



TO: Higher Education Committee
P-12 Education Committee

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SUBJECT: Update on School Counseling Regulations

DATE: December 8, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S): *John L. D'Agati*
SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The Office of Higher Education and the Office of P-12 Education will report the information collected relative to Department requirements for school counselors since the October 2013 discussion by the Board.

Reason(s) for Consideration

Review of Policy

Proposed Handling

This item will come before a joint meeting of the Higher Education Committee and the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the December 2014 meeting.

Background Information

In October 2013, the P-12 Office of Student Support Services (SSS) and the Office of Higher Education (OHE) came before the Board with a discussion item relating to current requirements for school counselors. The discussion focused on a range of issues related to the requirements for the preparation of school counselors

and their ongoing work and responsibilities in schools. At that meeting, the Board directed the Department to establish an advisory team, the School Counselor Advisory Council (SCAC), comprised of both school counselors practicing in the field, and school counselor preparation programs to assist the Department in providing the necessary support to the field. This support will enhance their knowledge and skill level directly related to implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards; build a counselor skill set around effective career counseling and guidance, including exposure to employers and career pathways beginning in the middle grades; build a more comprehensive understanding of highly rigorous approaches to learning, including Career and Technical Education and which specific programs are best aligned to college and career readiness; and develop an awareness and understanding of regional economies to best guide students in maximizing their options for potential careers.

Current School Guidance Program Requirements (K-12)

Under current Commissioner's Regulations, every public and non-public school must have a guidance program for all of its students. [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2(j)]. All grades, K-12, are required to develop and submit a district plan which "sets forth the manner in which the district will comply with the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations." This district plan must be filed in the district office and available for review. This plan must include program objectives, which describe expectations of what students will learn from the program; activities to accomplish the objectives; specification of staff members and other resources assigned to accomplish the objectives; and provisions for the annual assessment of program results. The plan shall be reviewed annually by the school districts, and revisions shall be made as necessary. [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2 (j) (iii)].

Guidance programs in grades K-6 must be designed, with input from the teaching staff, to prepare students for success in their future educational programs [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2(j)(1)(i)]. In addition, guidance programs must prepare students to participate effectively in their current and future educational programs, to help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral or adjustment problems, to educate students concerning avoidance of child sexual abuse, and to encourage parental involvement. [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2 (j)(1)(i)]

In New York State, grades 7-12 guidance programs must include activities and services that provide for an annual review of every student's educational progress and/or career plans, either individually or in small groups [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2 (j)(1)(ii)]. Specifically, programs must provide instruction on career pathways and career planning skills for every student at each grade level. Additionally, guidance programs must include activities and/or services that enable students to benefit from the curriculum; help students develop and implement postsecondary education and career plans; help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral or adjustment problems and encourage

parental involvement. [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2 (j)(1)(ii)].

Current School Counselor Preparation Program Requirements (Higher Education)

While the Commissioner's Regulations specify the K-12 school guidance program requirements, the requirements for higher education preparation programs are not as specific. The higher education program requirements for school counselors only consist of the completion of a program approved by the Department. The specific coursework within the program is not as clearly defined or outlined in regulation for institutions of higher education to follow, contrary to teacher preparation programs. [See Commissioner's Regulations § 80-2.3]. Commissioner's Regulations §80-2.3(b)(1) states that, for Provisional Certification, "the candidate shall hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education or from an institution approved by the Department, and in addition the candidate shall have completed 30 semester hours of approved graduate study in the field of school counseling, including supervised practice in guidance." Additionally, §80-2.3(b)(2) states that for Permanent Certification, "the candidate shall have completed, in addition to the requirements for the provisional certificate, two years of school experience in the field of pupil personnel services and 30 semester hours of graduate study in the field of school counseling. Within the total program of preparation, the candidate shall have been awarded a master's degree." [See Commissioner's Regulations §80-2.3(b)(2)]. Currently there are no exam requirements for certification.

The Perspective from the Field

In the fall of 2013, program staff from the P-12 Office of Student Support Services and the Office of Higher Education (OHE) conducted a series of interviews with P-12 schools and higher education institutions regarding their current school counseling program design, vision, and concerns. During interviews, phone calls and related research, program staff ascertained a deeper understanding about the current realities of school counselor programs at the P-12 and higher education levels, and gathered relevant feedback from those involved.

OHE reviewed the program catalogs for five counseling preparation programs in New York State. Only two of the five programs included coursework that required candidates to develop guidance plans required by regulations for the district. [See Commissioner's Regulations §100.2, noting that required plans for the district must also be reviewed and updated annually.] Only one of the five programs included a required K-12 career development course in compliance with Commissioner's Regulations §100.2(j)(1)(iii). Furthermore, only one program offered a course on vocational development and decision-making at various life stages, as required by §100.2(j)(1)(ii)(b)(c) of the Commissioner's Regulations.

In addition to the review of program catalogs, telephone interviews were set up with three institutions of higher education with school counselor programs to gather feedback from the field: one CUNY program, one SUNY program, and one independent

program. Information gathered during this review revealed significant variations among these programs. Common misalignments include the variation in the number of credit and internship hours from program to program, as well as inconsistencies in the program models adopted. In conclusion, due to the variation in models, and number of required credits and internship(s), school counselor candidates are entering the field without a frame of reference in their preparation and training.

Similarly, P-12 and OHE staff interviewed superintendents and school counseling staff by phone in three school districts (rural, urban, and suburban) to learn about their school counseling programs. Although counselor focus and related tasks were similar in each of the three districts, the number of counselors, resources available to assist the counselors, overall approach and individual student needs differed. All three districts interviewed had suggestions on ways to strengthen school counseling preparation and training through higher education certification.

Recommendations that emerged from the P-12 and higher education communities during these initial conversations included the need for school counselors to have clear working knowledge of:

- high school graduation requirements;
- Common Core Learning Standards and college and career preparation inclusive of the college application process and information on financial aid;
- the broad range of support services and opportunity programs available to students;
- data collection;
- working with parents and families; and
- Social-emotional development and learning skills.

The districts contacted were all in agreement that a professional development requirement for school counselors is critical once permanent certification is reached. Schools also noted the importance of awareness in multiple related areas, including knowledge of requirements for special education and English language learners. Higher education programs noted a need for greater consistency in coursework and internship requirements along with the inclusion of coursework on topics such as student assessment.

Ongoing Collaboration

The Department, in collaboration with the New York State School Counselor Association (NYSSCA), New York State Association for College Admissions Counseling (NYSACAC), and the New York Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (NYACES), hosted the New York State School Counselor Summit on April 7-8, 2014. This event provided an opportunity for over 200 practitioners to address issues that both promote and impede the development of comprehensive, data-driven, standards-based practices of school counselors, and to propose best practices and recommendations to enhance leadership in this critical area.

Additionally, as directed by the Board, the Department created the sixteen member School Counselor Advisory Council (SCAC) comprised of eight school counselors from across New York State and eight representatives from school counselor preparation programs. Two of these members are New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) representatives, and one member is a representative of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The SCAC is co-chaired by the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services in the Office of P-12 and the Project Director for the Office of Higher Education. The SCAC convened its first meeting in February 2014 to examine and recommend improvements to both school counseling preparation programs, as addressed in Commissioner's Regulations §80-2.3(b) throughout New York State, and current comprehensive school guidance plans as addressed in Commissioner's Regulations §100.2(j). The SCAC helped to develop surveys for distribution to school districts and institutions of higher education in order to obtain additional information from the field.

Two SCAC workgroups, one representing the P-12 community and another representing the higher education community, were established to focus on specific projects:

- P-12: Developed a draft revision of the Commissioner's Regulations §100.2(j), incorporating updated language and specific requirements for developing a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate school counseling program for each student attending a New York State public or charter school.
- Higher Education: Developed a list of recommended changes to Commissioner's Regulations §80-2.3, incorporating revisions to requirements concerning:
 - Practicum/Internship;
 - Faculty Qualifications;
 - Accreditation;
 - Ethics;
 - Certification and Reciprocity;
 - Technology;
 - Capstone;
 - Qualities and Characteristics of School Counselors; and
 - Coursework.

Two surveys were crafted by the SCAC and distributed to both the P-12 and higher education field. The survey results were compiled and analyzed by the Department in both the P-12 and Higher Education offices and are summarized below.

P-12 Survey

The P-12 survey, which allowed individuals to respond anonymously, was sent to the BOCES district superintendents, school district superintendents, and building

principals for distribution to school counselors throughout New York State, including school counselors in New York City. There were a total of 2,541 respondents; 2,092 (82.33%) of these respondents were school counselors currently employed in New York State public school districts, with over 56.03% of respondents having over ten years' experience. BEDS data from the 2012-2013 school year shows a statewide school counselor population of 6,375; therefore the Department estimates that 33% of the current statewide school counselor population responded to the survey. Survey respondents reported an average school counselor-to-student ratio of 1:300.

Over the course of a school year, survey respondents indicated that school counselors, on average, spend a majority of their time on personal/social competency delivery and the least amount of time on career competency delivery. It was reported that school counseling staff support teachers' work with students mostly in the areas of individual counseling and parent outreach. The survey results also concluded that the majority of the professional development received by school counselors was provided by school districts and regional school counseling meetings/conferences. Frequent topics included: the Dignity for All Students Act, understanding graduation requirements, data collection and analysis, and Common Core Learning Standards. School counselors also reported that they do not attend professional development training because they are too busy and overwhelmed (72.79%), or there are no funds to support professional development in their districts (30.04%).

Higher Education Survey

In New York State there are a total of 41 registered programs, with some institutions having two or three school counselor preparation programs registered at multiple campuses. The higher education survey was sent to program deans, coordinators, directors, advisors, and chairpersons in school counseling which, like the P-12 survey, allow anonymous responses. Of the 34 programs that were sent the survey, 31 programs responded.

Although a master's degree is not required for provisional certification, many school counselor preparation programs offer a master's degree, or even a doctorate degree, and a certificate of advanced study for certification; however, program requirements vary from institution to institution. Survey findings indicate that school counselor doctoral degrees require somewhere between 72 to 96 credit hours in total, depending on the institution. Survey findings also indicate a range of 12 to 60 credit hours for a certificate of advanced study in school counseling, and a master's degree requires from 36 to 60 hours. In effect, some school counselors obtain their master's degree by taking only 36 credit hours (twelve courses), while others may have taken as many as 60 credit hours (twenty courses).

Survey results also indicate that field experiences vary in length among institutions. Practicum lengths range from 100 to 180 hours, to one full semester. Additionally, the required length for a separate internship ranged from no internship at all, up to one full year (*See Glossary of Terms- Appendix B*). Required interaction during

the internship by both the supervisor and the professor with the candidate varied in frequency, and most interaction with the candidate was over the telephone. Additionally, 56.67% of the respondents indicated that they have used one or more established guidelines for discussing and evaluating candidates' performance in the field.

Overall, a majority of institutions are accredited through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and also the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Regarding professional development, respondents indicated that the majority of training is received through attendance at local, regional or state school counseling meetings, conferences and trainings, or through presentations at such meetings and conferences.

Some critical skills for school counselors as recommended by P-12 field survey respondents differ from the counselor preparation requirements currently required by regulation and recommended by the same P-12 survey respondents. P-12 practitioners were asked to identify both the most critical skills school counselors need to possess in order to support students in reaching college and career readiness, and to identify what counselor preparation requirements should be recommended for higher education. Institutions of higher education were asked to identify courses offered for a master's degree in school counseling.

P-12 Critical Skills and Preparation Requirements	Most Common Courses Offered by Institutions of Higher Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent engagement • Individual counseling • College and career pathways • Crisis intervention and school emergency planning • Assisting students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling theories and techniques • Group counseling • Career counseling • Assessment counseling • Multi-cultural counseling

However, survey data indicates that the most commonly offered courses are not fully aligned with the critical skills and coursework identified by the P-12 community. It is critical that the school counselor preparation programs are aligned with the comprehensive school counseling model utilized in P-12 schools.

Summary of School Counselor Summit Recommendations

Recommendations by the School Counselor Summit participants provide the basis for enhancing the interconnectedness of school counselors' roles across the P-20 continuum. The Summit's recommendations and action steps included:

1. Revision of Commissioner's Regulations Part 100.2 to require that all relevant components of counselor accountability be tied to student outcomes. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model recommends this approach,

and this approach is backed by years of research supporting its effectiveness¹ and can serve as a model for New York State. Updates and revisions to counseling programs should include:

- a. School-wide standards-based and developmental P-12 programs that include: student competencies (e.g. academic, career/college and personal/social domains) and school counselor competencies (knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes);
 - b. A data-driven and annually revised counseling plan;
 - c. Integration with the school's educational curriculum and district's accountability outcomes in order to close student achievement and opportunity gaps;
 - d. A school counseling program developed, delivered, managed and evaluated by certified school counselors;
 - e. Establishment of reasonable maximum P-12 school counselor--to--student ratios to ensure accessibility for all students;
 - f. A school counselor annual professional performance review based on comprehensive school counseling program delivery and student results data; and
 - g. An annual documentation of individual goal-setting and progress reviews with each student covering academic, career and college, and personal and social progress.
2. The preparation of school counselors needs to be coordinated and consistent across all programs in New York State. Part 80-2.3 of the Commissioner's Regulations should be revised to require the following:
- a. A minimum of 48 credits for a master's degree with specific required coursework. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) provides a relevant list of courses and can serve as a model for New York (See Appendix A);
 - b. A minimum 100-hour practicum, and a minimum 600-hour internship in a P-12 school setting supervised by a certified school counselor; and
 - c. A renewable five-year school counseling certificate, with 175 hours of required professional development.
3. School counselors and school building leaders require significant annual professional development for supporting full implementation and evaluation of school counseling programs in every P-12 school. Annual professional development should include:
- a. A requirement that current school building leaders receive training on a comprehensive school counseling program model and the role of a school counselor before evaluating the school counselors under their supervision; and

¹ The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, 3rd Ed., The American School Counselor Association, 2012.

- b. Training sufficient to ensure that the school counselor and school counseling program evaluation process is based on an on-going comprehensive school counseling program.
4. Support from the Department to the field is limited and should be enhanced. Information critical for school counselors is not organized on the Department website and the Department has no mechanism to contact counselors directly. Memoranda from the Department to school building leaders are not finding their way to school counselors. A dedicated webpage for school counselors with relevant links accompanied by knowledgeable staff to support the counselors is critical to successful implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program

Summary of School Counselor Advisory Council P-12 Workgroup

The SCAC P-12 Workgroup submitted Part 100.2(j) revision recommendations to the Department. This Workgroup is comprised of P-12 practitioners and higher education representatives in the field of school counseling. A draft of revisions to the existing regulations was prepared using survey results and recommendations from the NYSED School Counselor Summit. In addition, the group contributed research findings and knowledge from currently practicing school counselors, counselor supervisors, and counselor educators.

Workgroup recommendations included incorporating the language and structure of the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) comprehensive school counseling program model. Specifically, this model includes establishing student standards and school counselor competencies.

Based on the Workgroups' recommendations, the following regulatory changes are needed:

- To reflect current certification language, "Guidance Program" should be changed to "School Counseling Program";
- To reflect the comprehensive school counseling program, reference should be made to P-12 instead of just 7-12, and require that services be delivered in collaboration with other educators and service providers;
- To address the reality of student needs and program delivery requirements, a "reasonable ratio" of school counselor-to-student to facilitate student access to program services should be established;
- To address the role of the school counselor, student competences should be established as the basis for assessing program outcomes;

- Establishment of a requirement that annual progress reviews be completed for each P-12 student and a requirement that instruction at each grade level include coursework in college and career, academic, and social and emotional domains;
- Implementation of tools to manage the comprehensive school counseling program, including annual program assessments, required annual agreement with school building leader specifying the school counselor's use of time, establishment of a counseling program advisory council data collection, and a core curriculum and lesson plan development requirement; and
- Implementation of tools for annual program review and revision including analysis of program results, evaluation of program components, improved results reporting, and school counselor evaluation based on program outcomes.

Summary of School Counselor Advisory Council Higher Education Workgroup

The SCAC Higher Education Workgroup includes representatives from institutions of higher education and P-12 practitioners in school counseling. Their recommendations incorporated findings from the School Counselor Summit , extensive review of other states' requirements, National Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards for counselor education programs, a New York State Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors (NYSACES) survey on current school counselor preparation programs, and national standards and ethical codes from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the American Counseling Association (ACA), and the National Association for College Admission Counselors (NACAC).

Current regulations are brief, utilize outdated language for initial and professional certification of school counselors, and specify only the degree required, semester hours of approved graduate study, and two years of school experience "in the field of pupil personnel services." Specific in-depth requirements are recommended to ensure every pre-service school counselor candidate can create, develop, and evaluate a school counseling program for every P-12 student to help close achievement and opportunity gaps and to ensure academic, career, college access, and social-emotional competencies.

School counselor preparation programs and state school counselor certification requirements need the following changes:

- **Degree requirements:** In order to apply for certification, educational requirements should include a master's degree in school counseling, in addition to a 100-hour practicum and a 600-hour internship in a P-12 school counseling setting, supervised by a certified school counselor.

- **Certification and Reciprocity:** 48 credit hours of coursework should be required for initial certification as a school counselor, and 60 credit hours of coursework should be required for professional certification. The certification must be renewed every five years, with at least 175 hours of professional development focused on school counseling being required for such renewal.
- **Accreditation of counselor education/school counseling programs:** Programs should align their curriculum with current CACREP Counselor Education/School Counseling specialty preparation standards.
- **Faculty qualifications:** School counselor education faculty should have experience in P-12 school counseling (preferably college access and admissions counseling), and have consistent participation, advocacy, and leadership within school counseling professional organizations and activities. Current CACREP standards require a doctoral degree for full time faculty, and recommend the same for part-time faculty.
- **Coursework:** Coursework should reflect core curricular requirements aligned with CACREP standards including how to create, develop, implement, and evaluate P-12 school counseling programs, as provided in more detail in Appendix A.
- **Capstone:** A national school counseling examination, a comprehensive paper, or a portfolio of school counseling program artifacts should be required for certification.

General Recommendations for Board Consideration

The following recommendations emerged from the School Counselor Summit, the School Counselor Advisory Council and the survey results:

- A need for a comprehensive school counseling program approach, including regulatory changes for school guidance programs to establish such programs that include four major program components: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability;
- Consistent pre-service preparation and certification of school counselors, including regulatory changes to counselor preparation programs and P-12 school districts;
- The development of a certification assessment in order to obtain a school counselor initial certificate;
- A change to school building leader programs to make candidates more aware of the comprehensive school counseling program model and its implementation;
- Professional development requirements for school counselors and administrators; and

- Direct communication and support from the Department to school counselors.

Next Steps

With guidance from the Board of Regents, the Department will draft amendments to current regulations for both P-12 and higher education programs, and will report back to the Board in April 2015.

Attachments

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) requires the following coursework for the accreditation of any master's program in counselor education:

Core Curricular Areas:

Professional Identity and Ethics
Counseling Techniques
Group Counseling
Multicultural Counseling
Assessment
Career
Research and Program Evaluation
Human Development

Coursework to cultivate knowledge of:

Advocacy
Leadership
Social Justice
Crisis
Anti-Violence

Curricular Experiences:

100 Hour Practicum
600 Hour Internship
School Counseling
School Counseling Program Development
Implementation of a School Counseling Program
Evaluation of a School Counseling Program
College Admissions
Academic Development Skills

Glossary of Terms

- (ACA) American Counseling Association
 - (ACES) Association for Counselor Education and Supervision
 - (ASCA) American School Counselor Association
 - (CAEP) Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
 - (CACREP) Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
 - (CUNY) The City University of New York
 - (MPCAC) Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council
 - (NACAC) National Association for College Admission Counselors
 - (NARACES), North Atlantic Region Association For Counselor Education and Supervision
 - (NCATE) National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
 - (NOSCA) National Office for School Counselor Advocacy
 - (NYSSCA) New York State School Counselor Association
 - (NYSACES) New York Association of Counselor Education and Supervision
 - (NYSACAC) New York State Association for College Admissions Counseling
 - (NYSUT) New York State United Teachers
 - (OHE) Office of Higher Education
 - (SCAC) School Counselor Advisory Council
 - (SSS) Student Support Services
 - (SUNY) State University of New York
 - (TEAC) Teacher Education Accreditation Council
 - (UFT) United Federation of Teachers
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- Internship- Candidates are placed with on-site school counselors who manage their workload and oversee their performance much like a school counselor in an actual school setting would. Program instructors visit the student 2-3 times during the internship to evaluate his/her progress and performance.
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- Practicum- Candidates must enroll in a specific course which outlines practicum expectations and requirements. They are then placed in a school building to observe and document how school counselors perform their job responsibilities. Participation is limited under the supervision of program professors and on-site staff. Candidates must be under the supervision of a professor and on-site program staff.