School Counselors' Activities in Predominantly African American Urban Schools

Lacretia T. Dye

Western Michigan University, young2dye@yahoo.com

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SCHOOL COUNSELORS’ ACTIVITIES IN PREDOMINANTLY AFRICAN AMERICAN URBAN SCHOOLS

by

Lacretia T. Dye

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Advisor: Suzanne Hedstrom, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 2012
WE HEREBY APPROVE THE DISSERTATION SUBMITTED BY

Lacretia T. Dye

ENTITLED School Counselors' Activities in Predominantly African American Urban Schools

AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
(Department)

Suzanne M. Hedstrom
Dissertation Review Committee Chair

Counselor Education
(Program)

Mary L. Anderson
Dissertation Review Committee Member

E. Brooks Applegate
Dissertation Review Committee Member

APPROVED

Dean of The Graduate College

Date August 2012
Urban school reform has begun to penetrate the school counseling profession in both theory and practice. The American School Counseling Association’s National Model (ASCA, 2005), as well as the Transforming School Counseling Initiatives component of the Education Trust (2007) are initiatives within the school profession promoted, in part, as responses to urban school reform. In particular, the ASCA National model is a “call to action” for school counselors to promote student success by closing the existing achievement gap whenever found between students of color, poor students, or underachieving students and their more advantaged peers (ASCA, 2005). However, little information is available on the activities of school counselors in urban schools that are predominantly African American. The purpose of this study was to explore the demographic characteristics of school counselors in predominantly African American urban as schools as well as ascertain how frequently they engage in school counseling activities as conceptualized by ASCA.

A descriptive, quantitative study was conducted. A total of 102 school counselors that worked in predominantly African American urban schools in Michigan participated in the study (40% response rate). Participants completed a demographic questionnaire as well as the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale Survey (Scarborough, 2002) in which
they indicated the frequency with which they performed activities recommended by the ASCA National Model.

Findings of this study revealed that counselors in predominantly African American urban schools performed many of the activities prescribed by the ASCA National Model. The descriptive analysis found a majority of the participants to be African American females (61%) who had master’s degrees or higher in school counseling trained in school counseling (85%).

Of the 48 recommended activities, 8 were performed always or frequently by more than 50% of the participants. Counseling students regarding school behavior and consulting with school staff concerning student behavior were the most frequently performed activities. Counselors spent most of their time performing activities in the categories of counseling, consultation and coordination. Curriculum activities were performed least frequently. Results indicated significant differences in the frequency of activities between elementary and high school counselors. Recommendations for counselor education and future research are offered.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am because we are.

Lacretia T. Dye
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School counseling, a specialty of the American Counseling Association, has been significantly influenced by federal legislation, state requirements, and educational policy. The school counseling profession has been shaped and developed by the need to match the demands of an ever-changing society. Most recently, societal issues, such as changing demographics and increased expectations on school systems, have prompted members of the educational community to head new school reform initiatives such as Goals 2000: The Educate America Act of 1994 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. As a valuable member of the educational community, the school counselor is among the reform initiators.

The American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA) development of the National Standards and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005), as well as the Transforming School Counseling Initiative, a component of the Education Trust (2003), are responses to the most recent school reform efforts. Specifically, the ASCA National Model is a call for school counselors to design, coordinate and implement, and manage and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors who work within the structure of a comprehensive program such as the ASCA National Model are to be strong leaders, advocates, and collaborators to promote systemic change. Furthermore, “the implementation of the ASCA National Models is said to hold great
promise for the school counseling profession and the students of this nation” (ASCA, 2005, p. 10). In particular, the model is a “call to action” for school counselors to promote student success by closing the existing achievement gap whenever found between students of color, poor students, or underachieving students and their more advantaged peers (ASCA, 2005). The Transforming School Counseling Initiative extended ASCA’s “call to action” for school counselors and how they serve students in urban schools. According to Lee (2005), urban schools largely reflect their neighborhood/residential environment and are typically in geographical areas characterized by a high concentration of people of color, higher per capita rates of poverty, and inequities in the educational system. Within this context, urban schools have had to contend with lack of resources, high drop out rates, and institutional racism (Butler, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 1998, 2005, 2010; Moore, Henfield, & Owens, 2007; Owens, 2007). Based on these contextual issues that confront urban school personnel, The National Center for Transforming School Counseling recommended that the school counseling profession shift its focus to meet the needs of students for whom schools have been the least successful, low-income students and students of color, and prepare school counselors to serve as effective advocates for this particular student population (Education Trust, 2007; Forbes, 2007; Martin, 2002; Martin, 2007).

Empirical evidence on school counselor activities that are reflective of these initiatives has emerged in the school counseling literature. For example, Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) examined the activities of 102 school counselors who resided in six urban cities on the east coast (e.g., New York City, Newark, NJ). The researchers found that along with conducting typical school counseling activities (e.g.,
counseling, consulting, coordinating), the study participants perceived low family functioning, academic achievement, and poverty as prevalent issues facing urban schools. The authors acknowledged the need for school counselors in urban settings to be able to work in schools with minimal educational opportunities, diminished access to resources, and unstable financial funding. They also recommended that future studies should be devoted to examining school counseling activities that specifically address the academic needs of low-income students and students of color. Similarly, a 2009 study (Owens, Pernice-Duca, & Thomas, 2009) of 60 school counselors employed in a large urban school district found that school counselors were overwhelmed with addressing issues such as high dropout rate prevention and encouraging low-achieving students to be successful.

One particular qualitative study (Holcomb-McCoy & Johnston, 2008) examined the experiences of nine White American school counseling practicum students in urban schools that were predominantly African American or Latino American. Researchers reported racial themes in that many of the participants noted their “Whiteness” and the discomfort that they felt because of their minority status in the schools. The study also found that the practicum students were often conflicted between what they were taught about school counseling and what school counselors actually do (activities) in urban schools with predominantly African American or Latino American student populations.

Constant change and transformation describes the evolution of the profession of school counseling. Murray (1995) asserted that the actual duties and tasks of the school counseling position have multiplied and changed to encompass the changing needs of school operation and school population. Although there has been limited discussion in
the school counseling literature pertaining to the roles and activities of school counseling in urban schools, specific recommendations regarding the responsibilities of school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools and the counseling needs of the students in these schools have been overlooked.

**Statement of Problem**

The current focus on urban schools that are predominantly African American is important given that in 2007, African-American students made up only 16 percent of the public school population (NCES, 2011), yet 48% of all Black public school students are enrolled in predominantly African American schools (NCES, 2011). Further, African American students are disproportionately concentrated in high-poverty, low-performing schools, vulnerable to poor educational opportunities that undermine their educational excellence. Downey and Pribesh (2004), using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) and the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), found that White educators had judgments of lower achievement and less favorable behavior towards Black students. For instance, Tettegah (1996) found that a sample of 126 White in-service teachers a majority (59%) believed that Black students are innately less intelligent than their White students. In addition to current research that indicates that African American children are disadvantaged by educator biases in the classroom (Au, 2006; Guerra, Attar, & Weissberg 1997; Hale, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Tucker, 1999), African American children are more likely to experience unwarranted punitive practices in schools (Moore, Henfield, & Owens, 2008; Noguera, 2003; NCES, 2003; Talbert-Johnson, 2004), and are disproportionately referred to and placed in the high-
incidence special education categories of mental retardation, emotional or behavioral disorders, and learning disabilities (Blanchett, 2006; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002).

The history of racism and discrimination towards African American students has been pervasive in urban schools (Wiggan, 2007). According to many prominent education scholars (e.g., Blanchett, 2005, 2006; Hale, 2001, 2004; Irvine, 1990, 2003; Kozol, 1992, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2007), a central problem in urban schools has been for educators to question the innate intellectual capacity of African American students. Further, several scholars argue that when educators believe that African American students cannot achieve, educators are less enthusiastic about their work and respond less supportively to this particular population (Ascher & Branch-Smith, 2005; Ferguson, 2003; Foster, 1994; Irvine & York, 2001).

The tendency for helping professionals to have a deficit perspective regarding the educational potential of African American students appears to be as real in the school counseling field as it is in the educational profession. For example, the school counseling profession in particular has consistently highlighted the under achievement and struggles of African American students. However, Butler (2003) argued that this continued negative perception of the academic abilities of African American students could compromise their academic development. The findings from Holcomb-McCoy and Johnston’s (2008) study that revealed that school counseling trainees viewed working in a predominantly African American school environment as a challenge (e.g., felt fearful, viewed students as hard to manage) may be a reflection of how the school counseling profession perceives the personhood of African American students. Furthermore, school counselors who are uncomfortable in urban environments due to their own assumptions,
fears, and stereotypes are incapable of effectively attending to the personal and emotional needs of African American children, which could hinder their academic achievement.

School counselors are ethically bound to develop comprehensive school counseling programs that advocate for and affirm all students from diverse backgrounds (ACA, 2005). The primary reason for having a comprehensive guidance program in place is to clearly articulate what school counselors “do” in that particular school or school district. Although the role of school counselors in urban schools has been studied/described, there is a dearth of information available on the activities of school counselors in urban schools that are predominantly African American. Furthermore, when school counseling practicum students were studied in an predominantly African American school environment, it was revealed that there was a discrepancy between what they had learned about school counseling and what they saw urban school counselors “actually do” in a predominantly African American school setting (Holcomb-McCoy & Johnston, 2008). Consequently, the purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent do counselors within predominantly African American urban schools implement activities prescribed by the ASCA National Model?

The findings from this study will fill a void in the literature because it will examine school counselor activities reflective of a comprehensive school counseling program in predominantly African American urban schools. The results will assist counselor educators in offering appropriate and realistic information to school counselors in training who will work in predominantly African American school settings. Practicing school counselors, as well as administrators, can also gain insight from the results of this study. This insight, in turn, may impact school leadership policy and practice.
Through the use of the ASCA National Model as a framework for school counseling programs, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

2. What activities recommended by the ASCA National Model received the greatest and least emphasis by counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

3. Are there differences in the frequency of reported activities as prescribed by the ASCA National Model among school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools according to demographic characteristics (level of employment, years employed as a school counselor at current school, and number of students enrolled at school)?

**Theoretical Perspective**

There is a growing movement by members of the counseling profession to acknowledge the issues of power, privilege, and oppression within our society. Specifically, a social justice perspective has become the prevailing counseling paradigm used to address inequitable social, political, and economic conditions that impede on the academic, career, and personal/social development of individuals, families and communities (Ratts, 2009). A social justice framework has been promoted as ideal for the urban school counselor. This framework requires school counselors to acknowledge the role oppression plays in student behavior and gives school counselors a channel to connect student problems with the oppressive environmental conditions that often surround urban schools (Bemak & Chung, 2005). Viewing students within the context of
their environment influences the services school counselors provide, whether direct
counseling or advocacy. The strong advocacy component is at the core of a social justice
framework in urban schools.

While the social justice framework acknowledges the need for the school
counselor to possess an in-depth awareness of oppression and its impact on student
development, it fails to directly respond to the situation and/or context of living in a
society that continually sees African Americans in general and African American
children in particular as unintelligent and uneducable. This form of dehumanization
cannot be “fixed” simply by addressing inequities in education because it fails to
recognize African American children as thriving, promising, and worthy learners.
Therefore, a contextual humanistic perspective will be used to understand the role of
school counseling in urban schools with predominantly African American student
populations. A contextualized humanistic perspective is a gathering notion under which
the core principles of humanistic theory (creativity, choice, freedom, and self-
determination) and the concrete realities of the African American experience can be used
to understand the psychological functioning of African Americans (Johnson, 2006).
More specifically, this perspective suggests that the condition of the African American
student or school environment must be understood in terms of the historical (and present)
realities of racism and racial oppression manifested most vividly in the enslavement of
Africans in the United States (Johnson).

In this fashion, urban schools that are predominantly African American are
revealed as valuable and worthy of study. Moreover, the urban African American
student’s environment as well as the African American student is examined from a
position of support, inspiration, and encouragement. The examination of a school’s comprehensive school counseling program that addresses academic, vocational, and personal/social issues from a historical context is an important action in assisting urban African American students in achieving academic success.

**Definition of Terms**

*African American*: Black or African American is defined as all citizens or residents of the United States who have origins in any of the Black populations of Africa. African Americans are generally direct descendents of captive Africans who survived the slavery era within the United States (Dodson, 2009).

*Predominantly African American schools*: Public schools within the United States with over 60 percent African American student population (Kozol, 2005; Tefera, Frankenber, Siegel-Hawley, & Chirichigno, 2011).

*School counseling*: A comprehensive set of services, tasks, and functions delivered by a professional school counselor practitioner in an elementary, middle/jr. high, or high school setting (ASCA, 2005).

*School counselor*: A professional counselor and educator who received specialized training in providing counseling services in all K-12 settings (ASCA, 2005).

*Urban schools*: Schools that largely reflect their neighborhood/residential environment and are typically in geographical areas characterized by a high concentration of people of color, higher per capita rates of poverty, and inequities in the educational system (Lee, 2005).
Overview of the Study

The review of existing research related to the problem under study is presented in Chapter II. Chapter III consists of the description of the research methodology including a description of the sample, data collection procedures, the survey instrument, data analysis procedures, and limitations. The data results generated by this study are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V is the discussion of the statistical findings and recommendation.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Comprehensive school counseling programs have been linked to positive academic outcomes of K-12 students (Bergin, Miller, Bergin, & Koch, 1990; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008). An appropriate school counseling program is important to the academic success of all students, and especially students in predominantly African American schools (Toldson, 2011). Davis (2007) asserts that school counselors must possess an awareness of the historically hostile and discriminatory environment experience by African American students in order to successfully service them. In this chapter, this literature review will focus on the history of the education of African American student, as well as how the school counseling profession has addressed the needs of the African American student. Further, the development of the school counseling profession will be reviewed with the past and present activities of school counselors.

Historical Review of the Educational Opportunities of African American Students

In order to fully speak to the current experiences of students in predominantly African American schools, it is critical to place the proposed topic in context. The focus of this section is to highlight the long-standing challenges faced by African American people in pursuit of knowledge. Additionally, the educational opportunities for African American students today would not be a reality without the relentless struggle of the
many African American people that came before them. The systematic and regular exclusion of African American students from quality schooling and public education process in the United States has been well documented, both historically and in more current studies (Anderson, 1988; Fultz, 1995; Tyack, 2004; Woodson, 1919).

In the early 1600s, Europeans began a multigenerational enslavement of Black people. Black Africans were torn from their land and culture, sold, and treated as chattel in the Americas. The psychological and physical enslavement of Black people lasted more than 400 years. Judicial decisions that prescribed the discipline of hard labor, breakup of the slave family, the physical power of whipping, burning, mutilation or murder, and the active prohibition of Blacks learning to read or write created a powerful system of control that benefited and supported White slaveowners. Of the most devastating judicial decisions was the restriction of Blacks from learning to read or write by penalty of death (Anderson, 1988; Litwack, 1999).

Although the American slave system was well established by 1700, Black codes that prohibited the education of Blacks were introduced. White people introduced these codes as a preventive tactic to the large military resistance to slavery by Black people. In 1740 the “Negro Act” of South Carolina, which made it illegal for slaves to move abroad, assemble in groups, raise food, earn money, and learn to read English, sparked a beginning of Slave education laws. Other states such as Georgia and Virginia quickly joined the prohibition (Woodson, 1919). Throughout the slave states it was declared unlawful for Negroes above the age of five to meet for educational purposes. This prohibitive legislation extended for more than a century for southern slave states (Woodson). In 1832 in the Virginia House of Delegates it was stated:
We have as far as possible closed every avenue by which light may enter their (the slaves) minds. If we could extinguish the capacity to see the light, our work would be completed; they would then be on a level with the beasts of the field and we should be safe! I am not certain that we would not do it, if we could find out the process, and that on the plea of necessity. (p. 32)

By 1835, the public education of all Blacks in the south was strictly prohibited (Woodson, 1919). Nevertheless, small groups of slaves secretly met, studied, and taught each other both before and after their emancipation from slavery. The inherent desire for information and knowledge was reflective of their African roots and identity (Rodney, 1972). Rodney described the education of Africans as an outstanding informal system designed to give young people confidence and pride as members of African societies. The desire for identity and purpose was strong for African people while enslaved. Anderson (1988) pointed out the slaves’ motivation for literacy and book learning with a description of a secret school of slaves:

Every window and door was carefully closed to prevent discovery. In that little school hundreds of slaves learned to read and write a legible hand. After toiling all day for their masters they crept stealthily into this back alley, each with a bundle of pitch-pine splinters for light. (p. 141)

As hostile responses from supporters of “Black codes” increased with attempts to stifle the slaves’ desire for literacy, slaves insistently pursued learning. A distinctive orientation that education was fundamentally linked to freedom and dignity was transmitted over time (Anderson, 1988).

Deeply driven by fear of continued slave revolts, the emancipation movement that began during and after the Revolutionary War caused Northern States to free their slaves by law. The educational prescriptions of the “Black codes” had temporally lapsed in enforcement. Education for the free Black before 1820 commonly became the result of
efforts of Black self-help groups, individual philanthropists, and religious or abolitionist organizations (Franklin, 1974). Unfortunately, in comparison to the growing Negro population at that time, only small numbers of children were able to take advantage of the limited school facilities. Free public schooling was not readily available to free Blacks in the north until 1820 (Gundaker, 2007). Funding the education for free Blacks varied from state to state. For example, in 1834 Connecticut passed a law making it illegal to provide a free education for Black students. Similarly, Ohio refused to require public school funds to be used for Blacks until 1849 and then only for segregated schools. In 1842, the New York City First African Free School and six others in the city began to receive public funding. Often, such as in the case of Boston, Massachusetts, free Blacks taxed themselves and established their own schools (DuBois, 1938; Morris, 2008).

In the 1850s, a turn of events revived the severe enforcement of the Black codes. Influenced by fear of more intense and more severe slave revolts in the south as well as economic competition between Irish immigrants and free Blacks in the north, the educational opportunities of Blacks were drastically slowed. In turn, the new states of the West adopted rigid separation of the races in public schools. African Free Schools in the North were burned and vagrancy laws were enacted (Erickson, 1997). Students could be given ten lashes of the whip for attending the schools. In the southern states, where education of slaves was prohibited, many state legislature required that all free Blacks leave the state so they would not be able to educate or incite the slave population (Woodson, 1919). It is important to consider that in 1857 the U.S. Supreme court ruled in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that Blacks have no rights that Whites are obliged to respect (Dodson, 2009). Both Black and White individuals were arrested, tried, and convicted for
teaching Negro children following enactments of legislation. Despite laws, legislations and prohibition, Black people continued to pursue education.

While White opposition saw education of the newly freedmen as a loss of their labor hands and a possible elevation of Blacks, free Blacks maintained their inherent desire for knowledge and many saw education as a safeguard against a return to slavery (Wilkerson, 2010). Anderson (1988) stated:

No dominant class could convince the freed people that its conception of education reflected a natural and proper social order. They had spent much time preparing themselves for the moment when they could act in ways more consonant with beliefs sacred to them that could not be expressed before emancipation. (p. 139)

Black parents, leaders, and politicians who by law had been denied education made every effort to secure education for their children (Wesley, 1957). In December 1865, Black leaders of Selma, Alabama published an appeal in the newspaper asking friends and even former masters to supply schools and teachers (Bullock, 1967). Due to the extreme poverty in the devastated south, Black leaders solicited help from Black and White northern philanthropic organizations, religious organizations, and the federal government in the years following the Civil War (Newby & Tyack, 1971). Consequently, Black people planted schools by the hundreds in the south, and their example provoked a counter program for poor uneducated White children (Bond, 1950). By 1876, in South Carolina, not only were 70,000 Black children going to school where none had gone before, but 50,000 White children were going to school where only 20,000 had attended in 1860 (Zinn, 1980). Black people’s commitment to and value of education and seeing that their children had the opportunity to receive it was evidenced in Caswell County, North Carolina. As early as 1886, 1,482 of the county’s 2,994 school age “colored”
children were enrolled in school, as compared to 871 of the 2,235 school age White children.

**DeJure Segregation**

Despite the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875 that explicitly outlawed segregation, in the 1896 seminal case of *Plessy vs Ferguson* the United State Supreme Court ruled that “equal but separate” accommodations were constitutional (Ficker, 1999). The case involved Homer Plessy, a mulatto, arrested for illegally entering a first class coach car for which he had purchased a ticket. Plessy was arrested and criminally charged after refusing to move to the non-White car. In court, Plessy argued that his arrest violated his civil rights under the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments.

Ficker (1999) asserted that due to the legality of separate schools in the 19th century, the educational system served as the foundation of segregation rulings. It was used as the legal argument used to justify “separate but equal” in the *Plessy vs Ferguson* case. The court’s decision that segregation based on race was legal validated all forms of discrimination based on race from 1896 to 1964 (Wilson & Gatewood, 1999). The legal practice of segregation provided Whites with a false sense of superiority and served as a basis for racist acts of Jim Crow laws, lynching, and burning of Black schools and communities. The decision to maintain legal segregation had an extreme impact on the education of Blacks in both the north and south.

With the turn of the century and the beginning of industrialization, the mission of Whites in the south was to “attach the Negro to the soil and prevent his exodus from the country to the city” (Anderson, 1988, p. 89). This was shown through unwritten plans and policies created by White Board of Education members, city officials, and residents to
discourage Blacks from establishing their own schools (Walker, 1996). For instance, Walker (1996) tells the story of the Black residents of Yanceyville, North Carolina’s 60 year long battle (1897 – 1967) with White school board officials and state capitol supervisors to maintain a quality education for their children. As evidenced by Walker (1996), Black schools in the south had affective qualities, institutional policies, and community support that helped Black children learn in spite of the neglect of their schools by White school boards. During the period of 1900 through 1920, every southern state increased tax appropriations for building schoolhouses, but virtually none was given to Black schools (Walker, 1996). Nearly all of the public schools in the south for Black children was paid for by Blacks through a double taxation. This methodology, which lasted well into the 1930s, was the process of Black people collecting and raising funds on their own for schools after paying a state tax for schools (money which they never would see) (Anderson, 1988, p. 16). The Black schools in the south were established, taught, and maintained by Black people. The schools served as a focus for individual and collective aspirations that reflected and solidified the community (Morris, 1999).

The legal practice of “de jure” segregated schools became common in both the north and the south for most of the 1900s. Typically, it was an unwritten statute that Blacks and Whites were segregated along residential lines, which supported the segregation of schools (Kelly & Lewis, 2000). In 1910 Baltimore was the first to separate the races by legal enactment. Similarly, a Virginia statute established “segregated districts” where it was unlawful for Blacks or Whites to reside outside of their zone. Despite the fact that the law required that such schools be substantially equal to schools provided for White children, it is well documented that such conditions were never
obtained (Anderson, 1988; Beale, 1934; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Newby & Tyack, 1971; Thompson, 1939; Wilkerson, 2010). Structural inequalities of African American schools during this time were deplorable. Segregated schools for African Americans often meant overcrowding, dilapidated physical conditions, and underpaid faculty (Thompson, 1939). Although African American teachers had on the average equal training as their White counterparts, they often received less than half the salary of the White teacher doing the same work. On average, a White teacher’s salary was 80% greater than that of a Black teacher during segregation (Morris, 1999).

The diligent work of the Black teachers and principals and their creation of strict learning environments during the first half of the century inconceivably produced excellence despite the societal and structural context (Wilkerson, 2010). Accounts of segregated schools by Thomas Sowell (1974, as cited by Walker, 1996) describes an atmosphere where “support, encouragement, and rigid standards” combined to enhance students’ self-worth and increase their aspirations to achieve. Sowell (1974, as cited by Walker, 1996) further described six “excellent” Black schools, including students’ recount of teachers and principals who “would not let them go wrong” (p. 3). They described teachers who were well trained, dedicated, demanding, and who took a “personal interest in them,” even if it meant devoting their own money or time outside the school day. The segregated school was most often compared with a “family” where teachers and principals practiced commitment and autonomy in shaping student learning and insuring student discipline (Walker, 1996). Irvine and Irvine (1983) described segregated Black schools as education institutions that addressed the deeper psychological and sociological needs of its students and community.
Desegregation

The 1954 Supreme Court decision to invalidate public school segregation had long been in the making through deep seated, social, political, and economic forces begun by African Americans in the early twentieth century (Kull, 1992). Schools were a part of the strategy to dismantle legalized segregation in society and education. Five legal cases of school segregation, collectively known as Brown v Board of Education stand as the legal campaign that overturned the doctrine of “separate but equal.” However, the Brown v Board of Education (Brown I) (1954) that declared “separate but equal” educational facilities were “inherently unequal” and segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, lacked a strategic plan of implementation (Orfield & Lee, 2005). Additionally, the massive resistance by Whites to the segregation as well as the consequences suffered by Blacks seeking quality schools has had a lasting negative impact on all students, particularly African American students (Hudson & Holmes, 1994).

One major response to desegregation by South Carolina governor James Byrnes expressed that if taken seriously, desegregation marked “the beginning of the end of civilization in the South” (as quoted in Kelley & Lewis, 2000, p. 82). Similar sentiments were expressed in the Gray Commission in Virginia, in November 1955, to determine possible options for defying the Brown decision. In Prince Edward County, Virginia public schools were shut down from 1959 to 1964 in opposition to the mandates of Brown v Board of Education (Kozol, 2005). Many southern states threatened to close schools before allowing their children to attend schools with Negroes (Haney, 1978). The 1956 signing of the “Southern Manifesto” by 90 Southern members of the House of
Representatives and by all except three senators denied that the Supreme Court had a right to rule on racial issues. The Southern Manifesto promised to offer “massive resistance” to the Brown decision (Badger, 1999). The resistance held strong for over a decade; in 1965, more than 75 percent of the school districts in the south remained segregated (Orfield, 1996).

Strong resistive tactics to desegregated schools were put in place by Whites to support the racist belief that only a White education system was sufficient for a White student. Haney (1978) described that during desegregation many state legislatures and school boards joined in a movement to give school boards the state right to dismiss Black educators “with or without a cause, and with or without a hearing or right to appeal” (p. 9). If not released of their jobs, many Blacks were demoted or given lower paying jobs. For example, Black teachers were reassigned as librarians in White schools. Black principals were often reassigned as an assistant to White principals or supervisors in central office where they were given “busy work.” Rosenthal (1957) reported that in North Carolina, 128 out of 131 White school superintendents thought it would be “impracticable to use Negro teachers” in schools under their jurisdiction (p. 68). Before the time of Brown vs Board of Education there were approximately 82,000 African American teachers in segregated schools within the country (Haney, 1978). Job loss for over 38,000 Black teachers and administrators was intentionally orchestrated within in the first decade following the Brown decision (Hudson & Holmes, 1994). In the following years, the number of African American students majoring in education declined by 66%. Additionally, over 21,515 African American teacher candidates were eliminated as a result of newly installed teacher certification and teacher education
program admission requirements designed to reduce African American teachers. Although the current disproportionately small African American teaching pool is attributed to varied factors, Morris (2008) suggested it is partly a fall-out of how the Brown v Board of Education decision was implemented by White American policy makers. The decision displaced thousands of African American teachers and administrators and created war on the front lines, with physical and verbal attacks from resistant Whites, for African American students attending desegregated schools.

As can be seen from this historical review, the educational opportunities of the African American student have been intrinsically different than that of any other student. Blanchett, Mumford, and Beachum (2005) describe these differences as the result of a deliberate and benign neglect of the constitutional rights of African American students. The residuals of this act continue to negatively impact the education of the African American student today. In the following sections, the focus is on the current educational opportunities of African American students.

**Urban Schools**

According to the U.S Census Bureau (2010), the term “urban” is used to reflect geographical concentrations. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) classifies an urban area as a densely settled area that contains 50,000 people and an urban cluster of at least 25,000 and less than 50,000 people. Haberman (2005) concludes that in education the term urban has become a category for describing undesirable conditions such as violence, poverty, drug use, crime, dysfunctional families, inadequate housing, and poor schools.

Urban school systems are more than academic institutions; they have also acquired the responsibilities of social and welfare institutions. The public schools have
become a microcosm of the economic, political, and social phenomenon of a larger system (Barnes, 1980; Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005). Government oversight, overt underfunding for districts and classrooms, superintendent turnover, principals as managers and leaders, and teacher shortages describe only a few of the challenges of urban schools.

Within the last two decades the United States has experienced radical demographic changes where citizens of European background have become the minority (Yeh & Arora, 2003). These changes are much more rapid and dramatic in the school age population. In the last two decades the total growth of African American students in this country is more than twice of that of Whites (Orfield & Lee, 2004). U.S. Census Bureau population projections suggest that by 2050 little more than two-fifths of school age youth will be White (U.S Census Bureau, 2010). “The end of the White majority will lead to a nation of schools without a majority of any one racial group” (Orfield & Lee, 2006 p. 8). To assess the increasing segregation of American public schools, Gary Orfield and others (Orfield & Yun, 1999; Frankenberg & Lee, 2002), through their work with The Civil Rights Project, examined and reported data from the Common Core of Data of the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education from 1968 – 2004. Although White students are attending schools with more students of color than before, it appears that the goal for state legislature and policymakers is to keep White students in predominantly White schools (Orfield & Lee, 2004). For example, Orfield and Lee found that in the 2003-2004 school year the average White student attends schools where more than 78% of the student body is also White. The average African
American student attends a school that is 30% White, and the average Latino student, 28%.

Since the Supreme Court 1991 Dowell decision, which allowed school districts to declare themselves unitary, end their desegregation plans, and return to neighborhood schools, the percentage of African American students attending majority non-White schools increased. In a 2006 study, Orfield and Lee found that the population of African American students attending non-White intensely segregated schools (schools comprised of 90-100% of minority population) increased from 66% in 1991 to 73% in 2004. In 2003 the west and the south had the lowest proportions of African Americans in intensely segregated schools (32% and 30%), while the Northeast and the Midwest had the highest (51% and 46%). The Midwest, and specifically the states of Illinois and Michigan, has consistently had the nation’s most segregated schools. The state of Michigan, in particular, has remained highly segregated without much change since 1970. Orfield and Lee found that cities such as Chicago and Detroit have the largest concentrations of students in extremely “apartheid” segregated schools 99-100% minority students.

A considerable body of research (e.g., Ayers & Ford, 1996; Blanchett, 2006; Kozol, 1992; Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008; Losen & Orfield, 2002) shows that extreme disparities exist both qualitatively and quantitatively between the educational environment of predominantly African American K-12 schools and those that are predominantly White. Predominantly African American schools in the nation are regularly allocated between $3,000 and $5,000 per pupil less than that of White, middle-class schools. For example, in 2009, Detroit Public Schools spent $7,580 per pupil whereas nearby Bloomfield Hills spent $12,443 per pupil. Detroit Public Schools have a
97% Black and Latino population, whereas Bloomfield Hills has 92% White population. Nationally, predominantly African American urban districts spend less per pupil than do non-urban districts. Funding disparities present a startling picture of a racially segregated reality. Unfortunately, funding disparities are only a small portion of the endless list of inequalities faced in predominantly African American schools.

**School Climate**

Fusick and Bordeau (2004) assert that school climate, as well as teacher and administrator expectations, directly impact student performance and perception of self worth. Teachers and administrators are agents for change in schools (Leland & Harste, 2005). Their perceptions and practices affect the hearts and minds of their students (McCray, Alston, & Beachum, 2006). In fact, classroom teachers are directly related to the quality and equitable delivery of education and student academic achievement (Ayers, 1998; Darling–Hammond, 1997a; Kozol, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Marzano, 2003). Uwah, McMahon, and Furlow (2008) found that school staff feeling encouraged to participate in their students’ lives was a significant, positive predictor of academic self-efficacy for African American students. However, the opposite has been reported to occur in predominantly African American schools (Bakari, 2003; Beachum, Dentith, McCroy, & Boyle, 2008; Irvine, 2000; Delpit, 1995; Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, & Jennings, 2010). It has been reported that African American students are generally less likely to perceive support in their school environment and more likely to experience unfairness from teachers (Toldson, 2011). Holcomb-McCoy (2007) asserts that teachers often rely on stereotypes and prior expectations, causing African American students to be at a
disadvantage. The cultural attitudes and expectations of teachers can have a woeful effect on their students (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005).

Researchers Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges and Jennings (2010) captured the sentiments of teachers and administrators towards African American male students. The researchers examined teachers’ and administrators’ perspectives on persistent academic failure of African American male high schools students in a predominantly African American high school. It was found that school personnel overwhelmingly blamed students, their families, and their communities for their lower achievement. The researchers characterized the school climate created by teachers and administrators in this urban schools as a culture of defeat and hopelessness. Ladson-Billings (2007) refers to this type of thinking as “a language of deficit.” She illustrates the language behind the beliefs of the teachers and administrators as (a) the parents just don’t care, (b) these children don’t have enough exposure/experiences, (c) these children aren’t ready for school, (d) their families don’t value education, and (e) they are coming from a culture of poverty.

Research has also illustrated that the economically strapped schools attended primarily by African American students have dilapidated and crumbling facilities (Kozol, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011); a lack of books and supplies, with limited access to technology (Diamond & Spillane, 2004; Lewis, James, Hancock & Hill-Jackson, 2008); few educational specialists (e.g., math and reading specialist) and resources (e.g., accelerated curriculum for all students); limited extracurricular opportunities (Villalba, Akos, Keeter, & Ames, 2007); a high turnover of teaching and instructional staff (Haberman, 2005; Luca, Takano, Hinshaw, & Raisch, 2009; Rice,
2003); and a high number of uncertified or provisionally licensed teachers (Kozol, 1992). On average, urban African American students attend larger, overcrowded schools, with lower graduation rates and higher dropout rates in comparison to their suburban and rural White counterparts (Kozol, 2005). In addition, issues of security, discipline, and punitive practices are intensified in predominantly African American schools (Talbert-Johnson, 2004).

School Counseling

Society’s powerful impact on the school counseling profession has significantly influenced the role and practices of school counselors. The profession’s tendency to react to society’s issues has created a long-lived experience of role ambiguity and confusion. Reaction to the Progressive Movement, the National Education Association’s Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE), the mental health movement, the Vocational Education Act of 1946, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act of 1984, and many more reactions are mirrored in the role development of the school counselor. The role of the school counselor has a complex history encompassing four distinct phases. These four phases (vocational guidance, mental health, personal adjustment, and developmental guidance) illustrates the profession’s reaction to societal trends, political movements, world events, and education reform.

With a focus on vocational counseling, the profession of school counseling began at the turn of the twentieth century in the nation’s urban centers. As the U.S. shifted from an agrarian society to an industrial economy, so did the social and work-related demands. In response to the difficulties of people living in urban slums and the widespread use of
child labor, the vocational guidance movement was led by social service agencies (i.e., YMCA, Civil Service House), philanthropists, schools, and contributors such as Frank Parsons (United States Bureau of Education, 1914).

Widely acclaimed as the founder of vocational guidance, law professor Frank Parsons viewed vocational choice as a form of individual and social efficiency (Savickas & Baker, 2005). In writing the first book on modern vocational guidance, Choosing a Vocation (1909), Parsons moved vocational guidance from an activity to a profession. The establishment of the profession brought about the formation of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA, which later became one of the founding divisions of the American Counseling Association) in 1913 in Grand Rapids, Michigan (Brewer, 1942). At its start, the role of the vocational guidance counselor was to guide urban youth and adults into the workforce to become productive members of society.

However, the role and function of vocational guidance quickly grew in scope and focus. With the end of World War I, passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (which established secondary school vocational training), the cognitive developmental movement, and the economic depression of the 1930s, an educational counseling focus began in U.S. society. John Dewey introduced the cognitive developmental movement and proposed that schools focus less on vocational guidance and more on cognitive, personal, social, and moral development (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). These social and legislative processes further solidified the profession’s formation and the role of vocational guidance in schools (Pope, 2000).

Particular to this time period was the influence of Carl Rogers, who likely had the greatest effect on the development of the counseling profession as a whole (Schmidt,
Rogers introduced the psychological humanism movement that influenced vocational guidance by conceptualizing clients as “people rather than problems” (Super, 1955, p. 4). Following Rogers’ work, the term guidance began to be replaced in the literature by the term counseling (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The identity of school counseling was strengthened and the formation of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) occurred in 1952.

Romano and Kachgal (2004) stated that the greatest growth of the school counseling profession occurred in reaction to the former Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik in 1958. United State government officials in desperation over the loss of a supposed U.S. superiority in technology enacted the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (Pope, 2000). The act provided $15 million a year to local school systems for the development of school counseling services with a major goal of improving K-12 student achievement in math, science, and English (Romano & Kachgal, 2004). Seven million was provided to universities (e.g., Harvard University; Teachers College, Columbia University; the University of Pennsylvania; Stanford University) for the development of school counselor training institutes (Miller, 1968). The Counseling and Guidance Training Institutes were established under the NDEA to provide training for counselors who were to implement the “identification and counseling of scientifically talented students” (Herr, 2001, p. 238). Similar to the legislation on vocational guidance that preceded it, the NDEA identified professional school counselors as sociopolitical instruments to achieve national goals (Erford, 2003). Over 14,000 individuals received training in the NDEA institutes with their counselor training focus to be on the college bound student (Romano & Kachgal). With the force of federal legislation behind the
preparation and employment of professional school counselors, more students in the U.S. were served in the 1960s and beyond than had ever before.

The 1960s brought an expansion in the population that school counselors served. During the 1960s, national legislation was developed to address the Civil Rights Movement, rising unemployment, poverty, and other social ills (Erford, 2003). For example, the Vocational Education Act Amendments of 1968 advocated for services to be provided to people considered as “disadvantaged.” The impact diverted the attention of school counselors to greater emphases on diversity in schools and the needs of ethnic/racial minority students for guidance and counseling.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of guidance and counseling as an integrated, planned, and systematic K-12 program emerged. Aligned with the accountability movement in education, counselors were being asked to set measurable goals and objectives for their students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). At that time Gysbers and Moore (1981) developed a model school-counseling program that eventually would become the template for the ASCA National Model. Refined and enhanced, the comprehensive developmental program approach has become the major way of organizing and managing guidance and counseling in schools.

Most recently, the profession’s reaction to the School to Work Act of 1994 essentially created the expectations for the current school counselor’s role (Von Villas, 1995). The School to Work Act signed into law by President Bill Clinton on May 4, 1994, provided one-time, five-year venture capital grants to enable states to design, implement, and sustain School to Work activities. These activities were to provide pathways for all young people to make productive transitions from education into high
wage careers. The School to Work Act of 1994 is linked to The Goals 2000: The Educate America Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1994), which fostered interest in the development of the National Standards for School Counseling Programs which was later renamed by ASCA to National Standards for Student Academic, Career and Personal/Social Development (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Use of the NSSCP assisted in definition of job responsibilities and clarity about the role and function of school counselors in the 21st century (Dahir, 2001; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Hatch & Bowers, 2002). The NSSCP also offered a shift from the profession’s “counselor” focus to a “counseling program” focus. Adopted by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), the NSSCP outlined a balanced approach that includes support for students in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Until the publication of the NSSCP (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), there was a lack of clearly defined roles for school counselors for which ASCA advocated (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). ASCA’s adoption of the NSSCP was an attempt to place emphasis on student achievement as primary in the school counselor role within a comprehensive school counseling program (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Although Hatch (2002) suggests that the NSSCP would increase the amount of direct service through more counseling activities, a study by Foster, Young, and Herman (2005) found that the National Standards are already addressed in effective counseling activities as perceived by school counselors.

**Comprehensive School Counseling Programs**

As discussed above, since the late 1960s the school counseling profession has maintained a focus on a comprehensive developmental program approach (Rye & Sparks,
The framework of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs originated from developmental theory and principles and includes contributions of Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, Havinghurst, and others (as cited in Paisley & Peace, 1995). Initial discussions in the literature focused on the needs that could be met through a comprehensive program (Hoyt, 1968; Isaksen, 1968). Specific aspects of a comprehensive model were suggested, including ideas for initiating a program (Greer & Richardson, 1992; Holcomb & Niffeneggar, 1992; Koepp, 1967; Thompson, 1968), developing and implementing a program (Carlson, 1991; McLaughlin, 1990), and planning and program management (Olson and Perrone, 1991; Rye & Sparks, 1990). Notable work in the development of comprehensive school counseling program models includes Dinkmeyer and Caldwell (1970), Myrick (1993), and Gysbers and Henderson (2000). After extensive review and synthesis of state, district, and site models, The American School Counseling Association, in 2001, collaborated with leaders in the field to develop a national school counseling program model.

The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2005) is the profession’s most recent resource created to ensure that school counselors can more appropriately meet the needs of contemporary students through a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. The model is a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management and accountability. The ASCA National Model provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students’ success. It provides a framework for the program components, the school counselor’s role in implementation and the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy and systemic change.” (p. 9)
A programmatic, collaborative, and preventative approach is actualized through the model’s four components: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability. The first component, foundation, clarifies what every student will know and be able to do. The development of a strong foundation requires the input of all stakeholders (i.e., parents, staff, and community) to create the “philosophy, mission and overall program focus” (ASCA, 2005, p. 27). The completed foundation aligns the school counseling program with the overall educational program for student success. The ASCA National Standards for student academic, career, and personal/social development are incorporated in the foundation component. Standards for the three domains provide school counselors guidance and direction to promote and enhance the student learning process.

The second component of the model, the delivery system, describes the activities, interactions, and areas in which counselors work to deliver the program. The delivery system includes the school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support. All activities of a school counseling program fit into an area of the delivery system.

The third component, the management system, is intertwined with the delivery system in the program development process. The delivery system describes how the program will be delivered, and the management system attends to “when, why, by whom and on what authority” (ASCA, 2005, p. 39). The management system addresses setting the calendar, collecting data, and clearly delineates responsibility for the implementation of the counseling program. The school counseling program must be effectively and efficiently managed through accountability.
Accountability, the final component, demonstrates how students are different as a result of the counseling program. The data collected in the management system are analyzed and used to report the effectiveness of the school counseling program.

The ASCA National Model was created to help school counselors develop programs consistent with the latest educational reform movements. Incorporated in the ASCA National Model were themes from The Education Trust Transforming School Counseling Initiative (ASCA, 2005). The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) was a response to education reform movement. To match the increased call for accountability in education and increased attention to access, equity, and success for all students, a five-year multistaged national initiative was funded by the DeWitt-Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund (Sears, 1999). The partnership between The Education Trust and the DeWitt-Wallace Reader’s Digest began a national initiative to transform the education, training, and focus of school counseling toward the New Vision School Counselor. The New Vision School Counselor (The Education Trust, 2011) is expected to engage in activities along five domains: Leadership, Advocacy, Teaming and Collaboration, Counseling and Coordination, and Assessment and Use of Data (The Education Trust, 2011; Sears, 1999). The themes of advocacy, leadership, and systemic change from the TSCI New Vision School Counselor have been infused within the ASCA National Model.

Roles and Activities of School Counselors

Within the past three decades the literature on school counseling has offered a variety of perspectives concerning appropriate roles and areas of focus for the school counselor (e.g., Anderson & Reiter, 1995; Bradley, Johnson, & Rawls, 2005; Coll &
Freeman, 1997; Clemens, 2007; Eschenauer & Chen-Hayes, 2005; Galassi, Griffin, & Akos, 2008; Johnson, 2000). Earlier studies focused on how parents and school personnel perceived the role of the school counselor.

For example, Bergstein and Grant (1961) presented evidence that parents tended to perceive the school counselor as being more helpful with educational and vocational problems than with personal-social-emotional problems. In their study approximately 200 pairs of parents of students in grades 6-12 were interviewed to obtain perceptions of the role of school counselors. The interview was built around an adaptation of the Gardner and Thompson Social Relations Scale.

Schertzer and Stone (1963) discussed earlier studies that highlighted the perceptions held by teachers and administrators of the school counselor’s role. Teachers and administrators viewed the school counselor’s function and role differently. Teachers often perceived school counselors as administrators with expendable services. Administrators expected counselors to function as clerks or quasi-administrators (Schertzer & Stone).

Researchers Riese and Stoner (1969) went a step further by surveying students training to be school counselors and teachers. In a study that included 125 school counseling students, results concluded that there was considerable difference between and among the groups in perception of school counselors’ roles and functions. This study showed that even in counselor education training programs at that time, well-defined functions and roles were missing. Authors Riese and Stoner further discussed how the lack of adequately defined roles has created friction and role ambiguity in the school counseling profession.
The pursuit of role establishment was reflected in the studies and discussions featured in the school counseling literature during the 1960s and 1970s. In fact, ASCA’s initial role statement was created in 1978. It declared the counselor’s major function was to promote structured development guidance experiences. Gysbers and Henderson (2000) asserted that the concept of “guidance for development” emerged during this time and the school counselor’s role shifted from a position to a comprehensive program. The school counselor’s role of putting comprehensive school counseling programs into place continued through the 1980s and 1990s.

Research over the last twenty years has primarily focused on the discrepancies between actual practice and preferred practice (Dahir, Burnham, & Stone, 2009; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). For instance, Hutchinson, Barrick, and Groves (1986) surveyed 40 secondary school counselors regarding their perception of ideal and actual job activities. Participants were asked to rank order activities they believed were ideal school counselor functions and those they actually perform. A total of 16 activities were ranked. The top five activities considered to be ideal functions were individual personal counseling, academic counseling, group counseling, career and life planning, and classroom activities. However, in actual practice, individual personal counseling, scheduling, academic counseling, testing, and parent conferences were the top five school counselor functions. Group counseling, career and life planning, and classroom guidance activities were functions for which school counselors found less time than they believed they should. Scheduling, testing, record keeping, and noncounseling activities required more school counselor time and attention than school counselors believed was warranted. Although the researchers surveyed counselors from inner-city, rural, and urban schools,
no information was shared about variance of school counselor activity among school types.

Tennyson et al. (1989) investigated aspects of the role and function of 155 secondary school counselors. The sample was made up of predominantly men (68%) and a majority of them (41%) between the ages of 41 and 50 years. A questionnaire of 58 listed functions was used to ask school counselors how often they performed identified functions and how important they believed each function to be for school counselors. The ASCA recommended functions were classified under the following categories: counseling, consulting, developmental and career guidance, evaluation and assessment, guidance program development, management and coordination, and administrative support services. A five point scale was used to rate frequency (never – 1, rarely – 2, occasionally – 3, fairly often – 4, frequently – 5) as well as importance (unimportant - 1, slightly important – 2, important – 3, very important – 4, crucially important – 5) of function categories. Results indicated that counseling was the only service for which the frequency mean was greater than 3.5, the midpoint between occasionally and fairly often. Developmental and career guidance was perceived to be the least frequently performed service. In respect to importance, counseling was perceived to be most important, followed by consulting, guidance program development and management, developmental and career curriculum, evaluation and assessment, and administrative support services. Each category showed a higher importance score than it was actually performed except for administrative support.

In 1993, Carter surveyed 200 elementary school counselors to determine the degree to which the ASCA role statements were indicative of the actual practice of
elementary school counselors. A three-part instrument was used consisting of a demographic section, a two-part Likert-type Survey of Counselor Function (SCF) scale and the Guidance Program Preference Scale (GPPS). The first SCF scale asked counselors to rate the degree to which they actually performed a particular function. The second scale asked counselors to rate the degree to which they believed they ideally should be performing that particular function. The GPPS, designed to discriminate between developmental and remedial approaches to school counseling, asked school counselors to choose between two possible reactions to a situation. The two possible responses were scored as either a developmental or remedial response. Results from the SCF subscales showed that participants believed they should spend more time in counseling and consultation activities, and were spending adequate time in coordination functions. Data results from the GPPS scale indicated that counselors were basically developmental in their work, though remediation emerged in the social area. Overall, Carter (1993) concluded that the ASCA statements are adequate descriptors of the roles of elementary school counselors, and school counselors were performing activities associated with a comprehensive developmental program.

Partin (1993) asked 210 elementary, middle, and high school counselors to estimate the percentage of their work time actually spent on nine activity areas. They were also asked to indicate their ideal percentage of time they would prefer to spend on each activity area. The nine activity areas included individual and group counseling, consultation, coordination, school counseling program activities (not counseling), professional development, testing, administration and clerical, and other non-program activities. School counselors indicated that they actually spent approximately 40% of
their time in either individual or group counseling. However, data revealed that school counselors preferred to spend significantly more time in these activities. Data also revealed that school counselors preferred to spend significantly less time in testing and student appraisal, and administrative and clerical activities.

A similar study by Mustaine, Pappalardo, and Wyrick (1996) examined the discrepancy between actual versus preferred number of hours per week spent in specified counselor activities. Participants included 44 women and 28 men school counselors who worked in both public and private schools. A survey of nine school counselor activities included: counseling and guidance planning and development, pupil testing, individual and group counseling, group guidance, educational and occupational planning, placement and follow-up, consultation, referral, and other. Data showed significant differences between actual and preferred time devoted to four of the nine activities. The most often performed tasks were individual and group counseling, educational and occupational planning, and other. Yet data revealed that school counselors preferred to spend more time in group curriculum, educational and occupational planning, and placement and follow-up. Additionally, school counselors preferred to spend significantly less time in other duties.

Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) surveyed 361 elementary, middle, and high school counselors from North Carolina and Virginia to investigate which factors influence the difference between the preferred and actual time spent in counseling activities. Of the respondents 87% were Caucasian while only 10% of the respondents were African American. The overall findings of the study revealed that perceptions of school climate, particularly the amount of support counselors feel, aided in predicting the
difference in actual and preferred practice of school counselors. The researcher failed to address demographics (e.g., urban, rural, suburban), which may have further explained participant responses.

In line with recent data-driven practice and accountability movement in schools, school counseling scholars have investigated the use of comprehensive school guidance models and emphasized the importance of school counselors addressing student achievement. For example, Fitch and Marshall (2004) investigated the differences between the school counselor’s role in high achieving schools and the school counselor’s role in low achieving schools. Subjects were from a convenience sample of 62 school counselors. The sample was 98% European American and 2% African American. Of the 11 roles identified; counselors in high achieving schools spent significantly more time than counselors in low achieving schools on three: program management, evaluation and research; adhering to professional standards (i.e., aligning programs); and coordination. Fitch and Marshall (2004) acknowledged these three areas specifically as a part of the management and delivery system of a comprehensive school-counseling program such as the ASCA National Model. Results indicated that counselors in low achieving schools rated advocacy oriented activities as more important than counselors at high achieving schools. Although school counselors in low-achieving schools rated advocacy as more important, they did not report that they spent significantly more time on these activities.

Foster, Young, and Hermann, (2005) conducted a study to gather empirical data about the role of school counselors and to determine if their work activities addressed the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (NSSCP), a component of the ASCA National Model. The National Board for Certified Counselors’ Job Analyses
Survey (JAS) was used. The JAS consisted of two scales, one measuring how frequently a respondent performed an activity and the other measuring how important a respondent rated the activity. The racial composition of the 526 surveyed participants was predominantly Caucasian (84.4%); African American (5.5%) was the second largest group. The findings indicated that school counselors’ roles and responsibilities are aligned with and promoted students’ academic, career, and personal social development as suggested by the ASCA National Model. A major drawback to this study was that school demographics (i.e., racial, socio-economic) were not identified.

A more recent study found similar results. Walsh, Barrett and DePaul (2007) examined the work activities of newly hired elementary school counselors to determine whether the four components of the Delivery System of the ASCA National Model (guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support) could be implemented. The researchers described the four schools where the study was investigated as “urban” and a part of the Boston Public Elementary Schools. The study participants were all Caucasian women. The data for the study were collected through weekly logs, written in narrative form, in which school counselors documented their service delivery activities. Data analysis included deductive methodology that derived a final set of nine categories, termed school counselor activity categories. Findings revealed that the activities of the school counselors in this study were consistent with the components of the Delivery System of the ASCA National Model.

In summary, the research literature reveals that over the past two decades school counselors activities have more commonly been investigated within a comprehensive school-counseling program such as the ASCA National Model. Missing from this line of
research, however, are studies investigating these activities in predominantly African American urban schools and a more complete explanation of school counselors’ demographic information.

**Urban School Counseling**

Over three decades ago, Keith Barnes (1980) in his work with the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, noted that much work had been done by school counselors and counselor educators to establish comprehensive school counseling program models. Barnes also acknowledged that a considerable amount of effort needs to be expended before operational systems for conducting effective comprehensive counseling programs are a reality in urban schools. Barnes further stated that the time is long overdue for attention and action to be given to guidance and counseling services in the urban schools of America. In an attempt to raise awareness of the state of urban school guidance and counseling, Barnes, analyzed 112 of the country’s largest urban school systems and produced a list of 25 barriers to the efficient functioning of urban guidance and counseling programs. Some of those barriers included (a) lack of funds to provide adequate supplies, resources, and personnel; (b) lack of organized guidance programs (poorly delineated roles and job functions); (c) poor or nonexistent evaluation procedures for measuring counselor performance; (d) poor teacher/counselor coordination; (e) administrative interference with counselors; (f) inappropriately high student/counselor ratios; (g) poor communication skills with urban school staff, families, and communities, and (h) poorly trained counselors with an inability to relate to and provide services to ethnically different students in the urban setting.
Several of the barriers identified in the study conducted by Barnes (1980) have been the focus of current scholars and counselor educators (e.g., Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Lee, 2005). Lee noted increasing workloads, lack of resources, bureaucratic interference or indifference, and high rates of administrative turnover as current structural challenges to urban school counseling. Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell’s 2005 study which included a sample of 102 participants, 87% reported their ethnic background as White/European American, 24% as African American, 1% as Asian, 5% as Hispanic and 3% as “other.” Seventy-six of the respondents were female. The researchers found that urban school counselors are overwhelmed by large caseloads and commitment to noncounseling duties. In fact, in a study that explored the perceptions and experiences of urban African American male students with their professional school counselors, participants reported that although their school counselors are helpful, limited numbers of counselors resulted in students’ needs being unidentified and unmet (Owens, Simmons, Bryant, & Henfield, 2010). Subjects, 10 African American males between 14 and 16 years of age, completed a 50-minute interview. Participants perceived their school counselors as engaged, yet desired more targeted academic support and increased direct services that addressed nonacademic problems.

Recently, more attention has been given to overcoming the challenges associated with urban school counseling (Bryan, 2005; Evans & Carter, 1997; Holcomb-McCoy, 1997). For instance, Green, Conley and Barnett (2005), in their discussion of urban school counselor models, emphasized the need for an ecological perspective in order to address the complex environments in which urban students live. They suggested that the needs of urban students must be addressed through a perspective that accounts for the
complex environment in which they live. Evans and Carter suggested an expanded role of school-based family counseling in urban settings to improve the linkages among families, schools and communities. This is similar to what Bryan referred to as the school counselor’s role in School-Family-Community partnerships in urban schools. School based family counselors assume a central role in facilitating the school-family-community partnership. The school based family counselor’s role is embedded within an ecological framework (Green, Conley & Barnett) with counseling, prevention, community outreach, and program development components that provide a vehicle for helping teachers and parents enable children to be more successful in the classroom (Evans & Carter, 1997; Bryan, 2005).

Perhaps the most frequent topic in the urban school counseling literature is the issue of preparation and training of school counselors who serve in urban school settings. Holcomb-McCoy (1996, 2004) stated that urban school counselors have special training needs and urban school counseling training programs must prepare counselors to be culturally competent. Counseling in urban schools requires a set of competencies that will enable counselors to effectively address the personal, interpersonal, and structural challenges that often stifle academic success for students in urban settings (Lee, 2005). Competencies suggested by Lee include (a) cultural competence, (b) skills for promoting empowerment, (c) systemic perspective, (d) advocacy, and (e) leadership.

Additionally, Holcomb-McCoy (1998) and Lee (2005) both noted that issues and problems relevant to urban educators are given insufficient and inaccurate coverage in school counselor preparation programs. In the qualitative study conducted by Holcomb-McCoy and Johnston (2008) with nine White American school counseling students who
completed their practicum experience in urban schools, it was found that practicum students were often conflicted between what they were taught and what school counselors actually do in urban schools. For many of the participants, the development of productive and comfortable relationships with both students and personnel was difficult (Holcomb-McCoy & Johnston) and cultural differences presented as an issue.

In order to promote change in counselor education programs that more effectively support students in urban settings, The Education Trust’s Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) (see prior section: ASCA National Model) solicited counselor education programs throughout the country to propose innovative counselor training grant proposals and to transform their recruitment, selection, and training procedures. The Education Trust specified eight elements in the training of school counselors: (a) criteria for selection and recruitment of candidates for counselor education programs; (b) curricular content, structure, and sequence of courses; (c) methods of instruction, field experiences, and practice; (d) process of induction into the profession; (e) working relationships with community partners; (f) professional development for counselor educators; (g) university/school district partnerships; and (h) university/state department partnerships (as cited in House & Sears, 2002).

The Education Trust’s advisory board further gave recommended activities for the New Vision School Counselor. The New Vision School Counselor is expected to engage in activities along five domains: leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, counseling and coordination, and assessment and use of data (The Education Trust, 2011; Sears, 1999). The themes of advocacy, leadership, and systemic change from the TSCI New Vision School Counselor have been infused within the ASCA National Model.
Perusse and Goodnough (2001) conducted a national study to assess how counselor education programs were addressing The Education Trust’s initiatives. A total of 332 counselor education programs were mailed questionnaires; 185 surveys were completed and returned. In this study, counselor educators rated leadership, assessment and use of data, and counseling and coordination as the highest areas that incorporated TSCI domains in their curriculum. With regard to the TSCI’s essential elements, Perusse and Goodnough found that the highest reported areas were the infusion of multicultural concepts and field supervision, recruitment of diverse students, and securing mentors for new school counselors receiving the lowest ratings. The researchers asserted that the school counseling profession needed to move more towards intervention aimed at systemic whole school change. However, a later study of 636 school counselors, Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, and Jones (2004) found that most school counselors did not accept the suggested TSCI systemic whole school change as central to the school counselor’s role.

**Multicultural School Counseling**

According to Lee (1995), the civil rights movement of the 1960s laid the foundation for tremendous sociopolitical changes within the United States. In the counseling profession, there was a shift from a time when racial minorities, especially African Americans, were deliberately excluded from professional activities, featured as objects of scientific racism (Jensen, 1969; Riessman, 1962), and conceptualized from a culturally deficient approach. For example, the 1972 formation of the Association of Non-White Concerns (ANWC) was not easily received as a division of the American Counseling Association. Vontress (1969, 1974) described problematic ethnic and racial
barriers in the counseling relationship, and Ballesteros (1970, as cited in Arredondo-Dowd & Gonsalves, 1980) asserted that it is the “Anglo-Point-of View-Problem” that hampers the racial, cultural, and language values of society. The recognized lack of interest and ability to appropriately address the needs of racially/ethnic minority groups has been a major challenge faced by the counseling profession. The school counseling profession in particular has also struggled with addressing diversity and multicultural counseling. For instance, Comas, Cecil and Cecil’s (1987) study using expert opinions to explore the preservice and inservice training of school counselors found that that multicultural competencies failed to appear as important training needs of school counselors.

In one of the first studies featuring school counselors and their need for multicultural training, Carey, Reinat, and Fontes (1990), surveyed 719 school counselors. Of this number, most were female (74%) and White (87%). In terms of work setting, roughly equal numbers of participants worked in urban (26%); suburban (38%) and rural (29%) school districts. Overall findings revealed there was a strong expression of need for multicultural training by school counselors; however, Hispanic and Black counselors indicated that they perceived greater needs in their districts than did White counselors. The study found that White counselors rated multicultural training objectives as only moderately deserving. These finding suggest that there seems to be a lack of awareness of need for multicultural competence in the field of school counseling by white counselors.

Similar findings are reflected in another study. Herring (1998) gave open-ended questionnaires to 85 master’s level students in a study designed to explore the multicultural counseling views of professional school counselor interns. The participants
included 71 European Americans, ten African Americans, one Asian American, and two Native Americans. Data analysis occurred through an inductive process using a concept formation approach. Findings support that preservice school counselors need to receive opportunities that integrate the multicultural awareness and knowledge they have learned in class with their counseling skills. Additionally, the findings from this study suggest that the multicultural knowledge and skill development of school counselor trainees need to be assessed regularly.

Furthermore, several works by Holcomb-McCoy (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005) have addressed the multicultural competence needs of professional school counselors. Holcomb-McCoy’s (2001) exploration of the self-perceived multicultural counseling of competence of 76 elementary school counselors in a northeastern metropolitan area found that, generally, elementary school counselors perceive themselves as multicultural competent. The study’s participants perceived themselves as multicultural competent despite their lack of knowledge about theories of racial/ethnic identity development. The instrument used in the study was a modified version of the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey (MCCTS) (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1991). Holcomb-McCoy (2005) further investigated this topic by expanding the participant group to include K-12 school counselors from all geographic regions of the U.S., and the results of this study also suggested that professional school counselors perceive themselves to be multiculturally competent. In both studies the majority of the participants were White/European females. These studies by Holcomb-McCoy stimulated the creation of the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey (2005) and Checklist (2004) for School Counselors. These tools have offered school counselor
educators and school counselors a tool to assess their perceived multicultural competence as well as raise awareness of essential competencies. In this type of tool, self assessment is the focus.

**Counseling African American Students**

When considering meeting the needs of African American students, the school counseling literature presents three different types of discourse. The discourse has included a “culturally deprived” orientation (see Bancroft, 1967; Caliguri, 1969; Clarke & Waters, 1972; Ivine, 1968; Lefkowitz, & Bakef, 1971; McGrew, 1971; Parker & McDavis, 1989; Vontress, 1967) to a more multicultural training discussion (Bolden, 1970; Hayes, Hill, & Young, 1975; Locke, 1988, 1989; Smith, Barnes, & Scales, 1974) to one that promotes the “empowerment” of the African American student (Bruce & Getch, 2010; Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008; Lee & Simmons, 1988; Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2010; Wyatt, 2009).

The “culturally deprived” orientation perpetuates the notion that the African American child needs to be “fixed” or is “problematic.” A review of the early counseling literature referred to the African American child as “disturbed,” “alienated,” “inadequate,” and “culturally deprived.” These terms are similar to such current descriptors as “at-risk,” “disruptive,” “difficult,” and “urban.” For example, in a 1966 opening letter in the *School Counselor Journal*, guest author Honorable P. Mink, a representative of Congress, expressed to the school counseling profession that the Negro “culturally deprived” child views established society as the enemy. Vontress (1967) discussed counseling the Negro adolescent as a challenge and further list several negative characteristics that he describes as only that of a Negro boy or girl. Caliguri (1969) found
it important to work with disadvantaged Black children in small groups to avoid “noise and verbal distraction common to these students” (p. 381).

More recently, in the “deprivation” discourse, Woodard (1995) suggested an approach for working with disruptive Black elementary school boys. Initiated out of an interest to “fix” their disruptive behavior, the author expressed it advantageous to introduce an African-centered value therapeutic approach coupled with trust theory and Gestalt therapy. One technique included students doing good deeds like that of a favorite athlete and recording them. Although African centered activities are important to develop a sense of self in African American students (Bass & Coleman, 1997), an activity such as emulating the good activities of a pro-athlete presents as superficial and further perpetuates stereotypical notions about African American boys. Woodard (1995) used pro athletes as a role model as if this is the only career to which African American boys can aspire.

Bass and Coleman (1997) introduced a similar approach through a pilot study called The African American Rites of Passage Movement. Six middle school students in a predominantly African American school completed a 20-week group intervention designed to improve academic performance and classroom behavior. The study was based on the premise that through the use of the seven Kwanzaa principles, students will gain a sense of self and positive self-esteem. The authors asserted that a positive self-esteem would facilitate higher levels of academic motivation. Results of the study indicated that participants improved their knowledge of African cultural symbols and thought and dramatically decreased problem behavior incidents. The findings further suggested the need for similar programs in schools with significant numbers of African
American students. The authors also suggested replication of the study with a larger sample size.

Bemak, Chung, and Siroskey-Sabdo (2005) suggested a group counseling model purported to be an effective intervention to prevent high school failure with at risk populations. African American students, specifically, African American girls were chosen as participants for the group intervention. Bemak et.al noted that through their example of their intervention with a “very difficult” population, other school counselors will be able to replicate their intervention. Although the authors described their group intervention as having an impact on attendance, study habits, and life aspirations, no data were given to support this position. Additionally, the writers in this article essentially displayed the “pathologized” lives of the group participants through participants’ statements and discussions. The authors presented their group intervention as a way to “save” the young African American girls from their “discouraged” lives.

Unfortunately, school counselors who practice from this type of deficit-based position, tend to focus on the child’s inadequacies, tardiness, alienation, inability to communicate and anti-achievement. Discussing the nature of the African American child as “disadvantaged” is limited, insufficient and can only offer students remedial type services.

The second discourse about the African American student in the school counseling literature reflects a cultural consultative position. This is shown in the work of scholars who have advocated for the inclusion of relevant experiences for students of color and further have attempted to educate White school counselors of ethnic differences in a non-pathologized manner (Bolden, 1970; Hayes, Hill, & Young, 1975; Locke, 1988,
Smith, Barnes and Scales stated, “effective counselors will learn to change or modify their behavior in order to enhance the personal growth of the Black child and to avoid creating conflicts and frustrations” (p. 246). Locke (1989) contended that this effort required more than a superficial understanding of the African American culture and that school counselors should learn as much as possible about the African American cultural experience. Locke (1989) offered ten attitude or behavior guidelines to school counselors that assist their multiculturalism in general and positive images towards African American students in particular. These attitude guidelines encouraged school counselors to practice such things as being honest in relationships with African Americans, eliminating behaviors that suggest prejudice or racism, holding high expectations for African American children, and learning as much as possible about the African American culture.

Findings from a study by Colbert (1991) aligned with Locke’s (1989) suggestions. Colbert interviewed 23 African American parents (three couples, two men, and 16 women) of elementary aged students. Subjects were asked open-ended questions that fell within the topics of satisfaction with past and present school experiences; communication of responsibility for their child’s education; and school involvement and child-rearing practices. Results revealed high reports of parental concerns regarding teacher and principal perceptions as well as tension in interactions with school personnel. Parents reported that they often left school meetings with feelings and questions unexpressed, perceiving that interpersonal dynamics between school personnel and themselves resulted in lack of connection. Colbert concluded that school counselors could help modify home-school interactions with African American parents. The researcher further suggested for
counselors to look beyond “surface-level activities such as open houses” in order to identify factors that may prevent an effective education for African American children. Bradley, Johnson, Rawls, and Dodson-Sims (2005) suggested that school counselors can better collaborate with African American families by offering flexible meeting times, establishing community relationships, and advocating on behalf of African American parents and students. Several scholars have presented school-family-community partnership models to promote the school and family success of African American children and adolescents (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Epstein, 1991,1995; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010).

Several scholars have intended to educate school counselors who work with African American students through the description of potential stressors, ecological factors, and contemporary issues they may face. Researchers Mosley and Lex (1990) investigated the incidence of potentially stressful life events among members of an urban population of African American youth of low socioeconomic status. The authors stated that because so little information specific to urban African American youth experiences existed, data were collected specific to this population. Participants ($N=433$) completed a survey constructed to gather information about incidence of stressful life events. In general, the respondents described school-related events as stressors more frequently than home or other related experiences. The students described experiences of feeling as though they were picked on by school personnel and having problems getting along with teachers as part of their day to day stressors. Mosley and Lex concluded that much more research is needed in this area that investigates school related stressors for this African American students.
Day-Vines, Patton, and Baytops (2003) contended that stressors such as race, culture, and middle class status could have an impact on the school performance of African American students. The authors explain unique issues such as code switching. The practice in which students alter their behavioral patterns to conform to the current environment can create a certain amount of psychological distress in African American students. For example, a student may speak or behave in a Black English Venacular when interacting with African American peers, yet modify speech and behavioral patterns to align with norms and expectations valued in more integrated settings. Day-Vines et al. recommended that counselors recognize particular cultural markers such as code switching and normalize students’ need to navigate multiple norms and values. Counselors are further encouraged to avoid looking at African American students as monolithic entities.

Like Day-Vines et al. (2003), Fusick and Bordeau (2004) stated that school counselors should first and foremost not assume a monolithic perspective that all African American students are the same nor should counseling strategies for African American students be uniformly applied. In an examination of potential stressors as well as contemporary issues faced by African American students considered to be at-risk, Fusick and Bordeau suggested that school counselors consider the institutional racism and stereotyping that often occurs in schools. Intervention strategies that assist ethnic identity development, career development, and academic development, while acknowledging the impact of institutional racism and stereotyping, has the potential to work successfully with African American students (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010).
The third discourse in the school counseling literature reflects activities of counseling, curriculum, consultation, and collaboration that promote helping the African American student feel empowered. In 1988, Lee and Simmons presented a comprehensive life-planning counseling model that assisted African American adolescents in setting career, educational, and marriage and family goals. The model was designed for implementation in a three to four year high school experience. The authors acknowledged the challenges of racism, poverty, and oppression that can hinder the life progress of African Americans while focusing on the school counselor’s activities of counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum.

As scholars have discussed helping African American students feel empowered, the challenges of racism, poverty, and oppression are commonly discussed. Holcomb-McCoy and Moore-Thomas (2001) discussed the particular challenges of female African American students that include racism, classism, and sexism. The authors believed that one way school counselors can play a pivotal role in empowering female African American students’ sense of self is by helping them manage the impact of others’ negative perceptions.

Scholars Day-Vines and Terriquez (2008) as well as Wyatt (2009) recommended similar empowerment techniques for male African American students. Wyatt explained the conduct, achievement, and relationship improvement of 82 male African American students following a Brotherhood Empowerment Program. Data were collected through final student grade point average and questionnaires. Findings from the study suggested that there is a need to provide continuous academic, personal/social, and career
development support for African American males with special consideration to racism, socioeconomic background, and oppression.

Schellenberg and Grothaus (2010) demonstrated the integration of core academic and school counseling standards as a culturally responsive strategy to address the academic needs of six African American males. The small group of six were students in a predominantly African American public elementary school. The group met weekly for four 30-minute sessions. Results indicated that the group was effective in meeting both school counseling curriculum objectives and the core academic curriculum objectives. Knowledge gains were made in both the school counseling and academic curriculum content areas. The study also revealed that students experienced increased self-esteem.

In Bruce and Getch’s (2010) study of 11th grade African American students, a similar small group approach was used. Participants, 15 students who were first time test takers on the Georgia High School Graduation Test, participated in 10 weekly group counseling sessions that addressed social, emotional, and academic concerns as well as four monthly booster sessions to improve their test performance on high-stakes testing. Results indicated that the intervention to improve test performance of African American students was successful. Twelve of the 15 students (80%) who participated in the intervention received passing scores on all four of the Georgia High School Graduation Test.

**Summary**

The literature review revealed that the racist and divisive plans to discourage the education for African American children is deeply woven into the tapestries of the
educational system of the U.S. An inherent belief by Whites that Black people were uneducable was shown in the political and educational practices throughout this country. Additionally, this literature review revealed that disparities still remain in the resources that are afforded to students to in predominantly African American schools. Unlike teachers and administrators of defacto segregated schools, several studies confirmed that the attitudes and practices of current teachers and administrators often reflects a deficit view which can impede and discourage the development of students in predominantly African American schools. Defacto segregated schools are remembered as having atmospheres of support, encouragement, and rigid standards in contrast to that of the strict, reactionary discipline, and punitive practices in today’s predominantly African American urban schools.

Economic, social, and political changes that have risen over the past century have shaped the history and development of school counseling and the school counselor’s role. The federal government, administrators, teachers, and even counselors have offered varying ideas on the appropriate roles for school counselors. The recent emphasis on examination of the school counselor’s role and activities have contributed to a more succinct role definition. Additionally, the ASCA National Model has offered a guideline to school counselors in the development of school counseling programs. Studies have shown that in their current role, counselors have the ability to implement the ASCA standards with positive results for students and schools. However, there is a void of information regarding the specific activities of counselors in predominantly African American urban schools.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher detailed the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. As mentioned in Chapter I, the overall purpose of the study was to explore to what extent do counselors within predominantly African American urban schools implement activities prescribed by the ASCA National Model. This chapter includes the research questions, population and sample, instrumentation, and data collection procedures to be used in this study.

Research Design

In order to gather descriptive data of the status of counseling activities for school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools, a cross-sectional survey design was used. This design is characterized by data collection on a population collected at a single point in time (or within a short time frame). In this type of research study, either the entire population or subset thereof is selected (Biemer & Lyberg, 2003). Cross-sectional survey design is useful in research when the goal is to describe and better understand relationships among variables. This methodology also allows one to examine differences in subjects (such as age, education, and ethnicity) and how those differences at the time of data collection may impact the dependent variables (Bowden, 2011).
Instrumentation

Currently, there are no known studies that explore activities of school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools. The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) was chosen because it measures school counselors’ activities currently advocated as best practices based on the ASCA National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003).

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale

The SCARS (Scarborough, 2005) (Appendix A) is designed to measure both the frequency with which a school counselor actually performs a work activity and the frequency with which the school counselor would prefer to perform a work activity. Users rate the frequency of 48 work activities using a 5-point verbal frequency scale (5 = always, 4 = frequently, 3 = occasionally, 2 = rarely, 1 = never). Similar to a Likert scale, a verbal frequency scale is used to measure “how often” an action is taken (Alreck & Settle, 1985). A higher score indicates a higher frequency of a particular activity.

The SCARS (Scarborough, 2005) was developed in two phases. In phase one of the first study, a list of work activities was developed using school counselor literature, ASCA publications including the National Model (ASCA, 2003), and The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). This phase of the study included the construction of the instrument design and measurement of frequency activities. Phase two of the first study the instrument was pretested, reviewed, and revised based on feedback from two trial participant interviews and five expert reviewers.
Study two (Scarborough, 2005) included 361 elementary, middle, and high school counselors as participants and was an examination of the reliability and validity of the SCARS. The majority of the participants were Caucasions (87.4%) and female (89.7%). A principle components factor analysis with an orthogonal transformation using the varimax rotation was done to identify factors and assess construct validity of the SCARS. While it was acknowledged that there may be an overlap of skills in subscale interventions (e.g., counseling and consultation), each intervention was considered to be separate and distinct. Because four intervention categories (subscales) are recognized within the school counseling profession (counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum), Scarborough analyzed these 40 items seperately from the “other” activities. The four factor solution found for the 40 items representing counseling, coordination, consultation, and curriculum categories all met Kaiser’s criterion with eigenvalues greater than 1. Convergent construct validity was established through examination of group differences among grade levels of employment on the SCARS subscale (actual scale). Grade level group differences were expected and found on all subscales. SCARS subscales (actual scale) and a demographic variable with no expected association was used to establish discriminate construct validity. Results indicated two modest correlations between years of experience and the coordination scale.

The SCARS (Scarborough, 2005) is a self-report measure designed to assess the differences between actual and preferred activities of school counselors and to give counselors a method to collect process data on their activities for the purpose of individual or program accountability (Scarborough). Preferred activities refers to school counseling activities recommended by ASCA’s (2003) National Model, including
curriculum, coordination, consultation, counseling, and other interventions. The curriculum subscale consists of 8 items designed to reflect the school counselor’s involvement in conducting classroom lessons reflecting competencies addressed in *The National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). These include lessons in career development, personal and social characteristics, social skills, conflict resolution, and personal safety. This subscale includes items such as: *I conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues.* The coordination subscale consists of 13 items that are designed to reflect activities to develop, implement, and evaluate the counseling program, or to organize and manage services to students. This subscale includes items such as: *I inform teachers/administrators about the role, training, program and interventions of school counselor within the context of my school.*

The counseling subscale has 9 items designed to reflect individual and group counseling related to personal and family concerns, school behavior, crisis, relationships, substance abuse, as well as student follow-ups. This subscale includes such items as: *I conduct small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills.*

The consultation subscale has 7 items that reflect when school counselors spend time working individually or with groups of teachers and parents, or other mental health and school personnel, for the purpose of identifying and meeting the needs of students. This subscale includes items such as: *I coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals.*

The final subscale, “other” school counseling activities has 10 items that encompass clerical, fair-share, and administrative activities. This subscale includes items such as: *I handle discipline of students.*
Various studies have been conducted since the initial validation of the SCARS and used the tool to collect the actual and/or preferred activities of school counselors (Berry, 2006; Clark, 2006; Gloster, 2009; Nelson, Robles-Pina, & Nichter, 2008; Scarborough, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Woods, 2009). This researcher recognizes that the SCARS asks respondents for both actual and preferred time of various counseling activities. For the purposes of this study, respondents were asked to only complete actual time data.

Demographics

A 13-item demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), developed by the researcher, was used to indicate the characteristics of the participants. A second purpose for the questionnaire was to explore the relationship between specific demographic variables and the amount of time participants spend in school counseling activities. Alreck and Settle (1995) explained that demographics can be used to identify groups of people that behave in similar ways and that demographic groups often differ significantly on issues of importance. The American Psychological Association (2001) recommended demographic items such as age, sex, and race/ethnicity be used to portray the nature of the sample. Therefore, Questions 1 through 4 asked participants to identify their age, sex, race/ethnicity and annual income in accordance with recommendations. Additional demographic items (Questions 5 through 8) were based on previous research and practice and were selected because of their potential relationship to how school counselors spend their time (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Foster, Young, & Herman, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2009; Walsh, Barrett, & DePaul, 2007). Questions 5 through 8 asked participants about their current school counseling employment with respect to school
level of employment, number of students in the school, student case-load, and length of
time at present school. The remaining items were used to portray the nature of the sample
with respect to professional training, professional activity, and employment demographic
variables. The researcher deemed these questions to be pertinent since ASCA, CACREP,
The Education Trust, and counseling scholars (e.g., Alderman & Taylor, 2002; Baker,
2001; Bemak, 2000; Green & Keys, 2001; Gysbers, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Lee,
2005) have challenged the counseling profession to develop and practice new ways for
school counselors to function in today’s diverse educational environment. Thus,
professional training as well as professional activity directly influences the school
counselors’ activities. Questions 9 through 11 asked participants about their professional
training program with respect to degree, type of program, and accreditation. Question 12
asked participants to identify their certifications/licensures. Question 13 asked
participants about their professional membership.

Population and Sample

Population

The population of the proposed study consisted of individuals who were employed at the time of the study in the position of elementary, middle/junior, or high school counselor in a school that is predominantly African American (at least 60% of student body is African American) in the major urban centers (Ann Arbor, Benton Harbor, Detroit and the metropolitan area, Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Kalamazoo, Saginaw, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Buena Vista, Holland, Ypsilanti, and Willow Run) in the state of Michigan. The aforementioned cities were identified as urban cities
as due to their challenges of unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and higher populations of people of color.

Sample

The proposed study sought to gather data from individuals working in the role of school counselor at each of the predominantly African American urban schools in the state of Michigan. School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling. The school counselor has received specialized training in counseling and development with emphasis in applying principles to the school organization. The school counselor utilizes a variety of interventions including counseling, consultation, and coordination to implement an integrated school counseling program. Since the entire population of the school counselors working in predominantly African American urban schools was invited to participate in the study, a sampling plan was not necessary. In consideration to the current school budget crisis in the State of Michigan that often reflects the lay-off of school counselors, this researcher sought to obtain data from a declining population. Therefore, the sample included each individual within the population who responded with a completed and usable survey.

Data Collection Procedures

Locate the Sample

Michigan Department of Education Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) provides a current, online listing of all public elementary, middle and high schools within the state (http://www.michigan.gov/cepi). This document is titled
2010-2011 Building Level Pupil School Headcount Data. CEPI created this file using data collected from the Fall 2010 Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) Submission. Data comes from the MSDS GoodStudentRecords database and includes records from the Supplemental Nutrition Eligibility (SNE) Collection and Student Record Maintenance (SRM) data. The SRM data includes records that have an “as of date” of 9/29/2010 through 10/29/2010 and a “certification date” earlier than December 6, 2010.

**Develop a Contact List**

Using the Michigan Department of Education 2010-2011 Building Level Pupil Headcount Data, this researcher created a list of the names of schools with at least 60% African American enrollment. There were 3,563 school buildings in this data set. At the building level, there were 492 buildings with a student population of at least 60% African American in urban settings. From the compiled list, this researcher reviewed school building websites to find if there was a school counselor and the school counselor’s contact information. If the school counselor’s information was not listed on the website, this researcher obtained information by a phone call to the school’s front office asking if there is a school counselor and the school counselor’s contact information. Name, title, school, address, phone number, and e-mail address were recorded for each school counselor (Appendix C).

**Participant Contact**

The tailored design method presented by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) was implemented to collect data. Dillman et al. (2009) suggested that researchers
implement a system of multiple contacts that varied in method (e.g., mail, postcard, e-mail) and content. Important to consider is the timing of each contact.

**Mail pre-notice letter.** The systematic process began by mailing a pre-notice letter (Appendix D) to each school counselor during the third month of the school year. The letter was brief and personalized. It introduced the researcher, informed the recipient that he or she will receive a mailed invitation to complete a questionnaire within one week, described the purpose of the study, and asked for his or her participation. This letter was sent by first class mail.

**Mail survey.** One week after mailing the pre-notice letter, this researcher sent a second letter that reiterated the ideas expressed in the initial contact letter (Appendix E). The letter explained the purpose of the study, informed participants that participation in this research study is voluntary, provided participants with the researcher’s contact information, survey procedures, and the paper survey/demographic questionnaire. A stamped envelope was included with this letter.

**Thank contact person.** A third and final contact was sent one week following the mailing of the survey. The postcard encouraged those who had not yet completed the survey to do so, expressed gratitude to those that completed the survey, reiterated the importance of their participation, and provided information by which the another survey may be obtained (Appendix F). The participants were notified that this was the third and final contact.

**Data Analysis**

The proposed study included several statistical analysis procedures to address the following research questions.
Research Question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

Research Question 2

What activities recommended by the ASCA National Model received the greatest and least emphasis by counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

Responses to the questions 1 and 2 were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of data (Howell, 2002) including the frequency and central tendency of responses. For each survey item, the number and percentage of counselors performing each activity at each degree of frequency was calculated. These results are used to describe the sample.

Research Question 3

Are there differences in the frequency of reported activities as prescribed by the ASCA National Model among school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools according to demographic characteristics (level of employment, years employed as a school counselor at current school, and number of students enrolled at school)?

Several analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to permit the researcher to compare the effects of demographic variables on participants scores on the SCARS. The test was used to explore whether any significant differences in the mean response in regard to the frequency of counseling activities on the basis of demographic variables (a) level of employment, (b) years employed as a counselor at current school, and (c) number of students enrolled at school.
Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include the self-report nature of the instrument and its survey design. Due to the volunteer nature of the study, there was the possibility of selection bias. The characteristics of the subjects who responded and those who did not respond were possibly different, causing biased results. Generalizability is limited to the characteristics of those who chose to participate. The sample was comprised of only Michigan school counselors, and therefore, may not generalize to school counselors in other states. Similarly, the participants in this study were not representative of all ACA nor ASCA geographic regions and work settings. The percentage of African Americans in this study do not reflect the demographics of ACA or ASCA membership. Therefore, this may limit generalizability.

A second limitation of this study was performance desirability. There is the possibility that participants may have believed it more “correct” to perform ASCA recommended activities in attempt to appear to be more competent. If this was the case, participants’ ratings reflected their desire to be competent rather than their true frequency of school counselor activities.

A final limitation of this study was the low response rate due to the timing and method of survey dissemination. The survey was disseminated during the last week of November as counselors were between holiday breaks.

Summary

This chapter included the methods used in this quantitative, descriptive study of the activities of urban predominantly African American counselors in Michigan. After
participant identification, a survey was disseminated to 255 counselors in predominantly African American urban schools. The survey consisted of 48 items representing counseling, coordination, consultation, curriculum, and “other” activities. A demographic survey was distributed as well. Participants indicated the frequency with which they performed the listed activities. The survey was completed by paper and returned to the researcher. To analyze the data collected, the researcher reviewed the number and percentage of respondents in each category indicating the frequency with which they performed activities. Additionally, an ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the performance of the activities related to demographic variables. This chapter closed with a discussion of limitations of the study. Presented in Chapter IV are the results obtained from these methods.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the activities of school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools and how they spend their time on school counseling activities. Employment, professional, and demographic variables were examined for significant differences of what types of activities are performed as well as compare how often school counselor activities are performed.

Participants were asked to complete The School Counselor Activity Scale (SCARS) (Appendix A) and demographic questions (Appendix B). Analyses of the demographic variables, instrument data, as well as statistical analyses utilized to answer the three research questions are presented in this chapter.

Research Question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

The participants of this study were those in a school counselor role in urban predominantly African American elementary, middle, and high schools in the state of Michigan. Of the 255 surveys that were mailed, 105 surveys were returned within the researcher’s specified data collection window of four weeks. Three were unusable because they were partially completed, this yielded a 40% return rate.
Survey participants provided information relative to demographic variables to portray the personal characteristics of the respondent sample (see Table 1). In regards to personal characteristics, a majority of the counselors were female (87%) and African American (61%). Statistics relative to the work setting of the participants is listed in Table 2. Most of the respondents (50%) had been at their current school fewer than six years. Most of the respondents (53%) worked in high school settings. Respondents were asked to report the actual number of students on their caseload and mean caseload numbers were computed by grade level. With regard to grade level, high school counselors maintain the lowest caseload ($M = 314.15, SD = 137.80$), followed by elementary school ($M = 373.50, SD = 248.62$), middle/junior school ($M = 423.31, SD = 197.09$), and other/combination ($M = 436.15, SD = 283.85$). Of the respondents, 48% have a caseload of over 300 students.

Demographic information related to school counseling training, professional membership, and certifications/licensure is presented in Table 3. Most participants (99%) hold at least a master’s degree in counseling, and 85% of these were specifically in school counseling. Of the participants who completed the survey, 69% indicated that they graduated from a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

Certifications and licensure are reported in Table 3. Only 11% of the respondents held certification as a National Certified Counselor, and 50% percent of the respondents to the survey indicated being licensed professional counselors granted by the State of Michigan. Participants indicated relatively low membership in national and state professional counseling organizations. Fewer than 35% of the participants reported
membership in the American Counseling Associations, the American School Counseling Association or in their state branch organizations.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Participant Personal Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 years and over</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001 – $40,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001 – $50,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 – $60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$60,001 – $70,000</td>
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<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,001 – $80,000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,001 – $90,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,001 – 100,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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Table 2

*Frequencies and Percentages of Participant Work Setting*

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School level of employment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Combination/Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Years as a school counselor at current school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58.8</td>
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<td>6-10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and above</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of students in school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-200</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-400</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-600</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601-800</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801-1000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001 and above</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School counselor caseload</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-200</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-400</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-600</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601-800</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>801-1000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
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Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages of Counselor Training, Degree Type, and Program Accreditation*

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School counseling</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Counseling/Mental Health</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master’s Program CACREP Accredited</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Certified Counselor</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Certified School Counselor</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Licensed Professional Counselor (includes limited license)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other State Credential (e.g. teaching)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68.6</td>
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Table 3—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member of ACA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member of ASCA</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member of State Branches of ACA and/or ASCA</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member of National Education Association</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. CACREP = Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. ACA = American Counseling Association. ASCA = American School Counseling Association.*

**Research Question 2**

What activities recommended by the ASCA National Model received the greatest and least emphasis by counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

Detailed responses to survey questions that addressed the extent to which school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools implemented activities prescribed by the ASCA National Model are outlined in Appendix G. Previous studies using the School Counseling Rating Scale reported the number and percentage of counselors performing each activity at each degree of frequency (i.e., 50% of the respondents) at varied thresholds (Berry, 2006; Gloster, 2009). Of the 48 activities listed in the School Counseling Activity Rating Scale (SCARS), eight activities were performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 50% of respondents. Table 4 highlights the
eight activities performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 50% of respondents (sum of columns “always” and “frequently”).

Of the eight activities there were five activities in the subgroup of counseling that 50% or more of respondents reported performing on an always or frequent basis. Counseling students regarding school behavior, and consulting with staff regarding school behavior were performed frequently by more than 70% of respondents. Other commonly performed activities included counseling students regarding academic issues, personal/family concerns, and relationships.

There were five recommended activities that 50% or more of respondents reported never performing (see Table 5). Conducting classroom lessons regarding substance abuse issues was the least performed activity, with 60.8% of respondents indicating they never performed this activity. Counseling students in small groups regarding substance abuse issues was the second least performed activity.

Of the ten activities within the counseling category, five were performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 50% of respondents, and six activities were performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 30% of respondents. The consultation category consisted of seven activities; all seven of the activities were performed on an always and frequent basis by more than 30% of the respondents. Seven of 13 of the coordination activities were performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 30% of respondents. The curriculum activities were least performed, with only one of the eight activities performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 30% of respondents. Activities in the “other” category were performed on an always or frequent basis by more than 30% of respondents for nine of the 10 activities.
Table 4

*Percentage of SCARS Activities Performed on a Always and Frequent Basis by Fifty Percent or More of Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding school behavior</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with school staff concerning student behavior</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding personal/family concerns</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule students for classes</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding academic issues</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding relationships</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate on committees within the school</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale*
Table 5

Percentage of SCARS Activities Never Performed by Fifty Percent or More of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group counseling for students regarding substance</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abuse issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.

Research Question 3

Are there differences in the frequency of reported activities as prescribed by the ASCA National Model among school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools according to demographic characteristics (level of employment, years employed as a school counselor at current school, and number of students enrolled at school)?

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted among the mean score of each school counseling activity category and the demographic variables (a) level of employment, (b) years employed as a counselor at current school, and (c) number of students enrolled at school. The activities with significant differences are presented.
Counseling

In the area of counseling, results of the ANOVA revealed that of the three explored demographic characteristics only school counselor’s level of employment (i.e., elementary, middle, high, and combination/other) showed statistically significant findings among the groups $F(3, 98) = 9.371, p < .001$. Tukey’s post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in the mean frequency between elementary and high school counselors. Elementary school counselors ($M = 3.76, SD = .639$) more frequently reported participation in counseling activities than high school counselors ($M = 2.91, SD = .632$).

To further understand how elementary and high school counselors’ activities differed, individual non-parametric tests examined the frequency of endorsement for each of the ten counseling activities reported in the SCARS. A Bonferroni-type adjustment to the Type I familywise error rate was implemented for these post hoc tests. For example, there are 10 counseling activities pooled under the counseling area, thus the Bonferroni Type I error rate was set at $.05/10 = .005$. Contingency analysis of elementary and high school respondents revealed differences in the amount these counselors reported engaging in three areas: (1) counseling students regarding school behavior ($\chi^2 = 23.072, p < .001$), (2) providing small group counseling addressing relationship and social skills ($\chi^2 = 39.328, p < .001$), and (3) conducting small groups regarding family and personal issues ($\chi^2 = 23.564, p < .001$). The results are shown in Tables 6 through 8.

Elementary school counselors reported that they counseled students regarding school behavior all of the time while high school counselors had a broader spread across
the response scale. Elementary and high school counselors also differed in their reported frequency of counseling small groups addressing relationship and social skills. A majority of high school counselors reported doing this activity never or rarely while elementary counselors reported frequently counseling small groups addressing relationship and social skills. High school counselors reported that they never or rarely conducted small groups regarding family or personal issues, compared to elementary counselors with a broader spread across the response scale.

Table 6

SCARS Counseling Item 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

Table 7

SCARS Counseling Item 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*
Table 8

*SCARS Counseling Item 7*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues</th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.

**Consultation**

In the area of consultation, results of the ANOVA revealed that of the three explored demographic characteristics only school counselor’s level of employment (i.e., elementary, middle, high, and combination/other) showed statistically significant findings among the groups $F(3, 98) = 6.901, p < .001$. Tukey’s post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant difference in the mean frequency of consultation activities between elementary and high school counselors. Elementary school counselors ($M = 3.691, SD = .732$) more frequently reported participation in consultation activities than high school counselors ($M = 2.831, SD = .777$).

To further understand how elementary and high school counselors’ activities differed, individual non-parametric tests examined the frequency of endorsement for each of the seven consultation activities reported in the SCARS. A Bonferroni-type adjustment to the Type I familywise error rate was implemented for these post hoc tests. For example, there are seven activities pooled under the consultation area, thus the Bonferroni Type I error rate was set at $0.05/7 = .007$. Contingency analysis of elementary and high school respondents revealed differences in the amount these counselors reported engaging in four areas: (1) consult with school staff concerning school behavior ($\chi^2 =$
15.870, \( p = .003 \), (2) consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues \( (\chi^2 = 17.034, p = .002) \), (3) coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals \( (\chi^2 = 25.354, p < .001) \), and (4) assist in identifying exceptional children \( (\chi^2 = 17.935, p = .001) \). The results are shown in Tables 9 through 12.

Elementary school counselors reported that they consulted with school staff concerning student behavior routinely while high school counselors had a broader spread across the response scale. Counselors also differed in their frequency of consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues based on school level. High school counselors more frequently reported never or rarely performing this activity than did elementary counselors. Coordination of referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals was another activity that was performed to different degrees according to school level. A higher number of high school counselors than elementary school counselors reported never or rarely performing this activity.

Table 9

**SCARS Consultation Item 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consult with school staff concerning student behavior</th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*
Table 10

**SCARS Consultation Item 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionaly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

Table 11

**SCARS Consultation Item 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionaly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

Table 12

**SCARS Consultation Item 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionaly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

**Curriculum**

In the area of curriculum, results of the ANOVA revealed that of the three explored demographic characteristics only school counselor’s level of employment (i.e., elementary, middle, high, and combination/other) showed statistically significant findings among the groups $F(3, 98) = 7.145, p < .001$. Tukey’s post hoc analysis revealed
statistically significant difference in the mean frequency of curriculum activities between elementary and high school counselors. Elementary school counselors \((M = 3.166, SD = 1.216)\) more frequently reported participation in curriculum activities than high school counselors \((M = 2.014, SD = .874)\).

To further understand how elementary and high school counselors’ activities differed, individual non-parametric tests examined the frequency of endorsement for each of the eight activities reported in the SCARS. A Bonferroni-type adjustment to the Type I familywise error rate was implemented for these post hoc tests. For example, there are eight curriculum activities pooled under the curriculum area thus, the Bonferroni Type I error rate was set at \(.05/8 = .006\). Contingency analysis of elementary and high school respondents revealed differences in the amount these counselors reported engaging in five areas: (1) conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits \((\chi^2 = 26.268, p < .001)\), (2) conduct classroom lessons on relating to others \((\chi^2 = 22.982, p = .001)\), (3) conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues \((\chi^2 = 20.364, p < .001)\), (4) conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution \((\chi^2 = 21.972, p < .001)\), and (5) conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues \((\chi^2 = 26.577, p < .001)\). The results are shown in Tables 13 through 16. Counselors in elementary schools reported more often conducting classroom lessons on personal and social traits, relating to others, personal growth and development issues, conflict resolution and personal safety issues compared to high school counselors.
Table 13

**SCARS Curriculum Item 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routinely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

Table 14

**SCARS Curriculum Item 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routinely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

Table 15

**SCARS Curriculum Item 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routinely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

Table 16

**SCARS Curriculum Item 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routinely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*
Table 17

**SCARS Curriculum Item 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues</th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

**Coordination**

In the area of coordination, results of the ANOVA revealed that of the three explored demographic characteristics only school counselor’s level of employment (i.e., elementary, middle, high, and combination/other) showed statistically significant findings among the groups $F(3, 98) = 4.918, p = .003$. Tukey’s post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant difference in the mean frequency of coordination activities between elementary and high school counselors. Elementary school counselors ($M = 3.214, SD = .791$) more frequently participated in coordination activities than high school counselors ($M = 2.453, SD = .704$).

To further understand how elementary and high school counselors’ activities differed, individual non-parametric tests examined the frequency of endorsement for each of the eight coordination activities reported in SCARS. A Bonferroni-type adjustment to the Type I familywise error rate was implemented for these post hoc tests. For example, there are 13 coordination activities pooled under the coordination area, thus the Bonferroni Type I error rate was set at $0.05/13 = .0038$. Contingency analysis of elementary and high school respondents revealed differences in the amount these counselors reported engaging in the area of formally evaluating student progress as a
result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives ($\chi^2 = 18.687, p = .001$). The results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

**SCARS Coordination Item 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Routinely</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionaly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCARS = School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.*

**Other**

The final category of school counselor activities is “other.” Results of the ANOVA revealed that of the three explored demographic characteristics only school counselors’ years of employment at current school (i.e., 0 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, 16 to 20 years, and 21 years or more) showed statistically significant findings among the groups $F(3, 98) = 4.918, p = .003$. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant difference in the mean frequency of “other” activities between school counselors employed at their current school for 0 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years. Those employed at their current school for 0 to 5 years ($M = 2.653, SD = .59139$) less frequently reported participation in other activities than school counselors employed for 6 to 10 years ($M = 3.415, SD = .59139$).

To further understand how school counselors employed for 0 to 5 years and those employed for 6 to 10 years differed, individual non-parametric tests examined the frequency of endorsement for each of the ten “other” activities reported in the SCARS. A
Bonferroni-type adjustment to the Type I familywise error rate was implemented for these post hoc tests. For example, there are 10 “other” activities pooled under this area, thus the Bonferroni Type I error rate was set at \( .05/10 = .005 \). Contingency analysis of elementary and high school respondents revealed no significant differences in any one particular item.

Summary

The results of the study’s descriptive and statistical analyses were presented in this chapter. The descriptive analysis found a majority of the participants to be African American females with school counselor training. The most frequent activities performed were counseling, consultation, and coordination activities. Curriculum activities were performed least frequently. The ANOVA analysis found significant differences in the frequency of counseling, coordination, consultation, and curriculum activities between school level of employment in a majority of core activities. There was also a significant difference in the frequency of “other” activities and years employed at school. Chapter V presents a summary and discussion of the above findings, along with recommendations for counselor education and future research.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Recent school reform has focused on challenges within urban school environments. The American School Counselor Association’s release of the *The National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (ASCA, 2005) is the school counseling profession’s response to the recent school reforms. A major focus of these efforts has been to close the achievement gap between students of color, poor students, or underachieving students and their more advantaged peers. A significant proportion of urban environments is populated with a majority of our nation’s African American students (NCES, 2011).

Few studies have examined the activities of school counselors in urban schools, and no studies have explored activities of school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools. To address this gap, counseling activities of school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools were explored.

The purpose of this study was to shed light on the activities of school counselors working in predominantly African American schools. Through the use of the ASCA National Model as a framework for school counseling programs, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?
2. What activities recommended by the ASCA National Model received the greatest and least emphasis by counselors in predominantly African American urban schools?

3. Are there differences in the frequency of reported activities as prescribed by the ASCA National Model among school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools according to demographic characteristics (level of employment, years employed as a school counselor at current school, and number of students enrolled at school)?

**Summary of Major Findings**

The Statistical Package for the Social Studies was used to analyze the survey responses. Descriptive data were collected and several ANOVA test were used to determine if differences existed in the frequency of performing specific counseling activities based on demographic characteristics.

Demographic data indicated that a majority of the participants were African American (60%) and females (87%) ranging in age 20 to 60 years old. While a majority of the participants (53%) were employed in high schools, the other participants were employed evenly in the other three settings of elementary, middle, or other/combination. In terms of years employed as a school counselor in current setting, an overwhelmingly majority of the participants (50%) had been in their current school for fewer than five years. More participants (27%) earned a salary between $60,000 and $70,000 than lower or higher salary ranges. Most of the counselors (68%) obtained a Master’s degree in school counseling from a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
The data regarding how counselors spend their time on school counselor activities prescribed by the ASCA National Model revealed that as a group, the participants spent the most time in core areas of counseling, coordination, and consultation activities. The least amount of time was spent in the core area of curriculum. Further, it was found that of the 48 recommended activities listed in the SCARS questionnaire, only eight activities were performed on an always or frequent basis by at least 50% of the participants. Of the eight activities, five were direct counseling activities. Overall, of the full 48 items, the most often performed activities were counseling students regarding school behavior, and consulting with staff regarding student behavior. The least performed activity was conducting classroom lessons regarding substance abuse.

Analysis of the data to determine if differences in the performance of activities existed due to demographic factors indicated that significant differences existed only in relation to the participants’ level of employment. Elementary school counselors were most frequently involved in the core areas of counseling, coordination, curriculum, and consultation. The ANOVA test revealed a stastically significant difference related to the participants’ years of employment at current school and “other” activities. School counselors who have been employed at their current school for 6-10 years were significantly more frequently involved in “other” activities than those employed from 1-5 years.

**Discussion of Major Findings**

The researcher collected data from school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools across the state of Michigan. The following discussion of the research findings is presented in response to the three research questions.
Findings Related to Research Question 1

The first objective of this study was to identify the demographic characteristics of school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools. Findings from this study indicated that a majority of the school counselors working in predominantly African American urban schools are African American females. Other studies have found white females to be the predominant group in most school counselor training programs, employed as school counselors, and members of the American School Counseling Association (Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Foster, Young, & Herman, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2002; Walsh, Barrett, & DePaul, 2007). The strong presence of African American females in predominantly African American urban schools is worthy of acknowledgment. Scholars posit that a presence of African American professionals in educational environments promotes and affirms the African American students’ identity, global self-worth (McMahon & Watts, 2002), academic achievement (Butler, 2003), and career development (Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004). In fact, several studies have found that preservice education students of color are generally more committed than White preservice education students to multicultural teaching, social justice, and providing children with an academically challenging curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Rios & Montecinos, 1999; Su, 1996). African American female counselors may be especially important for African American female students’ development. A history of racial stereotypes and gender stereotypes may have negative effects on self-efficacy and outcome expectations of African American females’ lives. According to Holcomb-McCoy (2005), counselors of African American females must have the ability to conceptualize problems from a feminist perspective as well as a cultural/racial
perspective. Zirkel (2002) found that adolescents who had at least one race- and gender-matched role model demonstrated better academic performance and had more achievement-related goals than did students without a race- and gender-matched role model.

Findings from this study suggest that school counselors in predominantly African American urban schools are fully credentialed as certified or licensed school counselors. Prior research in urban environments indicated that there is a high number of uncertified and provisionally licensed educators in predominantly African American urban schools (Haberman, 2005; Kozol, 1992; Luca, Takano, Hinshaw & Raisch, 2009; Rice, 2003). In addition, current findings revealed that 69% of the participants indicated they completed their training as school counselors in CACREP accreditated programs. This is significant considering Scarborough’s (2002) findings that a positive association exists between school counselors who perceived that they were adequately trained and training in a CACREP accreditated program. In Scarborough’s study of school counselors’ activities in all settings (e.g., urban, suburban, and rural) only 43% of the participants reported they completed their training as school counseling in CACREP accreditated programs.

Researchers have explored the relationship between school counselors’ years of experience and school counseling level of expertise (Border & Drury, 1992), job performance (Brott & Meyers, 1999), perception in the development and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs (Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2000), and advocacy behaviors (Hernandez, 2006). While years of experience is not the specific issue this study focuses on, it is worthy to note that counselors with more experience (6 or
more years) do more counseling activities (Nelson, Robles-Pina & Nichter, 2008), and have learned to navigate the demands of the school environment while maintaining a focus on student needs (Hernandez, 2006). A review of salary and years employed at current school comparisons may indicate that a majority of the participants in this study were experienced counselors. School districts in Michigan most often pay school counselors on a teacher’s pay scale (National Education Association NEA, 2012). The starting salary for a Michigan teacher without a master’s degree is $35,164 and average salary is $57,327. A majority of the participants in this study had salary of more than $50,000, which suggests that the participants in this study were experienced counselors. These findings are encouraging considering the extreme barriers that often plague urban school environments. Although experienced in school counseling, over 50% of the participants had been at their current school fewer than six years. It is possible that the counselors in the current study may have experienced job shifting and staff reductions due to the common closures occurring in urban school districts nationally and especially in the state of Michigan (NEA, 2012).

Findings Related to Research Question 2

The second objective of the study was to explore what activities recommended by the ASCA National Model received the greatest and least emphasis by counselors in predominantly African American urban schools. According to the study results, counselors performed many of the activities outlined by Gysbers and Henderson (2006) and the ASCA National Model (2005). As a group, the participants spent more time in activities that represent the SCARS core areas of counseling, consultation, and coordination activities. The result, though limited to the participants in this study, is
encouraging. One of the findings in the literature was that urban school counselors engaged in too much time in noncounseling related activities (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005). Such responsibilities prevent school counselors from performing activities that assist students in academic achievement. In the current study, the “other” area contained the non-counseling related duties. With the exception of scheduling students for classes and participating on committees in school, the participants reported performing “other” activities on a less frequent basis than school counselors in general in other studies (Partin, 1993; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005).

The findings in this study indicated that counselors were engaged routinely in counseling activities with individual and small groups for personal, social, and academic concerns. In their study of 475 high school counselors in Texas, Nelson, Robles-Pina and Nichter (2008) found that counselors working in urban areas prefer to do more counseling than counselors in suburban and rural areas. Counseling activities were found to be the most performed type of activity in the current study of urban school counselors’ activities. Eschenauer and Chen-Hayes (2005) encouraged school counselors in urban schools to reconceptualize individual counseling as a collaborative act of advocacy and accountability to close achievement and opportunity gaps.

Consultation and coordination activities were found to be the second and third most frequent activities, by category, performed by the counselors in this study. The school counseling literature has suggested that consultation and coordination activities are important to school counselors’ roles as advocates (Bemak & Chung, 2005), ability to function as leaders (Hanson & Stone, 2002), and skill to develop school-family-
community-partnerships (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2008) in urban schools. Authors encourage that these activities foster systemic change and help to close the achievement gap (ASCA, 2003; Education Trust, 1997; Sears, 1999). Additionally, Scholars House and Martin (1998) encouraged counselors to be a part of committees in the school to better advocate for their students. School counselors in this study frequently participated in activities of consultation and coordination. Activities such as team/grade level/subject team meetings and coordination of community referrals, activities pertinent to urban schools (Amatea & West-Oltunji, 2007; Bemak, 2002), were frequently performed by school counselors in this study.

Activities of counseling students for student behavior and consulting with school staff regarding student behavior ranked the first and second most frequent of the 48 activities identified in this study. Two considerations can be noted relative to these findings. First, urban students, specifically African American students, are often viewed by teachers and administrators with a deficit view. Researchers Adams, Benshoff, and Harrington (2007), in a review of secondary data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), found that teachers were more likely to contact the school counselor concerning behavioral issues when the student was male and African American. In a study that used the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS:2002) conducted by Bryan, Vines, Griffin and Moore-Thomas (2012) it was found that race was a predictor of English teacher referrals. Black students in general and Black and multiracial females were more likely to receive disciplinary referrals to the school counselor by their English teachers.
Studies have revealed that teachers often doubt that education is important for low income students of color (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005) and have feelings of inadequacy when teaching students of color (Marbley, Bonner, McKisick, Henfield, & Watts, 2007). Both of these views can have a negative impact on students’ self-image, academic achievement, and behavior (Manning & Baurth, 2004).

A second consideration relevant to these findings is that teachers and administrators have a tremendous impact on school counselor service utilization (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005). Teachers as well as principals often have a misperception about the role of school counselors and services that school counselors should provide to students (Reiner, Colbert, & Perusse, 2009; Ponec & Brock, 2000). Perhaps the frequent individual counseling activity as well as consultation regarding student behavior may be related to the belief of teachers and principals that school counselors are available primarily for remedial services, such as responding to student behavior (Borders, 2002; Fitch, Newby, Ballesteros, & Marshall, 2001). According to the ASCA National Model, responsive services such as responding to student behavior should be performed occasionally by school counselors. Yet, the results of this study showed that these types of activities were performed frequently by a majority of the participants.

**Findings Related to Research Question 3**

Studies suggest that school level of employment influences school counselor practice (Gibson & Mitchell, 1995; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Myrick, 1993; Nelson et al., 2008; Scarborough, 2002). Sisson and Bullis (1992) asserted that there is an expectation of varied job roles when counseling with students at the elementary, middle
school, and high school levels. Accordingly, comprehensive school counseling models account for some differences in the amount of time recommended to be spent in counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination activities by school level (see Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Myrick, 2003).

Particular to the current study, elementary school counselors had a significantly higher frequency of participation in counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination activities than high school counselors. Prior research leads us to expect this pattern of differences between counseling activities at the elementary and high school levels. Elementary school counseling is rooted in child development and does not share the historical influence of career guidance at the high school level (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994). Additionally, the literature acknowledges that the comprehensive school counseling program has been more common in elementary schools since programs were initially implemented at this level. Academic scheduling and postsecondary planning are significantly higher priorities for high school counselors than elementary and middle school counselors (Dahir, 2004). Current findings are consistent with other studies that have reported differences in how school counselors spend their time based on grade level of employment (Davis, 1999; Johnson, 1993). In regards to counseling activities there were three specific activities that elementary school counselors reported engaging in more frequently than high school counselors. Counselors at elementary schools had a larger percentage of respondents who indicated they routinely or frequently counseled students regarding school behavior, provided small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills, and conducted small groups regarding family/personal issues.
Statistically significant differences were found on several activities within the consultation and curriculum areas based on school level. Counselors in elementary schools reported performing the following activities more regularly than their counterparts in high schools: consulting with school staff concerning student behavior, consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues, coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals, and assist in identifying exceptional children. Additionally, counselors in elementary schools reported more frequently conducting classroom lessons on personal and/or social traits, relating to others, personal growth and development issues, conflict resolution, and personal safety issues.

Only one coordination activity, formally evaluating student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives, showed a significant difference in frequency according to grade level. A greater number of high school counselors reported never or rarely performing this activity than the number of elementary school counselors.

There was a significant difference in the frequency of “other” activities based on the number of years employed as a school counselor at current school. Those employed at their current school for 1 to 5 years were less frequently involved in “other” activities than those employed for 6 to 10 years. These findings are similar to those in Gloster’s (2009) study regarding school counselor activities in Title I schools. In that study, a greater percentage of counselors with more experience reported that they performed “other” activities more routinely than those with six or fewer years of experience.

Performance of “other” activities by those employed six years but less than ten in their
current position may be related to the counselor’s familiarity of the environment and a higher awareness of unfulfilled school environment needs.

**Recommendations for Counselor Education and Research**

**Recommendations for Counselor Educators**

The results of this study have implications for training and research in counselor education. School counselor educators are promoting a new role for urban school counselors to be leaders and social justice advocates (Bemak & Chung 2005; Dahir, 2009; Education Trust, 2011; Eschenauer & Chen-Hayes, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; House, & Sears, 2002; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011). Both of these roles require a comfort with and value for the students in predominantly African American urban schools. Consequently, because of the majority presence of White, middle-class, female counselor education students, leaders in the counseling profession have attempted to address the attitudes, multicultural skills, and social justice development of these students (Bradley, Johnson, Rawls, & Dodson-Sims, 2005; Day-Vines, Patton, & Baytops, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). Although this task is very important, it is just as critical to populate the school counseling profession with excellent, multiculturally and culturally responsive school counselors from diverse backgrounds. In this regard, school counselor training expectations for urban environments should parallel the training expectations of all educators in culturally diverse urban schools. Haberman (1996) posits that urban educators succeed or fail based on what they bring to their training more than on what they learn in preservice programs. Haberman’s observations of excellent urban educators identified seven primary attributes. According to Haberman, these individuals
are generally older (30 to 50 years of age), are of color, are from an urban area, have raised children and held other jobs, and have learned to live normally in a somewhat violent context (Haberman, 1996). Similar to teacher education programs, much more can be done to bring into the profession counselors who culturally match the children in the schools.

Additionally, as current school counseling initiatives move toward the promotion of ASCA-like counseling programs and the development of collaborative practices such as school-family-community models as systematic approaches to whole school change, perhaps school counselor training programs might offer onsite training to urban school counselors in training to more effectively implement models specific to urban environments.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research is needed to determine recruiting tactics for future school counselors who culturally match the children in the schools of urban environments. The findings of this study showed a strong presence of African American school counselors in predominantly African American schools, yet a majority of school counselors in the other studies and in the profession are White. The review of literature concerning school staff expectations and perceptions of students in predominantly African American schools clearly points to the need for a filtered training and hiring process. In particular, it will be necessary to investigate what factors influence school counselor choice and desire to work in urban predominantly African American settings.

The findings of this study revealed a low frequency in the number of recommended activities performed by participants. This raises study presents the question
of whether or not certain activities beyond the scope of the current ASCA National Model recommendations are needed to meet the needs of students in predominantly African American urban schools. Future studies that include open-ended questions may allow school counselors to describe other activities they perform that were not included in the SCARS. Such additions may reveal activities that may be particular to predominantly African American urban schools.

Beyond this, the results of this study do not include information about the school climate where participants are employed. It is possible that the activities of the school counselors are largely determined by the building principal or other administrative/union forces. Further investigation of how school staff in predominantly African American urban schools conceptualize counselors’ roles needs to be conducted.

Finally, the results of this study provide only descriptive information associated with school counselor practice in predominantly African American urban schools. The findings and limitations of this study suggest future lines of research that would seek to replicate the study’s findings with a larger sample size as well as include variables such as school climate and counselors’ perceptions of self-efficacy.

**Conclusion**

It is disappointing that despite three decades of negative reports of challenges affecting urban school counseling programs (Avis, 1982), few studies have explored the actual activities and frequency of activities performed by school counselors in urban African American schools. Consequently, current discussion of urban schools and recommendations for urban school counseling are the same as those discussed over the past three decades. Time and time again scholars have shown that counselors in urban
schools are often forced to confront a number of significant issues that affect the psychosocial, emotional, and intellectual development of their students (Bryan, 2005; Green, Conley, & Barnett, 2005; Henderson, 2001; Lee, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 1998, 2005). Also discussed are factors such as minimal resources, violence, and high drop out rates that have a detrimental effect on urban school counseling (Holcomb-McCoy, 1998). Even with these noted challenges, school counselors in the present study in predominantly African American urban schools are doing activities as prescribed by the American School Counseling Association and comprehensive school counseling models (ASCA, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). While the actual frequency of performing specific counseling activities in this study may vary from the recommendations of ASCA’s and other school counseling models, it is possible that current models may not include recommendations that are relevant in meeting the needs of urban predominantly African American children. As stated earlier, this needs to be investigated in future research to elaborate on urban school counselors’ perspectives on what school counseling activities are essential in successfully servicing all students in urban environments.

Through the review of literature, the ideas presented in this study included a contextual presentation that is often overlooked in the current urban school counseling discourse and research. In particular, the so-called achievement gap that is referenced when discussing predominantly African American urban schools has become an increasingly growing focus for counselor educators. This study not only addressed the activities of school counselors in these schools but also helped to situate African American students within the context of society at large. The findings of this study provide the demographic characteristics of school counselors in predominantly African
American urban schools in Michigan, the frequency of their counseling activities, and variables that may influence the frequency of their activities. This knowledge will contribute to the current urban school counseling discussion and serve as a foundation in the investigation and development of meaningful comprehensive school counseling services by school counselors in a manner that respects, understands, and honors the particular needs of urban predominantly African American students.
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United States Census Bureau. (2010). Current population reports


Appendix A

School Counselors Activity Rating Scale
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = never</th>
<th>2 = rarely</th>
<th>3 = occasionally</th>
<th>4 = frequently</th>
<th>5 = routinely</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
<th>PREFER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confer needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate orientation process/activities for students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Other&quot; Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate on committees within the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate the standardized testing program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organize outreach to low income families (e.g., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule students for classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Handle discipline of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please reference:
## School Counseling Activity Rating Scale

Below is a list of functions that may be performed by school counselors. Please write the number that indicates the frequency with which you actually perform each function. In Column 2, please write the number that indicates the frequency with which you prefer to perform each function.

### Ratings:
- 1 = never
- 2 = rarely
- 3 = occasionally
- 4 = frequently
- 5 = routinely

#### Counseling Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
<th>PREFER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns
- Counsel with students regarding school behavior
- Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues
- Counsel with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)
- Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills
- Provide small group counseling for academic issues
- Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)
- Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)
- Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants
- Counsel students regarding academic issues

#### Consultation Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
<th>PREFER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Consult with school staff concerning student behavior
- Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students
- Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues
- Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)

#### Curriculum Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
<th>PREFER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)
- Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff, and/or students)
- Participate in team meetings

#### Coordination Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
<th>PREFER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)
- Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program
- Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school
- Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops
- Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention
- Inform teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school
- Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs
- Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform

---

Continued...
Appendix B

Demographic Survey
Demographic Questionnaire

Please complete the following demographic items listed below

1. Which of the following best identifies your race/ethnicity (Check one)?
   - African American
   - Asian/Pacific Islander
   - Caucasian
   - Hispanic/Latino
   - Native American
   - Multiracial
   - Other ____________________________

2. Gender (Check one):
   - Female
   - Male

3. Age (Check one):
   - 20-30
   - 31-40
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 61+

4. Current salary (Check one):
   - Less than $30,000
   - $30,001 - $40,000
   - $40,001 - $50,000
   - $50,001 - $60,000
   - $60,001 - $70,000
   - $70,001 - $80,000
   - $80,001 - $90,000
   - $90,001 - $100,000

5. Which of the following best identifies your school level of employment (Check one)?
   - Elementary
   - Middle/Junior
   - High School
   - Other or Combination ____________________________

6. Number of students enrolled at your school (Check one)?
7. Approximately how many students are you responsible for in your school counselor role? ________________________

8. Length of time in years employed as a school counselor at your current school (Check one)?
   - 0 - 5  - 6 - 10  - 11 - 15  - 16 - 20  - 21+

9. What is the highest degree you have obtained (Check one)?
   - Bachelor’s
   - Master’s
   - Specialist
   - Doctorate

10. In what area is/will be your Master’s degree (Check one)?
    - Counselor Education/School Counseling
    - Counselor Education/Community or Mental Health
    - Social Work
    - School Psychology
    - Clinical Psychology
    - Educational Administration
    - Other ______________________________

11. If you completed your Master’s degree in a Counselor Education program, was it CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) accredited (Check one)?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Unsure
12. What certification/licenses do you hold other than a state school counselor license/certificate (Check all that apply)?

- [ ] National Certified Counselor (NCC)
- [ ] National Certified School Counselor (NCSC)
- [ ] State Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- [ ] Other state education license (e.g. teaching license)
- [ ] Other ________________________________
- [ ] None

13. What professional memberships do you hold (Check all that apply)?

- [ ] American Counseling Association (ACA)
- [ ] American School Counseling Association (ASCA)
- [ ] State branches of ACA and/or ASCA
- [ ] National Education Association
- [ ] Other ________________________________
- [ ] None
Appendix C

Phone Script
Phone Script

I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Western Michigan University. I will be conducting a study on the activities of school counselors in predominantly African American schools. Using the Michigan’s Department of Education 2010-2011 Building Level Pupil Headcount Data, I have created a list of the names of schools with at least 60% African American enrollment. According to this list, your school building’s population meets the criteria. Please consider answering the following question and inform one way or another.

Is there a school counselor or someone that serves in a school counseling like capacity employed to service your school building?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

If so, please provide the individual’s contact information.

Name, title, school, address, phone number and email address for each person.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Lacretia T. Dye, NCC, LLPC, SCL
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education
Western Michigan University
Appendix D

Pre-Notice Letter
Date, 2011

Participants Name
Address
Address

A few days from now you will receive in the mail a request to fill out a brief questionnaire focusing on students in predominantly African American schools.

I have contacted you in advance because many people prefer to be notified ahead of time. The study is an important one that may prove helpful in school counselor and school administrator training, continuing education, and advocacy programs. The ultimate goal is to help school counselors effectively meet the needs of all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It’s with generous help from educators like you that our students can be successful.

Sincerely,

Lacretia T. Dye, NCC, LLPC, SCL
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education
Western Michigan University
Appendix E
Invitation to Participate in Study
Date, 2011

Participant Name
Address
Address

I am asking fellow school counselors working in predominantly African American schools to participate in my dissertation research study in Counselor Education at Western Michigan University.

The working title of my study is, “School Counselor Activities in Predominantly African American urban schools.” The objective of my dissertation is to better understand the dynamics of school counseling activities performed in predominantly African American schools.

Results from this study will be used to inform school counseling theory by exploring activities recognized by ASCA and school counseling practice by understanding the alignment between theory and counselor education preparation.

All information collected for this study will be kept strictly confidential and results will only be presented in summary form in which no individual’s answers can be identified. While your participation is voluntary, the knowledge and experiences you personally hold can help the counseling profession better meet its goal. All you need to do is take a few minutes of your time to share your experiences of being a school counselor by completing the survey. If for some reason you prefer not to respond, please return the blank questionnaire in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail lacretia.t.dye@wmich.edu, or my dissertation chair, Dr. Carla Adkison-Bradley by e-mail carla.bradley@wmich.edu.

Thank you for your time and help with this important study.

Sincerely,

Lacretia T. Dye, NCC, LLPC, SCL
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education
Western Michigan University
Appendix F

Postcard Thank You and Reminder
A week ago you were mailed a questionnaire regarding school counselor activities. I am asking fellow school counselors working in predominantly African American schools to share their experiences. This email is another invitation to participate.

If you have already responded I thank you and greatly appreciate your time and energy. I truly want to share the voice of the practicing school counselors in predominantly African American schools. Your responses will help me achieve this objective.

If you have not responded please take the time to do so now. If it was misplaced, please contact me by e-mail lacretia.t.dye@wmich.edu and I get a survey to you in a manner that is convenient to you.

Best wishes for a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Lacretia T. Dye, NCC, LLPC, SCL
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education
Western Michigan University
Appendix G

Performance Activities: Percentage of Responses in Each Category
# Performance of Activities

Percentage of Responses In Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding personals/family concerns</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding school behavior</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding relationships</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group counseling for academic issues</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group counseling regarding family/personal issues</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issue</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel students regarding regarding academic issues</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with school staff regarding school behavior</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in identifying exceptional children</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide consultation for administrators</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom activities to introduce myself and explain the counseling program to all students</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social trait</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coordination Activities**

<p>| Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic,career, or personal/social issues | 23.5 | 22.5 | 26.5 | 16.7 | 10.8 |
| Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive counseling program                | 26.5 | 14.7 | 27.5 | 15.7 | 14.7 |
| Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of my school | 11.8 | 25.5 | 20.6 | 26.5 | 18.6 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform teachers/administrators about the role, training program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of my school</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend professional development activities</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate orientation process/activities for students</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Other Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Particpate on committees within the school</td>
<td>Always: 30.4, Frequently: 27.5, Occasionally: 23.5, Rarely: 12.7, Never: 5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate the standardized testing program</td>
<td>Always: 21.6, Frequently: 10.8, Occasionally: 15.7, Rarely: 16.7, Never: 35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule students for classes</td>
<td>Always: 58.8, Frequently: 6.9, Occasionally: 3.9, Rarely: 1.0, Never: 29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain/complete educational records/reports</td>
<td>Always: 28.4, Frequently: 15.7, Occasionally: 7.8, Rarely: 13.7, Never: 34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty</td>
<td>Always: 27.5, Frequently: 8.8, Occasionally: 16.7, Rarely: 9.8, Never: 37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle discipline of students</td>
<td>Always: 14.7, Frequently: 14.7, Occasionally: 22.5, Rarely: 17.6, Never: 30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school</td>
<td>Always: 26.5, Frequently: 5.9, Occasionally: 6.9, Rarely: 5.9, Never: 54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute teach and/or cover teachers at my school</td>
<td>Always: 1.0, Frequently: 2.9, Occasionally: 19.6, Rarely: 30.4, Never: 46.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

Letter of Consent
You have been invited to participate in a research project titled, “School Counseling Activities in Urban Predominately African American Schools.” This project will serve as Lacretia T Dye’s dissertation for the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely. You may contact the student or principal investigator if you have any questions.

This study is being conducted to find out more about the activities of school counselors working in urban predominately African American schools. Anyone who is working in a school counseling position working in an urban predominately African American school can participate in this study. The survey is distributed in hard copy form along with this consent form. Your participation in this study should take approximately 20 minutes.

Time spent on completing these surveys may result in equivalent time lost to spend on other activities. Participating in this research provides the opportunity to think about your activities in which you engage and may be a benefit to you. There are no costs associated with participating in this study. All information provided by participants will be kept in a secure locked file cabinet in the principal investigators office. All of the information collected from you is anonymous. Your name is not recorded on any of the information collected.

You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigators can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent. Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Carla Adkison-Bradley by e-mail carla.bradley@wmich.edu or Lacretia T Dye by e-mail lacretia.t.dye@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB), through [TBD] once approved.
I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me.

If you would like to participate, please complete and return the survey and questionnaire in the stamp addressed envelope to indicate your consent to participate in this study.
Appendix I

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval Letter
Date: February 14, 2012

To: Suzanne Hedstrom, Principal Investigator
   Lcretia Dye, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 11-11-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that the change to your research project titled “School Counselors Activities in Urban Predominately African American Schools” requested in your memo dated February 13, 2012 (to remove principal investigator Carla Adkison-Bradley; to add principal investigator Suzanne Hedstrom) has been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

The conditions and the duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: November 10, 2012

Cc: Carla Adkison-Bradley