained to the participant what the DFG is, or what it stands for. Eventually, Participant E said that the district’s DFG has nothing to do with it.

Participant F

Participant F has worked in the school district’s counseling program for many years. He/She was very enthusiastic about being one of the participants in this study. Participant F works for a school district with a very diverse student
population, not only in terms of socio-economic, but also in racial and ethnic composition. Throughout the interview, he/she expressed the benefits for the district of having a superintendent who is very supportive of the counseling program. Participant F had a very busy schedule the day of the interview. After about five minutes of mundane conversation, the researcher proceeded with the interview.

*Interview Question 1:* Currently, one of the trends in education is accountability. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling be held accountable for students achievement?

Participant F remarked that, that he/she is having difficulty in answering the question, but he/she proceeded with the rest of the answer. The role of the counselor (in high school) is to schedule proper courses, make sure students are electing the right courses. He/She went on to say that there is also an issue of the number of students in the counselor’s caseload. He/She is concerned that counselors will not have enough time to know their students because they have 200 to 275 students each to take care. Participant F went on to say that "accountability" is a key word for education. He/She said that with NCLB and testing, everybody should be held accountable, the teachers, administrators, superintendent. He/She said that accountability is a wake up call for the school districts. Counselors, he/she said have to be aware of all children.

*Interview Question 2:* In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

Participant said that it is, but it is not written. Representative of the
building administration and supervisor of guidance evaluate the students.

Interview Question 3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and Counseling program contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

According to Participant F, in his/her personal opinion, one of the most important student needs or focus deals with issues within society. According to him/her, one of the most important things in school is not only academic but other issues. He/She said that in difficult cases, students are referred to outside agency.

Interview Question 4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

Participant F said that in their school system academic is given the most Priority "even if we are pulled to so many directions" ("we" meaning the staff members of the school district). Further more according to Participant F, next to academic is personal/social concerns. He/She said that they just started building the career awareness program of the counseling department, and as proof of this, the district is hiring a Career Counselor.

Interview Question 5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

Participant F explained that because the school district is diverse in many ways, and even extreme in terms of economic financial issue (the families are either rich or poor in many instances), the district has to deal with the
individual student. He/She was very emphatic in stating that "college" is not the only avenue.

*Interview Question 6:* Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up? Can you explain?

Participant F answered "yes", and because of the wide range or gap among students, he/she said that individual student’s need has to be looked at. Participant F said that the district has a Shadowing Program with the support of the community to expose the students to different occupations.

*Interview Question 7:* What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students’ achievements in your district? Please explain.

"Testing is the answer", was Participant F’s reply, (HSPA, GEPA, SAT). Emphatically he/she stated, "It distresses me to focus on testing. It’s sad that we focus on tests."

*Interview Question 8:* What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

According to Participant F the program is proactive in Grades 6 to 12. He/She said that the high school students who are members of the Peer Leadership program go to the middle school and elementary school. Participant F was very appreciative and praised the Superintendent of Schools whose focus is in mental health. (He/She said that the District Superintendent is a psychology major.) He/She further stated that in the elementary grades the district has a social worker and psychologist (who are not members of the
Child Study Team) who work with at-risk parents and students. He/She was very passionate in saying that mental health is important and mental health issues can not be ignored.

**Interview Question 9:** To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant 7’s answer is very straight forward and abrupt, he/she said, “I don’t know if it does.”

Participant 8

Participant 8 works for a school district that is fast evolving socially, economically, and it is one of the districts in the state that is experiencing a population explosion. The interview was very formal and was conducted in an almost business like process. The participant apologized for making the researcher wait for about ten minutes while he/she was attending to an unplanned meeting. He/She explained that he/she will be going to another meeting immediately thereafter. Without further delay the first question was asked.

**Interview Question 1:** Currently, one of the trends in education is accountability. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

Participant 8 said that the answer depends on the meaning of the word. He/She said that individual counselor should not be held accountable. All stake
holders are responsible for students achievement.

Interview Question 2: In what way is this reflective of the school reflective of the school district's policy?

Participant G stated that it's not stated anywhere in the policy, however according to him/her the district has a vision related to the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program.

Interview Question 3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

Participant G enumerated the different programs that the district have, such as Character Education, programs to improve social skills, and career program. He/She also mentioned the importance of articulation with other grade levels within the district, and that teachers, students and parents need to be in the same page. He/She mentioned evaluating the program, asking such questions as: What was done? What will you do? Participant G also said everyone must be involved.

Interview Question 4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

Participant G answered that the student's needs must be considered, and assessed. He/She said that the district wants all the students to achieve. He/She also said that the personal and social needs must be looked at to see if it impedes student's achievement.
Interview Question 5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training, or employment? Why?

Participant G again, emphatically stated that each student's strength and weakness has to be looked at. He/She also said that student grades should be a factor in career planning. Participant G mentioned that 88% of the high school's graduates go to a 2 year and 4 year college.

Interview Question 6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic makeup? Can you explain?

Participant G's answer was yes, however, because of the booming housing market, and families coming to the district, it will change, he/she added.

Interview Question 7: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote student achievement in your district? Please explain.

Participant G said that the school district added Advanced Placement and Honors Courses at the high school level. He/She said that the curricula has to be looked at and also look at student achievement. For student that need basic skills courses there are Laboratory courses in Math and Language Arts.

Interview Question 8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

Participant G answered that every district wants to have a proactive program. The participant informed the researcher that groups are conducted for different student needs. He/She said that groups such as bullying and harassment prevention are conducted by the Student Assistance Coordinator of
the district. Group assemblies are also conducted for the students.

*Interview Question 9:* To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant C said that the program is so important that it is part of the district policy regardless of the district's DFG. According to the participant, the program provides what the students need at every grade level.

Participant H

Participant H is very enthusiastic about participating in this study. He/She is the expert in terms of the CGCP in the state of New Jersey as far as this researcher is concerned. The district where the participant is employed is nationally recognized as having one of the best and well organized comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in the country. Participant H started the program in the district and has conducted countless seminars and workshops throughout the state. He/She is one of the two participants that the researcher is professionally acquainted with. After about 15 minutes of casual conversation concerning a variety of topics, the formal interview started.

*Interview Question 1:* Currently, one of the trends in education is accountability. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

Participant H fully supports the idea that the CGCP of the district should be held accountable for student achievement. As a testimony of this belief the participant gave the researcher a copy of the document that the district
counseling program uses as a guide which is called "Accountability Report Card." According to Participant H each school counselor starts with a project in the beginning of the year such as decrease attendance problem, suspension or failure. At the end of the school year, the strategy that was employed by the school counselor was evaluated for its success.

*Interview Question 2:* In what way is this reflective of the school district's policy? According to Participant H, the district is totally committed. He/She said that students data is aggregated by ethnic, special needs, economic and other areas and appropriate program are devised such as Saturday and Summer Academies to help students. The participant also said that this project has the support of the district superintendent, counselors, teachers and parents.

*Interview Question 3:* In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

The participant told the researcher that the district provides school counselors to all the students from kindergartens to grade 12. He/She cited Sink and Stroh (authors who wrote extensively on the benefit of CGC-P), who said that the longer the students stay in a school with CGC-P, the more are beneficial it is for the students. Participant H also said that in their district, workshops are conducted to benefit the parents also.

*Interview Question 4:* Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?
Participant H said that all three major components are treated as equal. He/She compared it to a marriage, that all these major components all go together, academic, career, personal/social development, equal success”, he/she said.

Interview Question 5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

The participant said that because the district is very diverse in its student population, they have several programs to meet all the students needs. He/She said that the district provides career day and career fair to all grade levels to let all the children understand the importance of work.

The researcher noticed (while waiting for the participant) that the high school of the district has a large career center. The participant told the researcher that the students use the career center for college, career, and employment search. Participant H also said that of course the district’s emphasis is for students to go to college, however, he/she said that it is important for all to have a post-secondary training in order to join the work force. Participant H further stated that the district’s primary goal is academic.

Interview Question 6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up?

Participant H answered the question philosophically by saying that anybody can be what they want to be and that there are options beside college. He/She said that issues directed to race (relating to career) in the district is “sticky” and must be considered carefully. Central office according to him/her...
is promulgating college. As a matter of fact, he/she said that 87% of the high school graduates pursue a two-year and four-year college education.

**Interview Question 7:** What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement? Please explain.

Participant H answered that the district has designed a program of accountability tied to student success. According to the participant, counselors conduct group and individual counseling and monitor students' interim progress reports and compare them with prior data to see if there is improvement in students' performance. He/She said that the district has a tutoring program where high school students tutor elementary school students after regular school hours. The participant also informed the researcher that in the middle school and high school, counselors have evening hours to accommodate students and parents.

Researcher's impression is that this program is unprecedented. This researcher has no prior knowledge of any district where school counselors work after regular school hours.

**Interview Question 8:** What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

The participant answered that it is both proactive and reactive. He/She said that the proactive programs are the organized K-12 monthly classroom visits by the counselors and followed by a letter which was sent home detailing what was taught to the children. Participant H also told the researcher that other proactive programs are School to Work, Groups, Anger Management, and
Competency Skills divided into Grades 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, and 9-12. In the high school there are five static groups. The members of the groups stay together for 4 years. In the reactive portion, the participant told the researcher that the response is to the problem at hand, such as, grief counseling, eating disorders, and so forth.

Interview Question 9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

Participant H said that he/she does not think so. The participant further said that this is a good program. Participant H gave the researcher additional information concerning the district's demographic composition. The district is very diverse racially and culturally. He/She explained that in the past the counseling department was composed of all "White staff" (all women), now it's racially diverse and there are male counselors. He/She even gave praise to the fact that the researcher is a non-Caucasian pursuing a terminal degree and in the counseling profession at that. He/She echoed his/her personal feeling that in our profession, "we try to do it all and we do the best we can." Participant H also informed the researcher that the counseling department has a yearly retreat, which involves self-study and self-assessment of what the department did and what they plan to do for the next school year.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of
the District Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. These major components are academic, career, and personal/social development for all students. There were eight Supervisors/Directors who were interviewed. These participants were identified as leaders or administrators of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (CGCP) in a K-12 school districts in New Jersey. These eight school districts are located in the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the state and have a District Factor Group (DFG) that ranges from an “Abbott” (one of the poorest districts), to a “J” (an affluent district), as identified by the state through economic ranking.

The interview yielded candid, and a few times, emotion laden answers which the researcher sensed as a true representation of the attitudes and perceptions of the participants toward the subject of the research presented to them. Another aspect from the interview that the researcher observed from all the participants, is the care and concern they projected to the “children” which, in reality, is the eventual reason why this particular entity of the educational process exists.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this research project is to study the attitudes of Supervisors/Directors toward the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in selected K-12 school districts in the state of New Jersey. Chapter V, the final chapter, is comprised of three sections. These sections are: (a) Summary of Major Findings, (b) Conclusions, and (c) Recommendations for Future Research. In order to gain knowledge and to gather information useful to this research project, there were eight participants interviewed by the researcher. The study is guided by the following three research questions: (a) What are the school districts’ specific outcome expectation from the counseling program? (b) Of the three major components of the counseling programs which one does a particular school district consider a priority? And why? (c) How does the DFO (District Factor Group) influence the implementation of the school’s comprehensive guidance and counseling programs? From the aforementioned, nine interview questions were formulated, and therefore, the basis of the text for this chapter.

Summary of Major Findings

The first interview question was about the issue of accountability in relation to School counseling and students’ achievement. Three participants responded that the school guidance and counseling program should be held accountable for students’ achievement. Participant B said that since it is just like other discipline, therefore it
should be held accountable. Participant C and D remarked that since the counseling program is an integral part of the educational system, part of the equation, therefore the bottom line is "student achievement." Participant A and E said that the counseling program should only be partially accountable, other personnel in the school district should share the responsibility. Participant G and H felt that the whole school district should be held accountable, whereas Participant F said that accountability is the key word for education.

The second interview question addressed whether the accountability issue is reflective of the school district's policy.

Six participants indicated that the issue of accountability (Question 1) reflects their districts' policy, while two participants said that the district doesn't have a policy that connects the school counseling to students achievement.

Question number three asked the ways by which CGCP contribute to students success. Seven participants indicated that their CGCP have different programs which contribute to the success of the students in the district. These programs are delivered to the students by the counselors and other personnel within the department. The method of delivery ranges from classroom visits, scheduling proper courses for the students, help students set goals for their academic plans, appropriate intervention techniques to help students with non-academic issues, and parent involvement. Some of these seven districts, but not all have a guidance and counseling curriculum to guide the district program and an assessment and evaluation means to measure the department's accomplishment at the end of the school year.
Participant D was honest in his/her response when he/she said that the district where he/she works is in the process of constructing a formal CGCP curriculum.

Question number four asked the participants that of the three major components of COCP academic, career, and personal/social), where the priority lies. Four participants viewed personal/social issues as the priority of the district. These participants have various reasons to support their answers. According to Participant A issues at home hamper student's learning, therefore priority lies on personal/social development, then academic and lastly, career.

Participant B said that personal/social issues is the district's priority, and academic next. He/She said that career must be introduced in the elementary grades.

Participants E and G said that personal/social issues must be looked at and resolved otherwise it will impede learning.

Participant D and F said that academic is where the priority is placed in their district due to the demand of the community and it's population. Both participants mentioned personal/social issues as second and career last.

Participant C felt that the priority of CGCP should be the students' needs in accordance with their grade level and the community. According to participant C, priority should not be a programmatic need, instead it should be based on the needs of the students.

Participant H's point of view is more holistic. According to him/her, the three major components of COCP should be treated equally.

The researcher deemed it necessary to make a comment as to the participants responses to question 4. In an article written by Richard Rothstein (2004) for the Phi
Delta Kappan, in public opinion surveys, Americans consistently say they want schools to produce good citizens and socially responsible adults first, and high academic proficiency second.

Question number five was about the district's career development program. All eight participants said that the district's emphasis is for the students to pursue a college education as their post-secondary destination. Participant B was very emphatic when he/she said that the school district believes that their reputation is based on the percentage of high school graduates who pursue a college education and most important is to which colleges the students attend.

Participant D said that majority of the students' parents in the district are college graduates and these parents expect their children to go to college also.

Participant E did not like the question, however he/she said that the district's emphasis is on college because of it's demographic composition. Participant H said that although the district places emphasis on college as number one in its career development program, other options are part of the curriculum. Participant F and G felt that the career development program of the district should be dictated by the individual student needs, but in spite of G's attitude toward question number five, 88% of the high school graduates in the district where he/she works pursue 2 year and 4 year college as a career option.

Question number six asked if the career development program of the district is consistent with the district's demographic make up. All participants answered "yes" to the question. Participant A works for an urban district with a high percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch, therefore part time employment for students is encouraged, and
also the business community depend on the school to supply them with young workers. Participating B said that the school district’s population is made up mostly of recent immigrants pursuing an American Dream, and these parents believe that this can be realized through education. Participating C’s school district is rapidly changing from rural to suburban. The district must provide all students with career exposure and options according to Participating C. Participating D’s district is comprised of predominantly professional parents. According to him/her the career development program is actually based on students’ demand for college information. Likewise with Participating E’s district, because it is affluent, therefore most of the high school graduates pursue a college education.

Participating F’s career development program is tailored for the district’s student population, some are affluent and some are poor. Participating G is anticipating that the career development program in the future will depend on what the housing market brings to the district, according to him/her. (As mentioned earlier the district is experiencing a housing construction boom, thus bringing an influx of different people from different places.)

Eighty seven percent of the high school graduates of the district where H works enroll in college. This district has also one of the most diverse student populations in the state. Participating H said that the district has several career programs.

For answer to question number seven, all participants had indicated to the researcher that the school district is implementing or have implemented programs to help promote students achievement. Three participants told the researcher that the district used the results of the state standardized test, analyzed them and used the data
to institute basic skills program and also used the same data as part of the counseling program.

Two participants said that the district have a tutoring program. At least three districts used the curriculum as a means of promoting student achievement. One district increased the Advanced Placement and Honors courses to challenge the students, one district instituted an SAT preparatory courses, and had utilized programs such as "Hooked on Phonics" and this same district sent some of the students to the Huntington Learning Center for extra academic help.

Two participants told the researcher that the district extensively used Intervention, and Referral Services to help students whose other issues prevent them from performing to their potential. One district has instituted an evening hours in the counseling department to accommodate parents and students. In all of the above programs the district counseling department had an active role in its implementation.

For question number eight, six participants told the researcher that the personal/social development programs of the district are proactive. Most of these programs have similarities, such as anti-bullying, anti-harassment, peer leadership and peer tutoring, character education and so forth. The districts employ different modes by which these programs are delivered to the students. Some of these methods are classroom visits by different professionals (such as counselors, social workers, psychologists and student assistance coordinators), grade level assemblies with visiting speakers, and group and individual counseling. Some of these districts organized workshops for the parents of the district. One district called a counseling group (for at-risk high school students) "Book Club" to eliminate the stigma for group members.
One school district has a transition program for ninth graders.

In one district, the participant said that the elementary and middle schools have a proactive personal/social development program, while in the high school, it is reactive. In another district the participant told the researcher that the district balances proactive and reactive programs for all students.

Question 9 asked if to what degree does the DFG of the school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy. Six participants answered "no" to question number nine. Participant B said that regardless of the DFG, the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs will still be implemented anyway because it is a state mandate. Participant B is the only participant in this study who alluded to the fact that the comprehensive guidance and counseling program for all the school districts in the state of New Jersey is governed by an administrative code.

Participant C stated that the financial status of the district should not be a factor at all in the implementation of CGCP. Both Participants G and H said that the program is a good program and important that it should be implemented by the school districts.

Participant D is not sure of what answer to give to question 9. Participant A told the researcher that the DFG has an influence in the implementation of the CGCP even though there is no formal policy to support it.

Conclusions

This research project revolved around the premise that one aspect of the educational reforms in the State of New Jersey is the introduction of the New Jersey Counseling Initiative (NJDOE, 2000). One of the provisions of this administrative
code (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.2) is for the school districts to implement a comprehensive
guidance and counseling programs which will take into consideration the academic,
career, and personal/social development of all students. In retrospect, the researcher
selected four salient issues to support the relationship between what was indicated in
the literature review and some of the findings of this study.

In 1984 according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1996), a
survey entitled "High School and Beyond" found that the primary goal of high school
counseling program was to help students prepare for work. In 2002, a survey
conducted by the Department of Education indicated that the primary goal of high
school counseling was student achievement. This in itself is a proof of the evolution of
the guidance and counseling as it developed into a comprehensive program and part of
the educational process and not an ancillary service. This change is evident from the
responses of the participants of this study. For example one school district's career
program is geared toward providing the local businesses with employees from
the high school, where as one district's emphasis lies heavily in preparing students for
college.

Faisley and Borders (1995, as cited in Keys et al., 1998), stated that the focus of
school counseling through the years has shifted at different points in response to the
changing social, economic, and political environment. The aforementioned statement is
evident in the state of New Jersey, and it is mirrored by the student population in our
public schools. Any change in the life of our school, children almost always affects
their academic performance and behavior in the classroom.

One of the participants, works for a school district whose student population are
mostly children of recent immigrants to this country who are pursuing the American Dream. Another school district which is classified as affluent and made up mostly of professional parents who have expectation that their children will pursue college education as a post-secondary goal, and another school district's student population came from a very diverse social and financial environment. This research showed that these school districts tailored their guidance and counseling programs to match the needs of their students. The districts' programs range from massive college information, to the "Shadowing" program.

According to Bandura (1995, as cited in Kraus and Hughry, 1999), the new realities of the information era requires advanced cognitive and self-management competencies to fulfill complex occupational roles to manage the maze of demands of contemporary life. This research showed that six out of eight participants work for school districts that have a formal career awareness program to meet these emerging needs.

Reeder, Douzenis, and Bergin (1997), were concerned that prejudices and racial misconceptions continue to be a problem in today's society, and it is mirrored in school setting. This research found that six out of eight participants stated that their school districts have a proactive program to address the personal/social development of the students. One district called the program for at-risk students the "Book Club" so as to reduce the stigma for its members. Almost all participants in this study told the researcher that their districts have an Anti-Bullying curriculum.

Why is research in the area of guidance and counseling important? Currently there is a focus on accountability in education, and the counseling field cannot ignore this
influential trend. One of the avenues that the counseling program can pursue, is the use of research mechanisms to evaluate their programs, such as data from test results and other proven studies. At this time, there is not substantial evidence that shows that school counseling has a positive influence on students' academic, career, or personal/social development (Whiston, 2000).

The primary goal of the school counseling program is to enhance student achievement and accomplishment, and for this goal to be realized, the implementation of standards for school counseling programs should be a joining of powerful educational forces such as teachers, administrators, parents, politicians and all the community, according to ASCA (1997, as cited in Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

To be able to draw conclusions for this research, three questions were used as a guide to delve into the honest feelings of the eight participants who are Supervisors/Directors of the district comprehensive guidance and counseling program. These Supervisors/Directors provide direct leadership to building level staff members such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, and student assistance coordinators and some instances, also nurses (Gybers & Henderson, 1997). These Supervisors/ Directors implement the district policy related to the CGCP, and their attitudes and perceptions project the philosophy of the school district. Because of the abovementioned reasons, the researcher, through the analysis of the participants responses, was able to reach the conclusions of how the attitudes of the Supervisors/Directors influence the success of CGCP in their school districts. The researcher also investigated the commonality and differences of their attitudes and perceptions toward the three major components of the guidance and counseling
program.

Based upon the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the participants sincerely believed that the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, as an integral part of the total educational system of the school district, should be a factor and be held accountable for student achievement. Also, since the participants, as leaders of the program, implement the school district's policy, the researcher further concluded that the school districts have expectations that guidance and counseling must have a positive influence in the educational process. This conclusion is supported by the fact that six out of eight participants indicated that the "accountability" issue is reflective of district policy.

As mentioned earlier, the CGCP has three major components, which are: academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. These components if implemented successfully will enhance student achievement and afford the necessary educational and social skills to navigate through life as well as help them choose a career suited to their interests and abilities.

The next research question asked, of these three major components (academic, career, personal/social) which one does the district consider its priority, as perceived by the participants. Of these three major components the researcher concluded that the participants believed that the personal/social development of the students is where the priority lies. Fifty percent of the participants indicated that the most important component of CGCP is personal/social. There is a consensus among those participants that a student's personal/social issues, if not resolved, can be a major impediment to learning and eventually will impact the realization of their true potential.
In other related issues concerning the academic and career development component, the participants again are consistent in their collective belief, that, regardless of the economic status and location of the district, there is a push from school administration that high school students should choose college as a post-secondary destination.

The researcher felt that this one particular finding is very worthy not only of mentioning, but also must be emphasized. There were two participants who work for districts that are deemed the most functional and successful in the implementation of their comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. One district is nationally recognized while the other one is recognized in the state of New Jersey. These two districts have something in common. Their success can be attributed to the fact that both programs have the full support of the school personnel and administration, from the superintendent to the school board and to the community. Both districts have an accountability system that is data driven.

Finally, the researcher concluded, based upon the participants attitudes and perceptions, that the District Factor Group (DFG) does not in any way influence the implementation of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in the school district. All the participants believed that the implementation of CGCP is good educational practice and good for the students. The most profound conclusion reached by the researcher is the fact that six out of the eight Supervisors/Directors who participated in this research work for school districts where the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program is part of the school district policy.

The most significant conclusion that the researcher drew from this investigation of
the attitudes of the Supervisors/Directors of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program, is not so much the differences of their responses, but the similarity of their commitment to the program and especially to the students. It is the researcher's belief that it is the leadership of these participants and their interpretation of the district policy as well as the clarity of purpose and the educational philosophy that guide their determination to afford the students all the opportunities possible to succeed in school.

Recommendations for Future Research

During the school year 2000-2001, the New Jersey School Counseling Initiative launched the implementation of the comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs. This initiative dictated that the main goal of the programs should be the development of the academic, career, and personal/social needs of the students (NGDOE, 2000).

The focus of this study is the school district Supervisors/Directors of the counseling program because they are deemed to be the leaders or administrators who will interpret the district's guidance and counseling policy. But according to the American School Counselor Association (1997), the implementation of standards for school counseling programs should be a joining of powerful educational forces such as administrators, counselors, teachers, superintendents and the whole community. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the researcher that some of the members of these powerful educational forces should be the subjects for future research.

The following are the recommendations for future research:
One of the most powerful educational forces in the school system are school counselors. They are the front runners of the counseling program. Their beliefs and attitudes will have a direct impact on students they serve. Therefore they should be a focus of study.

The building principals set the tone of their building's educational culture. The researcher is recommending that a study should be done of the impact of the building principal's attitudes toward the counseling programs.

The superintendents are second only to the local school boards in terms of powerful educational forces. Why are some districts in compliance with the New Jersey School Counseling Initiative while many are not? This important issue must be investigated.

School counselors and teachers have a special partnership in the educational welfare and common good of the students; therefore teachers' roles and how they view the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs and its impact on students' achievement must be studied.

The community at large is not only one of the most powerful educational forces in education but also is a very important stakeholder in, and beneficiary, of our educational system. There is a chronic complaint from business and industry that the K-12 public school system does not prepare high school graduates with the necessary skills to function in the work force. A study on the expectations of business and industry should be launched and the knowledge gained as a result of such study can be applied when school districts develop their career curriculum for their counseling department.
Another significant entity and one of the recipients of the consequence of the K-12 educational system are the colleges and universities. According to Venezia, Kirk, & Antonio (2003), there is a disconnect between high school preparation and college expectation. It is the recommendation of this researcher that a statewide study be conducted in all the colleges and universities in New Jersey, to investigate this concern.

It is also the researcher's recommendation that this study be replicated by selecting a larger sample, and it is further recommended, that a qualitative/quantitative methodology be employed.

Summary

The purpose of the study is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the District Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. These three major components are academic, career, and personal/social development for all students. This study was guided by three research questions concerning departmental accountability, program priority, and DFS (District Factor Group) influence.

There seems to be a popular public opinion that the schools, especially in the secondary level, focused primarily on student achievement and career awareness (especially college as a post secondary option). This study showed that 50% of the participants perceived personal/social development to be a priority, with the justification that if the child's personal and social issues is not resolved, these can be an impediment to learning.
Concerning the two remaining questions, six out of eight participants are in agreement that the school's guidance and counseling program should be held accountable for students' achievement. Seven out of eight participants also answered that the DFG (District Factor Group) had no impact on the implementation of the CGCP in the school district and they further stated that the implementation of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program is a sound policy and good for the students.

Beal, A. V. (2004). Questioning whether you have a contemporary school counseling program. The Clearing House, 78 (2) 73-76.


Appendices
Appendix A

Letter of Intent and Solicitation
May, 2005

Name of Superintendent
School District
Address
Dear

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education, Leadership, Management, and Policy at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. I am writing to request your permission to conduct research for my dissertation entitled: A Qualitative Study of the Attitudes of Supervisors/Directors Toward the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs in Selected K-12 School Districts. I am writing to you to request permission to interview the Supervisor or Director of the district’s guidance and counseling program.

The purpose of my research is to investigate the attitudes of the district Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. These major components are academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

There will be nine interview questions and the interview will be tape recorded. The duration of the interview will be between 30 minutes to 45 minutes. The date, time, and place of the interview will be at the convenience of the participant.

I can assure you that this research study’s not experimental in nature. Participation in this research is purely voluntary.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participant will be preserved. The data collected from the interview will be placed in a locked location. Only the researcher will have access to these collected data. If necessary, these data will be shared with the researcher’s mentor and committee members.

I am thanking you in advance for the time and consideration you give to this request and if you’re kind to respond as soon as you can. Should you require more information, I can be reached at my office telephone, (732) 396-1077 or by e-mail at deis@rahway.net.

Sincerely,

Dena D. Seiss
Doctoral Candidate
Appendix B

Informed Consent
Informed Consent Form

The researcher is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education, Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University. This letter is requesting for you to participate in a research study for my dissertation. The title of this dissertation is: A Qualitative Study of the Attitudes of Supervisors/Directors Toward The Comprehensive Guidance And Counseling Programs in Selected K-12 School Districts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the attitudes of the district Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. These three major components are academic, career and personal/social development for all students.

Procedure and Instrumentation

This qualitative research study will use “interview” as a method of gathering data. The interview will be tape-recorded. The interview will take between 30 to 45 minutes. There are no experimental procedures involve in the research. Attached you will find a copy of the interview questions. There will be no interview questions.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is purely voluntary and refusal to participate or to discontinue your participation will in no way incure penalty to you or your district.

Confidentiality

The interview will be tape recorded. After the interview, and after the data have been collected, to preserve the anonymity of the participants, a coding system will be used. Only the interviewer will have access to the collected data. The information may be shared with the researcher’s mentor and committee members, only when necessary. After the data are collected and transcribed by the researcher, it will be stored in a locked and secure place, which only the researcher will have access to.

Risk or Discomfort

Be assured that this research project will pose no risk or discomfort to you.

Benefits

There are no personal benefits derived from this research project by you individually or for your school district.

Permissions

Should you agree to this study interview, and if at any time you wish to review all or any portion of it, or request to destroy it, you will be within your right. The collected data and other material pertaining to the study will be stored in a secure place for three years after the completion of the research.

APPROVED

MAY 25, 2005

Colleague of Education and Human Services
Department of Education, Leadership, Management and Policy
Tel: 973-761-9107
400 South Orange Avenue * South Orange, New Jersey 07079

Seton Hall University
Contact Information

In the event that you need further information or clarification concerning this project, you may contact the researcher at telephone (732) 998-1677 or the researcher’s mentor Dr. Anthony J. Coella at (973) 761-9347. In the event that you may have questions directed to the Institutional Review Board involving Human Subjects of Seton Hall University the telephone number is (973) 761-6114.

Consent to participate is indicated by returning this letter, signed, and dated. The date and time of the interview will be at your convenience. You will receive a copy of this signed and dated document. Thank you very much.

Subject or Authorized Representative

Date

APPROVED

MAY 25 2005

THE

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy
Tel. 973.761.9347
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2585
Appendix C

Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
May 25, 2005

Dr. Seiss
280 River Road, 39B
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Dear Ms Seiss,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved as submitted under expedited review your research proposal entitled "A Qualitative Study of the Attitudes of Supervisors/Directors Toward the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs in Selected K-12 School Districts". The IRB reserves the right to recall the proposal at any time for full review.

Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of this stamped Consent Form.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mary P. Rozikes, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: [Signature]

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Appendix D

Interview Questions
The following are the interview questions:

Currently one of trends in education is accountability. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for students achievement?

In what way is this reflective of the school district's policy?

In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, and personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic make up? Can you explain?

What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement in your district? Please explain.

What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?
Appendix E

Transcript of Interviews
TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the District Supervisors/Directors toward the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. These three major components are academic, career, and personal/social development for all children. The participants’ insights, perceptions and attitudes toward the aforementioned topic were revealed in this transcript.

The following are the transcripts of interviews from the eight participants. The following are the assigned codes: Letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H, stood for the participants. The letter Q stood for the question, since there were nine questions therefore they are indicated as Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9. The letter A stood for answers, and R stood for the researcher. In addition, the researcher wishes to inform the readers that a break in the sentence (.........) meant that the researcher was able to decipher the spoken word or words of the participants.

Participant A

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability.” In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling be held accountable for students achievement?

A: I believe there should be accountability, but not full accountability. It’s difficult to say the number or percentage on it because the guidance department is in concern with the staff which is made up of all disciplines. In concert we address the whole student.
The counseling department can address issues like testing and test taking strategy and look at the student as a whole person and assess that. But the accountability I think can not be totally placed on the guidance department. Guidance counselors do look at chronic failing and chronic issues in school and try to address those so that they can be out of the way of the student's academic success. In that respect the guidance department can be held accountable.

Q2: In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?
A: Not this district. The district policy does not relate to accountability for student academic success.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the student in the school district?
A: The comprehensive guidance and counseling programs does address the whole student by looking at the three domains, the academic, social aspect of the student and paying attention to these aspects that will enable students to learn to be lifelong learners.

Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?
A: We prioritize by looking at the student issue at the given time and the social aspect or domain can't be ignored because issues at the home hampering academic success. Career issues must be addressed if the student is for example concern of how families get by and also planning ahead and goals and looking forward to .... The academic is what they master in order to fulfill the goal of the teacher. Again the priority is
depending on the issue that the student brings before you. Prior to that, if the student is not bringing other issues, I think the counselor should look at the academic.

Q5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training, or employment? Why?
A: Okay. We have to replace the word emphasis to the word exposure, where we expose them to various vocation, where we expose them to various employment. We look at the map of the ability, the achievement of the student. We look at that and guide them into the direction of college or vocational planning or employment.

Q6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up? Can you explain?
A: Yes I believe it is consistent with the demographic make up. We have a School to Work program and a career coordinator. The coordinator of the program through the community, help the students with employment, and therefore satisfying the commercial aspect of the community, who also benefit the community and the students.

R: If I may ask, can you tell me the demographic of the district?
A: I believe it's D.C. Ethnicity in general, the district is 80% African-American, 15% Latino, 5% of Asian-indian descent.

Q7: What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students' achievement in your district? Please explain.
A: Some of the programs that we have done. .... We have unified K-12 and what we have done beyond high school......

We started with the pamphlets "How to Get Good Grades", that all the students will
Essentially have. We have career day on all levels. That’s one of the initiatives. And we do that in concert with one another.

R: So you do have an active program.

A: Absolutely.

Q8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

A: We have a character education program which is designed to be proactive and it is the second year we have it and we already have recognition statewide.

R: The issue these days is in bullying. Do you have that too?

A: Yes, we have anti-bullying program K-12. We have various programs. Not all the counselors are using the same program, but they do have it. The district Affirmative Action Officer is constantly giving us information to address the different programs.

Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

A: It does have an influence, but it doesn’t affect the policy per se, but definitely have an influence in the program, because the District Factor Grouping collectively confirm the issue that the district have, and to address the problem. Especially when you’re trying to help the whole child.

Participant B

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability”. In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for students achievement?
A: Well, counseling should be in the same level as other departments in the school. If that’s true, then counseling should be held accountable. I think counseling should be held accountable for student achievement. The job of education arguably is to get children ready whatever that may be, either going to the university, or college, or just entering the workforce right after the high school, but we need to get our children ready. We need to get them ready for that and we should be held accountable.

Q2: Is what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?
A: Well, as you know we are a state operated school and for a state operated school the main goal to exit from state control, and the main item for that is student achievement. So our Board of Education and our Superintendent, this is a very high standard. We are held accountable for student achievement, especially (since) it’s a state mandate gives very high priority. We did many things to do that. It’s also a matter of getting out of state operation.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?
A: Well, I’m a proponent of the comprehensive counseling program because I think it provides the counselor with the systematic way of giving students what they need. The academic, social, and emotional, and career component. Every good counseling program should be comprised of, and also give our district a guide. Prior to the comprehensive counseling program we were, quite frankly, a crisis, reactive oriented program. Now we are structured to become a proactive program and a preventive and I hope this is having us achieve that goal.

R: Good.
Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how you prioritize it?

A: Okay. Even if one of the main goals of education is to help students achieve, I'm not going to put academic first because I believe the personal and social should come first because if students have problems, ah, it will interfere with their ability to do work, so I will put that as number one. I think if you can deal with those problems at least cope with the problems especially urban school like P (name of the city), they have many, many of them, that would be my first. Academic is second, because we really have to get the kids ready to become good, productive (citizens). Finally career. I don’t want to give the impression that I think it’s any less, I think career education is important. Students should be given a wide variety of options in elementary grades so that in high school we give career education. I think the most important for kids to know is you need to be happy at what you’re going to do. For children the most important aspect for what you have to be happy of what you’re going to do or you’re not going to be a very happy person in life.

R: Good.

Q5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training, or employment? Why?

A: Even though we are an urban district, we especially, our emphasis is on college. We have many students, their perception is that our school district's reputation is based on how many students we send or are going to college and the colleges where they are
going. Even if our emphasis is on college, we do vocational training, we do job employment. We do have many academies in P (name of the city), which are different learning environment and career clusters. Even these students in the academies, we have trained them for employment or admission to colleges and universities.

R: This year what is the percentage of your students who have applied to college?
A: I don’t have the exact number but about 60% to 65% which is good.

R: Good, good.

Q6: Is the career development of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up? Can you explain?
A: Okay. The demographic make up of the city is, we’re basically a city of middle class and lower-middle class, hard working people, many immigrants from all over the world. We have many, I think 30 languages are spoken in our school. So it is very diverse. When my grand parents came to P (name of the city), they’re hard working people. They want a better life. That’s why people come to America with “American Dream”, so, I think it is consistent with the middle class. They come here to better their life. Want better way to better your life than to get an education. We know that’s the way to progress. We know the dream of middle class is that better education, better jobs, better salary and better life. I think it is consistent with the demographic make up of the city and also I think people don’t want their children to be in the same level than they are. You always want more for your children.

Q7: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students achievement in your district? Please explain.
A: Our students achievement is at the top of our priority list. So one thing that the
counselors do, they analyzed the data from all of our testing and they look at that data primarily to see where students are lacking in certain area. We have what we call the Supplemental Program because we are also Abbott school district. One of the thirty Abbott school districts. So we are given many outside organization so we can refer. After the counselors have the data from the test, they recommend them to programs like COMAN.

R: What is COMAN?

A: COMAN is one of the agencies that will help students. COMAN is especially for Math. They are students that are not doing very well in Math. We have Booked On Phonics.

R: I'm familiar with that.

A: We also refer them to Huntington Learning. So depending on what the counselors found in testing they look and see in the chart. Especially with the No Child Left Behind, we have to. Many of our schools unfortunately are not passing schools, so therefore we have to afford the opportunity to parents to give this to them what we are not giving them in the school. We also have the SAT prep for students (it's a credit course), and hopefully improve their scores and so we can get them accepted to good schools.

R: Is that part of the district program?

A: Yes, that's part of the district program, we offer in all our high schools. We do a lot for the parents because we gave parents parameters, we know that their resources are limited. They don't really have the resources for extras. We also have an Application Courses for students who didn't do very well in the GEPA. When they get to the high
school we put them in remedial classes called Application which will address their needs. So we do have these programs. So I guess we do have many programs especially for students achievement.

R: That’s good, not many districts have that.

A: Abbott, I may say we have. That extra funding provides that. Especially the outside organizations.

P: Good.

Q8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

A: Well, all of it. I hope it’s proactive. We are trying just to have to deal with it then, so you have to be somewhat reactive. One of our very successful programs is Response Structure. It’s very successful. You work with kindergartens students and what you do is you have a morning meeting everyday. Teachers have a meeting with students and it lasts for half an hour, but in that meeting, some simple things like how you speak, look in the eyes, shake hands properly. Just the beginning kind of things. And saying thank you and just teaching some of the things that will help them in life and classroom. Just teaching things that sometime we take for granted. As they go to first and second grade it gets more involved. It cuts down on a lot of behavior referrals. It also cuts down on a lot of suspensions. That’s one of the proactive. We also have something called “Overcoming Obstacles.” (It’s just beginning.) It’s about behavior.

R: Character Education?

A: Yes. That’s not under my purview, but the counselors are involved with that. It’s just beginning, I don’t know much about it, but I believe it’s K-5. It seems like a good
teaching kids how to cope, how to make good decisions, how to avoid confrontation. Some of our current programs, we have in the upper grades, in the high school peer connection, peer tutoring. That have been very successful.

Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school/district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

A: I don’t think it has a real effect and anything to do with our district policy. Our district, since we are state operated, we do whatever comes down the road, which is good. The comprehensive counseling program is mandated by the state so we have to require that. We are actually involve with that before the state mandate.

Participant C

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability.” In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for students’ achievement?

A: I think that guidance and counseling should be a part of the whole educational program in the building, so that counselors within the program need to work collaboratively with teachers and administrators in order to have an impact on students’ academic performance. That doesn’t say that the counselors are held accountable per se in the academic achievement of individual counselors. However, the program as a whole needs to be viewed as a program that enables to make a difference in student achievement. For example, let’s take the middle school in which the structure is a team structure. The students are assigned to a number of teachers. The
counseling program needs to be a part of that team structures. And when students don’t do well, or aren’t working in their ability, then the counselors, along with the teachers, need to analyze what’s happening with the child. What’s going on? What’s wrong? We can’t fix everyone but we can certainly look in all that’s available to us, outside resources, inside resources, Child Study Team, psychologists, counseling program. We need how we as counselors and the counseling program can facilitate all these factors for children’s benefits and so, yes, the counseling program is accountable, no more accountable certainly than the teachers and no less, because we are a part of the system that needs to put our priority to student achievement.

Q2: In what way is this reflective of the school district policy?
A: I’m happy to say that this school district look favorably upon the guidance and counseling program. The district, in this days of budget shortfalls, we were actually able to add a counselor last year. That speaks very well for the Board of Education that believes that the counseling program is an important one. The fact that the Board of Education also adopted the guidance curriculum in January and has created the opportunity to be actually implemented by counselors and teachers. I think it speaks very well for the Board, and it’s a good help for our program.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?
A: The comprehensive guidance and counseling program creates an environment where counselors are accountable to affect change and so it’s not good enough to say, I’ve seen thirty students today, I’ve taught so many numbers of classes today. What’s important is to say, “What changed, because of what I’ve done.” If nothing is
changing, then you have to change what you're doing. So, I think if you look at that as a mandate to where you're going with your program, the CQCF is not just a combination of ancillary services. It's a program that we need to go from here to here because here's the problem that has to be addressed. These are social skills to be developed, these are career skills that have to be improved and so it puts it into a framework of a structure, because once you put it into a structure then you can actually see the change you've made. We have to make changes.

Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling Programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

A: Well, that is something that I can't generalize, because what you have to do is to look, number one, at the need of the school district, then you need to look further in the need of the building and the need of the children at that particular age. So, for example, when we look at our program that we implemented in our elementary building, there are certain areas, because of the demographic area, because of the student population, but there are certain areas that are very, very important. So we may feel the need in some school level that we need to really stress career and tying the value of what you're learning to what. Our kids here are relatively rural, and the rural atmosphere, they may not have the exposure to as many different kinds of career information, so that it takes on an important sphere here, or it may not in some other community. Ah, but when you're looking at where you're going to priorities, it's going to be different for each school and it's going to be different each school level.

Certainly in the middle school, we're already addressing social skills. We're spending
a lot of time helping kids to speak to one another and how to accept other people's opinion and how to speak to adults, where many, many years ago they got it from their homes but not now, so these are the issues that have to be addressed in the middle school. It's very dependent on your population and where you're located.

Q5: In the career development area. Where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

A: Well, career development in this district starts with grade K and we're looking at the career domain through the grade level. Certainly we're looking at exploration, exposure, right through grade six and seven, and begin to move to in the direction of helping. It's very important to understand how they learn and how well to compensate when people are teaching them in a matter of different ways they are able to learn.

That's the career development domain in my opinion. We have..... For our middle school, we are helping them to figure out different learning, (such as) learning by the use of their hands, what do they like, what turn them on. Through that, hopefully, when they come to the high school they're now are able to take courses that will direct them toward a career path. I think that when we talk about colleges, this particular school district is changing significantly. At one point it was a Blue Collar community when students didn't go on to any type of college. That's beginning to change because the whole community is changing. So we need to educate our teachers and the whole community to recognize that the place is changing and we need to put emphasis on challenging students to take more demanding core courses and move them forward.

More kids are going to a two-year college, more kids are going to a four-year college. At the same time, there's a need to be encouraging by the counseling department for
the administration, that we need to put more counselors that are hands on, more
courses that they can .......... not attend solely on those going to Vo-Tech and
get experience. I will say, here, we try to spend an equal time in our effort to looking
at students for possible employment as well as looking at checking good schools to
follow that career path and also to put a big push for students that will go on to college.
Q6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's
demographic make up? Can you explain?
A: Well, it' getting there. That' the reason why I've chosen this structure within the
high school. We have one career transition counselor. Because I often find that
counselors get bogged down in high school and get bogged down with scheduling,
those very guidance oriented tasks as oppose to counseling tasks. So by removing
some of that, the counselors can be freed from some of those and run .... And will be
able to look at those issues, develop a very analytical approach to career
development in the high school. What are we gonna do with our freshmen? What kinds
of lesson do they need? What can we do for them? So that when their junior year come
we should not have anybody who is clueless. They may not know yet, but they should
not be clueless. They should have a pretty good idea of what they' re good at, what
their strengths are, what their weaknesses are, what are their skills, what are their
abilities and where do they go in order to attain these.
Q7: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote
students achievement in your district? Please explain.
A: Well, one of the programs that we really worked hard at this year is developing the
Intervention and Referral Services here at the high school. The district supports that
whole-heartedly. We have a district professional who did a three-day training for all of our I&RS team. We have an IR&S team in every building and it's pretty intensive. We have done two-half day workshop that I had led. Just getting the piece off the ground so to speak, and what's it's function and so forth. And we have a pretty intense training and we have created programs in every building and certainly we are attempting to address those students who are severely at-risk. What we are planning to do this summer is, two of our counselors will be attending a workshop on creating (I'm not quite sure of the exact title), basically looking at behavior in an analytical way and then assigning that behavior to various deficiency (deficit) that the student might have. For example, a student in the middle school, having significant behavior, acting out in class, thrown out of class, failing classes, and so forth. The workshop said that we have to have to point to them to let them and let them understand what child's behavior in a collaborative approach. Identify the child's deficit. That child may have a deficit which they call an executive function, he may have a deficit moving from class to class to class and so because that child is unable to do that, all of those, the problem is behavior. When you look at children's behavior as indicative of deficit or skills the child hasn't learn yet. For example, social skills. Okay, failure to communicate. If the child can't do that and if you can identify the child's behavior related to that deficit, now you can look at the deficit, now you can design strategies and prevention programs. Maybe the child needs to be in a social skills group with five other children and role play how to talk. As simple as that, but the point being, that piece of the puzzle, that's missing. Instead of talking and talking, and listening, now we know the problem. We can't fix people's problems,
but if a child is coming from a home (where) there's no rule, no boundary, then help the child understand the rule. So, I'm excited about this program. One of the people that's going to this workshop is actually going to document a program in college. So it is really exciting. One of the things in the high school we expanded significantly, we have expanded our peer tutoring program. We do that by eliminating Study Hall in the high school, and what we've done is allowed students to do community service (Juniors and Seniors) program which is peer tutoring. Next year we hope to expand to the middle school. We will have our Juniors and Seniors peer tutors go to the middle school. What we did in our middle school Peer Tutoring, we put a data together, looking at kids who were failing and then we hook them up to the peer tutors, and now they are passing.

R: Good.

A: This is why we need to evaluate what we're doing, to present to the people. Now I can go back to my Board (of Education) and say, look, 80% of those failing last year, who were tutored passed. So now I can go back and say, this program is working, now we can expand it. We can't go to the Board and ask for more money if we can't prove to the Board that what we do work.

A: Right. Good.

Q8: What program(s) in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

A: Well, let's talk about it's proactive in the middle school. It works in the middle school because of our guidance curriculum. There are many, many lessons that are taught during our guidance classes. We address personal and social issues and I will
say the same is true in the elementary school because of guidance curriculum as well as counselors there are running groups for specific topics. For example, we have groups that kids really understand to be harassed. I'm very secure of what's happening in Pre-K to 4. In the high school what's happening is the students have logistic pairs. Logistically speaking it's difficult to get together into small groups. The teachers do not want them to leave their classes, they want to have lunch with their friends. So logistically it's more difficult. They can't stay after school because they have activities, so I would say it's a challenge to address the issue here in the high school. However, that said, what we will be doing next year, our SAC (Student Assistance Coordinator) here does run groups, that's usually working pretty well. In order to get over the stigma of being in a group especially here in the high school, what happen, we decided to run what we call the "Book Club." We've chosen a couple of books, one is Reviving Ophelia. What we're going to do is try and run the group as if it is a book club so that there's no stigma attached to it, so that kids won't feel they have been singled out. What we also did was order some "Highly Effective Habits for Teens" which I think is good for freshmen.

R: It's an interesting concept. I like that.

A: When I was a counselor for the middle school, I found that kids love even at that age for you to read to them and we have a grief group. In those groups we have kids who just lost their parents and I found that some less provoking and less anxiety to handle. This group I read a story to them and then we will talk about it. The team from and center, they can talk and then I found that this is a good way for kids who are hesitant to be in a group to begin with. The other thing that we are doing is that we
have a person coming from ... We have her here in the Spring for parent
workshop and the topic was dealing with anger and it's for parents. And the next Fall,
they're going to do a series for us and it's going to be for five weeks of workshops and
what will happen is that as parents come forward and start coming we may actually be
able to identify those students and we may start some kind of groups with students
regarding anger, conflict management. That seems to be an issue here.
R: Those are really good programs.
Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the
comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?
A: I don't think the DFG has anything to do with it. Obviously the DFG is going to do,
of where and how you're going to prioritize, what's good in Ridgewood may not be
good here. What's good here may not be good in Camden. So, obviously we have to
look at our district. But money should not be an issue or factor in making the
determination. Just because you have the highest DGF in the state of New Jersey and
98% of students go to college, that doesn't mean that you don't have students cutting,
students suffering loneliness, students who have no clues and don't understand what their
learning styles are? I don't think it should impact at all.
R: Very good, thank you.

Participant D

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is "accountability." In your opinion, to
what degree should the guidance and counseling program be held accountable for
students achievement?
A: I feel that the counseling program and guidance counselors are held accountable for
students achievement in the same level. We are part of the equation. I don’t know if I can give the percentages, but I think we need to support the students who are at the bottom most of the academic achievement level, create and support study skills structure so that the academic achievement will improve. The bottom line is we’re here to help students achieve academically more than anything else, although other things that we do are helping them academically also.

R: Exactly, I agree.

Q2: In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

A: Accountability?

R: Yes.

A: There’s probably not a whole lot of accountability in our school district policy as far as school counseling. We are a highly professional community you know, our parents expect an awful lot so, here at the high school level we do college applications, schedule the right courses, and such. And as far as our elementary level, our folks K-5 are really cracking on a lot. Not the college prep yet. So I don’t think we have a district policy on accountability for school counseling. But that will change as we develop a school curriculum K-12.

R: Okay, very good.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

A: As I’ve mention we do not have yet a counseling curriculum for the district K-12, however this summer we have to work on it. In particular in two schools there’s a difference in the academic, personal and social ...
The high school counselors already know that stuff and they are using it. I do believe that it contributes to student success but never before have a district curriculum, it's always been the high school counselors. I'm getting feedback from my elementary counselors.

R: Your district is not alone in that.

A: Oh, I know that!

Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

A: Hmm. Ideally I want them to be equal. I'm looking at schools, having been in other districts. The academic comes first, then personal and social next. There's a spinning wheel struggle to provide career counseling in a valuable meaningful way. We haven't gotten there yet. We have a computer program last year. We have the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery), the result was meaningful to our kids and their parents. It's kind of hard to have all the components.

Q5: Is the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

A: I think our career development area is definitely college. I think here in the counseling office, in the career development area, it is college. I think mainly because of our clientele. I think definitely college because that's where the majority of our students are going. We also have employment and vocational training. Even at the elementary level, they're already into that, they question the counselors. There's a student who asked how to prepare for sixth grade. Over here, they start early.
Q6: Is the career development of your district consistent with the district's demographic make up? Can you explain?
A: I think the career development is definitely consistent with demographics. What we focus is definitely college. We have high aspiring and high achieving parents.

Q7: What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote student achievement in your district? Please explain.
A: Ah, well, our counselors haven't done a whole lot with this. Actually we don't rank our seniors because students with GPA (Grade Point Average) of 3.75 is on the 50th percentile. We have the family initiative to achieve. We have a mentoring program for students who are struggling. The counselors have individual and group counseling to help support them. We have the I&R&S (Intervention and Referral) committee.

Q8: What programs in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.
A: Ah, actually a lot of what we do is proactive program. The counselors see all the kids for particular reasons. Here in the high school it's basically reactive. However, in the elementary schools, it is definitely proactive. They go to the classrooms running lessons on personal/social issues, running groups to help those kids who are weak in their personal and social issues. (Counselors) are running groups for the kids that are weak. So, we are definitely proactive in the elementary level, and reactive in the high school.

Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?
A: I am not sure if I can answer that. We are at the higher level DFG. We are not J, so
we must be I or IV/I. But I don't think that the DFG has any influence in whether the
district has a Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program or not.

Post Script: The participant made a comment: When she started working for the school
district, they still call the department "Guidance", although it's been many years that in
the national level it's been called the comprehensive guidance and counseling. She
made the recommendation for the district to change the name of the department.

Participant E

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is "accountability". In your opinion, to
what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable
for students achievement?

A: Again, I think the counselor certainly is held accountable with working with the
students and getting information to the students and parents. The guidance counselor is
responsible for having the students take the right class, if he should be in basic class,
that's where he should be. If he should be in honors classes, that is the responsibility of
the guidance counselor, but the guidance counselor is not accountable for the day to
day working and progress of the students. First the information should come from the
teachers, to the parents, then the counselors should certainly follow up on everything
that's happening in the classroom.

Q2: In what way is this reflective of the school district's policy?

A: Certainly, the policy, is that the first line of defense so to speak is the teacher.
Teacher is to contact the parents through interim report which is sent out every ten
weeks. They are certainly are encouraged to contact the parents whenever students are
not performing to the level. After the contact with the parents, the counselor have to be made aware, so the counselor can follow up, because I don’t feel that the counselor see the total picture. The Math teacher sees what’s happening in Math. The student may not be doing well in Math, but performing in Social Studies. The Social Studies teacher sees what’s happening with Social Studies. Then the counselor deals with the parents and students in that respect.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

A: Hopefully what we want, one of our missions, what we want to see in guidance is to have the students see the high school, and also the middle school and the elementary school as their total experience, as a step in their general goal. We want the students to have goals and have dreams. Our school district, our school mission is to develop open-minded, life-long learners to pursue their dreams and add value to the world. So if the guidance department is going to embrace this, they certainly have, then we’re looking at, again, at the whole student, the global student. So, there’s a reason for sitting in there, there’s a reason for sitting in Social Studies, because I have a goal that I want to get to. The next step maybe college, but what’s even beyond that. What’s the goal of the student?

Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how you prioritize it?

A: I think, it’s very difficult to prioritize it and that goes along with what I say because we are looking at the global child. We are looking at the whole child. But if we have to
do that, I think it's the personal and social because the child is not going to perform academically if they have all kinds of stuff going on at home or stuff going on at the hallway. So, first the child has to be comfortable with his skin so to speak and have a goal, personal goal. Give him reason to perform well academically and the career is where it comes in, they've rolled into one. He's comfortable with being him, therefore, "I'm going to work hard to reach that goal."

Q5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training, or employment?

A: Well, that question, the answer will be college. But I don't like the question because there's the "development" here. If we are developing a career plan for the child, then it goes along with the interest, it goes along with aptitude, that is the basis, and that's the most important. College maybe the outcome to that, but the most important pieces that we are talking about is the developmental aspect. Then we are talking about the child setting the goal, then what are the steps to getting to "my" goal, more than likely college.

Q6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic make up? Can you explain?

A: We are truly diverse district. Very diverse, and I believe it is. In going along with what I said, in the high school we use the COIN program. We begin with them (students), in the ninth grade, looking at their interests, aptitudes, abilities, their job values. What are they looking at? When we're looking at diversity, we look at all the children, "take me to where I am, and push me as far as I can go." We take children to the level where they're at and push them as far as they can go with that. We start them
at ninth grade and we have a very specific career program with COIN, (9-12) and it's wonderful.

Q7: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote student's achievement in your district? Please explain.

A: Of course in today's market with NCLB (No Child Left Behind), we were pushed to develop Lab with Math, Lab with Language and be sure that we put the students in the level where they should be, whether in special education or AP courses. I think we offer a variety of courses. We have one of the most, I don't want to say, 100 courses, but in the creative area, when you walk down the hall, you probably see all the courses we have and it's open to all. All the AP courses and all the basic courses. I'm all excited about it. So, the program you see here ...... but not far off I don't know if you notice the list of colleges where our kids are going to (in the Fall). We have a bulletin board that will help the student body to see. Kids will say, "if he can go to Harvard, I can go to Harvard too," or somebody go to school in Stockton, "I can go to Stockton too." Any level of college, ...... they accepted all because it's the end result.

Q8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

A: Oh, that's hard. What program/s in personal/social development? We have an extra-curricular program. Huge extra-curricular program, I think it's to the large extent and we certainly .... We have a TNT program and part of the program is getting ninth graders involve in whatever their thing is. It once again, could be career, sports. We have an activity fair, just for ninth grade to get involve in your community, your community is this high school. I think the kids start to get connected and I think
that’s very important. And in the academic part of that is, “I’m going to work.” We have all the support services that are available, therapists, student assistance counselors, that are available to them. They obviously, all of them have their guidance counselors, all the psychologists. So, “I feel that there’s a place to go to if I have a problem.” We go back to the mission statement, we’re so into “this is the community that you are a part of.” So I think their whole social development ………… If I look at, it’s just not us the counselors, but the teachers, the nurse, it’s the custodians, anybody in the hallway. “This is where I want to be, it’s a good place.”

R. What does TNT stands for?

A: It’s career, it’s technology, it’s a hodgepodge of things. I can look it up. (Pause), Technique and Technology for Student Success. It’s part of graduation. The TNT guidance counselors are in the classrooms a lot because we do that whole curriculum stuff and when the report card comes and if you are happy or not …….

Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

A: I have no idea what DFG is.

R: The researcher explained to the participant what DFG (District Factor Group) means.

A: I don’t know what this question means. I don’t know how to answer.

R: The researcher elaborated on the question.

A: The comprehensive guidance is for all the students. In New York State, I’ve been in the most wealthy district, I’ve worked in the South Bronx, the comprehensive guidance program is very important to all kids. What your district is, has nothing to do with it.
R: Okay, that's it.
A: That's it?
R: Yes, thank you.

Participant F

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is "accountability." In your opinion, to what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for student achievement?

A: Difficult question. Looking at guidance counselors, their role is to enable students to schedule students, to guide them along in their high school career. I guess the accountability is looking at, are they placing them in proper courses? Are they looking at the strength of the students? Do they know their students? I think the problem that arises with accountability is the number of students they (counselors) have to counsel, and how well do they get to other students. I think looking at the area of accountability across the school district ....... How well (do) they know the students? With the caseload of 270 kids, how can you properly guide them and put them in proper courses, and guiding them in selection? So, and I think that is an issue. I think "accountability" is not just counselors. It's because accountability is the key word in education. And with the No Child Left Behind and testing. Everybody is being held accountable, so it's not just the counselors, it's across the board, goes to the teachers, administrators and the superintendent's office. Everything is reported. We have to look at all parts of the student. It's a wake up call for the district. I guess guidance counselors have to be aware of that, because it's not just the high functioning kids. You have to look at kids down at the bottom and kids at the middle. They usually
get lost in the school system. The most demand is in the high performing and low performing students.

Q2: In what way was this reflective of the school district’s policy?
Written policy, huh, I don’t think it’s reflective in there. I think it all depends on the policy, the building principal and the administration in charge of the guidance department, I think that’s where it comes from. I think it’s the supervisor’s role to hold them accountable. It’s through observation and going to their PIP (Professional Improvement Plan) at the end of the year, to look at how their students, and to look to where they are not performing and pushing them to various workshops in promoting the areas where they are weak.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?
A: Personally, I think it is the most important because students do need guidance and they need to focus on students. As in the school across the board, we’re dealing with lots of issues, it’s just not academic, writing recommendations and college applications. There are other issues in society. Mental health issues. That’s what we’re dealing with. It is probably the most important thing in the school. They are not just dealing with academic issues and help students deal with it, and it’s just not maybe in the school. Counselors need bags of tricks, where they reach out to the community, when students are referred when having this kind of issues, I have a strong feeling toward that.

Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how you prioritize
it?

A: Hmm, well, I think, we all have to remain focus. We are a school system, and the academic needs to be the primary focus, and I think that's something we need to do. Sometimes we lose focus, counselors are pulled to so many directions, but we have to realize that we are a school system. I think I can tie academic and career together, but I think number two, personal/social issues because if we do not deal with them, academic is not going to happen. You deal with the special population. Especially now, there's mental health issue, and her in the school district, we are just now building our career program. We have always done it, but we bring our focus, we want to hire a career counselor because right now it's just the guidance counselor who are doing it, and also I think it is important, but I guess I have to prioritize it. I would do the academic, the social and the career.

R: Okay. Good.

Q5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

A: We are very diverse in population. We have two towns that's feeding into our high school population. One has higher socio-economic range and in the lower range of socio-economic. We have a great mix here as the high school. It's kind of hard where the focus is and can't say that all the students are going to college, and focus our program to them. We can't say we have to be able to give that wide range, college, vocational... Our counselors have experience in all these areas, I mean, and college is not just the avenue in our school. We are aware of others because of the diverse student population.
Q6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district’s demographic make up? Can you explain?
A: Yes we have such a wide range. We need to individualize. We have a career awareness and we are trying to bring some other programs, and the career awareness are not just kids who are going to college, but also doing different things, such as shadowing programs with people in the community, touch other areas to give students ideas. Kids come in and say “this is what I want to be”, but really have no experience what the job is. We are giving them that.

Q7: What program/s are you implementing or have implemented to help promote student achievement in your district? Please explain.
A: I guess right now, has to do with testing. We have a program where kids can practice SAT in the internet. Kids have access to the school and the individual student’s teachers, where they can have access to their weaknesses.
R: It’s good!
A: Yah, it’s just something we started. In the past ... now we are introducing elective in our SAT preparation. It distresses me, people focusing in the test, but that’s how public schools are perceived. It’s all in test scores. There’s more to the school, but that’s in our country that is the focus.

Q8: What program/s in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.
A: I think the program that we are bringing in are proactive for K to 12. Peer Leadership program. I think it touches everybody in the district because the high school peer leaders go to the middle school and do the program like that and different
assembly program. They also mentor kids in the middle school and high school. A lot of it is peer directed. We also have a superintendent who has a degree in psychology and she is very aware of the mental health issues in our district. In our elementary school we have a social worker and a psychologist who are not associated with the Child Study Team. They are there to assist at-risk kids and at-risk family.

The social worker and psychologist in the buildings have more Child Study Team responsibility and these people do not. We also have hooked up with Rutgers University this year, psychology program, and we have doctoral people here doing some work, going for counseling degree. It is a high priority in our district. You can't ignore the mental health issues. Our superintendent is a leader in that, something that she feels it's important, that we need to discuss this type of issue.

R: Good. Okay.

Q9: To what degree does the DFC of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

R: Last question.

A: I don't know if it does. I don't know if I can answer that.

R: You already answered the question.

A: I don't know if it does.

R: Okay, very good.

Participant: If you need something else give me a call.

Participant G

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is "accountability." In your opinion, to
what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable for students achievement?

A: Ah, when, hmm, well it depends on i guess what you mean by accountable. I think that if you have a strong counseling curriculum and counseling department, and you try to meet all the needs of your students academically, socially, emotionally, then you do what you need to do and then reaching out to the people, involving the community and using all the resources that you have, it’s important, and if something happen, one set out to do doesn’t take place, that could be a lot of reason for that. I would not like to think that a particular counselor in my department will be held accountable for something somebody did, because for any reason that it didn’t work out, or it wasn’t utilize to it’s potential. I think you have to look at all stakeholders that are involve and in the context that you use to get to where you’re trying to get to.

Q2: In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

A: Well, I don’t think it was stated in the policy that any one is held accountable, however, the school have a vision and a mission, that’s to meet all the needs of one’s students, and that, again, is socially, academically, physically, emotionally, and we do that through our program. We do that to the best of our ability.

R: Alright.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling program contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

A: Well, you probably have to look at all our programs. We have a lot of character education programs, we have programs dealing with social skills, values, we look at career components, we look at academic, our average students, where they are and
where they need to be and articulate with other schools within the district about your programs, and get your students in the same page, started, and where you want to go and just keep the articulation open with staff from other buildings, your students, teachers and your parents. I think that contribute to the success of the program and ultimately provide success for each student because you're continually looking at what you have, continually assessing, and seeing where you need to go, and looking at the particular need of the student. What have been addressed in the past, and evaluate what have been done, and being able to know at this point. And articulation is extremely important and just keeping everyone involved in the process is important, and knowing what everyone has done.

R: Good.

Q: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize it?

A: Well, I think you have to look at each student individually, and assess their needs and know where they're at. And you know every school district wants their student to achieve academically. In order to be able to do that, we have to take into account social and emotional issues that may occur or that already occurred that maybe the reason why that------- student achievement and take that into effect that some students that may come in with those social and emotional problems may be starting from the get go--------, because you know it will impede upon their success. Other student could be coming in and they are doing okay or other can be doing a little bit better. What you do is focus a little bit on their academic but sort of branch out and see what's going on, so
it depends on the student. If I have a student who's doing well socially, academically, so you would like to look at the career component because what you want to do, is, you want them to be lifelong learners. You want them to be successful once they leave school, and you want them to be, and in order to do that you have to look at the total picture of that student. You need to take everything into account, but, again, it depends on that person's needs, and if everything is moving smoothly, academically, emotionally and socially, then maybe with that particular student, now I can focus on career, because all of that will depend on where their needs are.

R: Good.

Q5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational training or employment? Why?

A: Well, again, I think you have to look at each student individually and assess their strengths and weaknesses, and talk about goals, career planning, provide inventory check for the students. We have that, so that we can help them. We have many students, close to 88% go to two-year and four-year college, some go to work, some go to the military. It depends on their interest and where their strengths are, and of course you have to take the weaknesses and their goals and try to establish a program for them to meet their goals, whatever they may be.

Q6: Is the career development program of your district consistent with the district's demographic make up? Can you explain?

A: Well, ah, when you're looking at the career development program, I probably would say that it's pretty consistent. However our district demographic make up is changing and we are in the midst of tremendous growth right now, and so that lots
things going on, lots of families.

Q7: What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote students' achievement in your district? Please explain.

A: A lot, added more AP and Honors courses. The past four years, looking at the curriculum and assessing if they are achieving academically and trying to meet the needs of our students by providing with maybe additional AP courses. We have a lot of honors courses that are available to our students. We have Math Lab, Writing Lab for our students, so that if we have students having difficulty, or watch the opportunity to improve upon, (students) can meet with the teachers math or language after school if they are able to do that, that will help students achieve.

Q8: What programs in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

A: We try to have, I think every district want to be reactive because .... however you try to be proactive by offering, we have a lot of groups, so our counselors do a lot of group work. Our Student Assistance Counselor does group work, groups for students with a lot of different needs, so that we are able to work with them, so that they are developing personally and socially which often have an effect on how they do academically. And again, we provide lesson for "Bullying" and "Harassment", so that they are able to be more aware of.....

Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the district policy?

A: Hmm, we are offering a comprehensive guidance program throughout the district. To me, anyway, it's important regardless. It's an important component because you
want to be able, again, to serve all your students, all the needs of your students, to be
able to look at the programs that are needed and be able to implement and in addition,
be able to articulate.
R: Thank you.

Participant H

Q1: Currently, one of the trends in education is “accountability”. In your opinion, to
what degree should the school guidance and counseling program be held accountable
for students achievement?
A: As much as any other department. We are counselors but we are in school district.
Our main function is to collaborate. Which we are as a partner in instruction with
administrators, teachers, and family. I see us counselors as the real key, serving as
leaders and collaborators with teachers, administrators, students, and parents to help
this happen. We are as shared partners in instruction. And with No Child Left Behind,
there’s a strong emphasis on student achievement, in closing the achievement gap, I
see the counselors as real key, as serving as a lead collaborators with teachers,
administrators, and students, and parents, to let this happen. What I have counselors
do, and we can discuss this later on, I let them design a measure that is important to
that school, that they would like to improve, like suspension rate, attendance,
academic achievement, and then celebrating student success based on the individual
need of the school. We have a district strategic plan, and each school has a strategic
plan. So we try to pick a topic that will help attain the goal in their school, they come
up with the data, like if they are going to decrease the failure. They will start at the
beginning of the first marking period and identify the students who have the
potential for failure for the working period. Then working with the other stakeholders, implement an intervention, then at the end of the year they will measure whether or not that was acceptable. I will give you the summary of the measure. It is called SPARC which stands for School Counseling Program Accountability Report Card and I can give you a couple sample of that.

Q: Okay, alright. Thank you.

Q2: In what way is this reflective of the school district’s policy?

A: Our school district is totally committed to student achievement. The level of our student is closing the achievement gap. The aggregate data, we look and see what ethnic group, Free Lunch, special education, ESL, which area where the gap is. It’s not always ethnic, it can be financial, and other areas. We have all kinds of support for our kids. Saturday Academy, Superintendent has a primary focus, we have also a new program, “Understanding by Design.” So he (Superintendent) is doing an all out effort to improve the achievement in this township and to reduce the achievement gap, and the counselors are on board.

Q3: In what way does the comprehensive guidance and counseling programs contribute to the success of the students in the school district?

A: Our students start in kindergarten. Our counseling program is from K-12 level. From the time they enter school until they graduate they do have a school counselor that work with them and their family in the school district. We always say that graduation begins in kindergarten, and there’s all kinds of research, I think Sink and Stroh are notable, that the earlier you can build the foundation, so we start in kindergarten teaching the students competency skills in the three domains, academic,
career, personal/social. In the power point i'm going to give you, and then it's kind
of a spiral curriculum in which they learn by level and then they demonstrated it, and
then they apply it, as we go through. And we do identify student competency goals and
we work very closely in groups and individually. They have workshops for parents and
very, very committed in helping students achieve and improve in their school work.
Q4: Of the three major components of the comprehensive guidance and counseling
programs (academic, career, personal/social), please tell me how would you prioritize
it?
A: We see them all equally. I see all components of counseling (is) like a marriage.
You can't have one without the other. We can't say that academic is important than
personal/social. Academic development, career development, personal/social
development equal student success. It's amazing, even if you're just doing academic
support group, you may, you're there to set goals, one kid say "my mother died", so
the personal comes out and the academic ties in with their scheduling, and they got all
three. And if you look at our guide, you'll see that there's competency in each domain.
Q5: In the career development area, where is the emphasis placed? College, vocational,
training or employment? Why?
A: Because we have a diverse school district, we start with the younger kids. We show
them the importance why people go to work. And we do career exploration, we do
shadowing, in the elementary school they have a career day, and career fair in the
middle school, and when they come to the high school, we have them in career-based
program. They do career searches, they do college searches, they do employment
searches and we help them, show them the areas that best fit them. There's a strong
emphasis in our district that all kids go to college, and we fight that, because what we say is that, it's important for all students to have post-secondary training whether it's a two-year college, a certificate program at a county college or apprenticeship. Some extra training so they have the skills to join the work force. In June when you ask our eighth graders who is going to college, they all want to go to college. There is an academic emphasis but we also want to show them there are other ways to earn money and be successful and try to point other options. And we also want to be sure that all our kids know the courses they need for college, because we do not want them to be seniors and all of a sudden they decide they want to go to college, and they don't have the right courses.

Q6: Is the career development of your district consistent with the district's demographic make up? Can you explain?

A: I'm not really sure that I understand that, because I think anybody can be what they want to be. So, I don't think it's really related to our demographic make up. But I think it is important to let them know that there are other options beside college, you know. It's a very touchy area because there's a feeling that in many cases the children of color have been pushed into vocational programs. They're not given a chance to go to college. We are very careful, this is what you need for college. There's nothing wrong in a two-year college and transferring to a four-year degree. We have a program Technical, Inc., with construction engineers where our kids participate in it and we try to explain, but as I say, if you talk to anybody in the office, everyone wants to go to college. Eighty percent of our kids go to some form of good education such as four-year school, technical school, business school, secretarial school, and two-year
college.

Q: What programs are you implementing or have implemented to help promote student achievement in your district? Please explain.

A: I think the measure is not really appropriate, but it is a way of measuring student achievement. For the past two years, counselors in the school have a designed measure called SPARC. But some of our interventions are high school students tutoring working with our elementary school. We have after school where they work closely with the teachers for help (on) weekends. We have success skills program in the middle school. This is just not academic, they also talk about self-management and other things like that, but as a whole, it is geared toward improving academic. It's Campbell and Brygham I think, it's success skills, I was introduced to that by ASCA through the annual workshop. Two of the middle school counselors are implementing that. We have non-traditional time, high school guidance counselors have evening hours, in the middle school, a counselor has evening hours. Parents workshops K-12. A lot of them are academics, but this year we have Internet Safety. We have a woman coming to present brain development in children, and how that affect learning. So I guess what I'd say is parents workshops, support groups, tutors, input from the community, the district itself sponsors a lot of academies. The Saturday or After School, or Summer where kids can come for enrichment. The counselors serve in the IERTS (Intervention and Referral Services) and they are involve with that. They do serve in many cases in academic teams. So, I worked so much so that we are not ancillary, just attend to crisis. We're not just there, but instead we help raise children achievement.
Q8: What program's in personal/social development does your district have? Is it proactive or reactive? Please explain.

A: I think it's both. Our programs are proactive, but we understand that there are issues with our kids, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, weight loss, so we tried to help them in transition and coping life skills, success skills. We also have groups for kids who lost ... our grief or lost, interpersonal groups in the elementary level. The counselors K-8 are going to the classrooms to do weekly lessons. All students see counselors each month. I don't expect that they can teach all the skills. The counselors give the teachers the information to follow through. The elementary school counselors send letters to parents every month telling them “these are the skills we worked on”, so they can work at home to reinforce the skills. They put the magnet is it so they can put them on the refrigerator. We have our evening programs. Last year one counselor and I, we did a workshop with parents of eighth graders talking about transition from middle to high school. It's pretty much an interpersonal skills because it's an informational session.

Of course we have our competency skills. The counselors are responsible for teaching K-12, K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12. In high school we have a Voss group. Kids being stuff to homeless people. We have anger management. It's on-going. We have three skills and they have to practice it, and understand it. In the high school level we have the caseload divided, which is large, into static groups. There are five static groups, and those groups stay together up to their senior year. They (counselors) do individual counseling. They try to hold on to it. I try to get rid of it.

Q9: To what degree does the DFG of your school district influence the inclusion of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in your district policy?
A: I think this is the program we need regardless of DFG. We are diverse, so the counselors have been trained for multi-cultural competency because we primarily are a white staff, but that has changed. I'm fortunate to have a few African-American counselors, I do have an Asian counselor, a Latino (Latina). The counseling staff started as primarily a white staff, we're getting there, but we're still the majority. Look at you, meaning the Researcher, you are the exception. If you look at the research, most people that go to counseling (occupation) are white women like me. We are sensitive to the needs of our multi-cultural population and we do try to address issue of racism. We don't pretend, as much as we celebrate diversity here, we don't pretend. We don't go around saying everything is O.K., we try to deal with it. Racism, harassment, and so on.

R: Okay.