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ROLE AND FUNCTION OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

by

Allison Grabias

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Major: Counseling

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## **Dedication**

To Ann Catherine and Joseph Thomas

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

Charter schools have become a mainstream educational reform over the past two decades. Charter schools are public schools, but have autonomy to make decisions independent of local school boards. School counselors across the country use the American School Counselor Association National Model to create and evaluate their comprehensive school counseling programs. Charter schools are based on the idea of innovation and educational reform. Consequently, job roles are frequently redefined. Charter school counselors have been absent from the research. The purpose of this study was to explore the role and function of school counselors in charter schools and examine if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model. Using a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, survey design, data was collected from charter school counselors in Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. Eighty-seven charter school counselors participated in the study, completing a demographic questionnaire and the School Counselor Ability Rating Scale. Descriptive statistics were used as well as ANOVAs to analyze between group differences. Findings include: 1) There is a significant difference between the Actual and Prefer SCARS scales 2) School counselors reported performing tasks related to the ASCA National Model rarely to occasionally 3) There is not a significant difference between licensed and unlicensed school counselors working in charter schools 4) There is a significant difference between Elementary, Middle, and High school counselors on the Intervention subscale 5) A comparison of program implementation between states found significant differences in two subgroups, curriculum and coordination 6) Program evaluation was reported to be done rarely to occasionally. Impacts of the results on the school counseling profession, professional organizations, and counselor education programs were further discussed.

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# Role and Function of School Counselors in Charter Schools

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### **Purpose and Background of the Study**

**Importance of the study.** The purpose of this study is to evaluate if school counselors in charter schools have a consistent role and function and if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model. For decades, educators across the country have been asking, “what does a successful school look like?” Charter schools emerged from a desire to answer that question. Charters are public schools, but with the addition of private funding and the autonomy to make decisions independent from the local school board. Since charters work independently of the school board, it is challenging to know what transpires in the school building and the various roles each staff member occupies (Gross, 2011). There are over 6900 public charter schools across the country and the number continues to grow (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools [NAPCS], 2019). This study will identify the role and function of school counselors in charter schools. School counselors, in particular, are absent from research on charter schools. It is not a mandated position and therefore easily merges with other roles. The fact that the position does not have to exist, combined with inexperienced administrators and faculty, as well as lack of district oversight, can change the purpose and daily function of school counselors as they operate in charter schools.

**Background.** Defining the job of school counselors is often a difficult task even in traditional schools. Counselors are typically asked to assume several duties, many of which are not traditional counseling tasks. The ASCA National Model (2012) is widely accepted as the blueprint for developing a counseling program. Charter schools, however, were developed as an alternative to public schools and as a way to experiment with new educational reforms that may not be possible in traditional public schools (Naslund & Ponomariov, 2019; Yoder & Rooney, 2007). As a result, the faculty and staff composition of charter schools frequently appears dissimilar from traditional public schools. It is not unusual to find the role of “Deans” in charter schools as well as titles that are often found in businesses instead of schools (Tennessee Charter School Association [TCSA], 2011; Wei, Patel, & Young, 2014). There is a substantial difference in the role and function from one charter school to the next (Buckley & Schneider, 2005; Goodridge, 2019). Examining the background, day to day roles, and overall program of school counselors in charter schools will provide insight as to what tasks school counselors are performing inside their individual school. Learning from other counselors in charter schools will unify the profession.

While the public school educational system in America has existed for centuries, charters originated a few decades ago. Charter schools generally begin with a skeletal faculty. One person will frequently have multiple titles (Yoder & Rooney, 2007). For example, one person may be principal and a teacher. Positions such as counselor are not added until the school is more developed. Therefore, there is insufficient research regarding the job role and function of school counselors in charter schools, which highlights the importance of this study.

In examining the evolution of the educational system in the United States, connections can be made between the Progressive Education Era and the current charter school movement

(Welch, 2011). One of the major ideas to emerge from the Progressive Education Era, was the notion of understanding the child in the context of his or her community instead of standardizing education in the classic European style (Cremin, 1964). The humanistic aspect of the era and progressive schools supports the concept of guidance and vocational counseling, which later evolves into school counseling (Brewer, 1942; Williamson, 1939).

### **Innovative Education**

**Progressive education.** The Progressive Education Era was roughly between 1890 and 1920. Experimental schools across the country were formed to discover a superior approach to educate citizens. With increased enrollment in schools and a greater diversity in the student body, schools needed reform. In 1919 the Progressive Education Association was founded with the mission of reforming the American school system (Altenbaugh, 2002). The Era “promoted various initiatives that advocated students’ independent thinking, more freedom for teachers, democratic classrooms, and social change” (Welch, 2011). The classrooms became more student-centered, which was a significant shift from previous models of education.

Experimentation in the classroom was embraced and new philosophical orientations in schools were created (Welch, 2011).

John Dewey was one of the leaders of the Progressive Movement. He believed schools to be an integral part of the community. Dewey understood the importance of not only having strong academic institutions, but also including vocational education in schools (Dewey, 1916). Progressive educators were interested in more than simply test scores (Altenbaugh, 2002). These educators were interested in human development. The emotional, social, and behavioral aspect of student development was addressed in progressive schools alongside the academic development

of students. Jane Addams, a progressive social worker who founded the Hull House in Chicago advocated for character education in schools (Altenbaugh, 2002).

One of the ancillary outcomes of the Progressive school movement was the birth of educational counseling. Central to establishing the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) were Jesse Davis, a Detroit high school principal and Eli Weaver, a New York City high school principal. They were the first to institute and advocate for educational counseling and career development in the schools (Brewer, 1942; Shertzer & Stone, 1976).

The educational system in the United States today embodies many of the principles and ideals that emerged from the Progressive Education Movement. The Movement has also influenced the development and structure of charter schools today, as well as many aspects of the role and function of school counselors (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

## **Charter Schools**

**History of charter schools.** As the United States slips farther behind in worldwide educational rankings, discussions as to how to improve the educational system in this country continue to grow. Educational reforms are at the center of many political discussions, whether it is at the local, state, or federal level (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005). Money is poured into States and local school districts that are willing to try innovative ideas. Tennessee and Delaware were the first states to receive money (\$500 million dollars in 2010) from the Gates Foundation Grant and Race for the Top Funds in part because of the willingness to loosen charter school laws and to support the charter school movement (Glazer, Massell, & Malone, 2019; TCSA, 2011).

In the early 1970's a professor at The University of Massachusetts- Amherst, Ray Budde, a former teacher and school administrator, developed the concept of chartering education (Budde, 1996). His original idea was to allow several teachers, or possibly a department within a

school, autonomy to make decisions independent of the principal and superintendent. This group would work as a “charter” within the school building and would answer only to the school board. Budde believed that control moved away from teachers with the addition of so many administrators and supervisors. Teachers were no longer treated as the experts in their classrooms. Budde suggested giving power back to the teachers to make decisions that did not have to be approved by several superiors first. Teachers would report to the Board of Education for support and oversight. His concept did not include chartering entire schools, but he eventually accepted the expansion of his idea (Budde, 1996).

In 1991, Minnesota was the first state to pass charter school legislation (Goodridge, 2019; Yoder & Rooney, 2007). City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota opened their doors in 1992 to become the first charter school in the United States. For the 2016-2017 school year, Minnesota has 167 charter schools teaching around 53,400 students across the state (NAPCS, 2018). Minnesota legislators saw charters as a way to provide school choice for all socio-economic groups and to raise the level of education. The NAPCS ranks Minnesota as having the second-best laws as pertaining to charters in the country. After Minnesota held the number one spot for years, Indiana now has the top position (NAPCS, 2019). Washington is the newest state to enact charter school legislation, doing so in 2016. Most elements of the legislation are based on the NAPCS model law. Now, Washington’s charter school laws rank in the top three in regards to charter school growth and accessibility to children. Washington currently has eight charter schools open and is laying groundwork to approve more charters (NACPS, 2019). Overall, charter school proponents are still fighting for more financial freedom and better ways to have charters authorized in the first place. There are seven states that do not have charter schools.

**Charter schools today.** Charter school laws vary from state to state, however, all charter schools have commonalities. The schools are created as an alternative to traditional public schools (NAPCS, 2018). All charters have to be approved by an authorizing board. In some geographical areas, that may be the local school district. It could also be the state board of education. In other geographical areas, it may be a separate entity entirely, such as a nonprofit or university (Yoder & Rooney, 2007). Charters schools are carefully monitored through local, state, and federal regulations and go through a periodic renewal process with the local school board. Additionally, charter schools are held accountable for meeting state and federal academic standards. If charter schools do not meet those standards, the process for terminating a charter is significantly faster than shuttering a traditional public school for the same reason (Merseth, 2009; Yoder & Rooney, 2007).

While charter schools have autonomy to structure the curriculum, school day, and school make-up, there is extra accountability when it comes to student achievement (Glazer et al, 2019). Charters are publicly funded with tax dollars, state funds, and federal funds (Naslund & Ponomariov, 2019; Yoder & Rooney, 2007). Almost all charters receive additional funding from private sources, which allows for additional programming (Goodridge, 2019). Additional programming can include extended school days, Saturday school, summer sessions, community experiences, and support staff (Merseth, 2009). Funding can be inconsistent and therefore places charters in a more difficult position to offer a full range of interventions and programs as traditional public schools (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005).

The National Charter School Research Project reviews the current state of charter schools and publishes research in hopes to inform policymakers, educational reformists, and the general public on charter school issues to promote improvement strategies. In a report published in 2011



entitled *Unlocking Doors to Student Success* (Gross, 2011), the organization strives to understand who and what makes up individual charter schools. Schools tend to work independently and little is communicated between charters, especially outside of their area or district (Buckley & Schneider, 2005). Gross (2011) believes that research on charters is important, so policymakers and the public is informed as to what transpires inside individual schools. Gross states, “Autonomy unlocks many doors, but new challenges lie behind them. Autonomy shifts responsibility to teachers and administrators in hope of encouraging local ingenuity and entrepreneurship.” This type of structure allows for creativity, but places faculty and staff of charters in the position to build a curriculum, lessons, and school structure. Creating something new and different is challenging and is not always effective. Charter schools functioning independently can find itself without the resources and ability to be both innovative and effective (National Charter School Study, 2013).

### **Professional School Counselors**

**History of school counseling.** The profession of school counseling is rooted in vocational counseling (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2003). In 1908, Frank Parsons wrote about the importance of vocational guidance in schools (Parsons, 1909). He believed trained staff should carry out this duty and that it is an important part of school programming (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2003). The trained staff originally was teachers, which in some states, teaching continues to be a requirement for licensure as a school counselor (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012). The duties of the vocational guidance position soon evolved into discussions about grades, interests, and issues preventing students from achieving success. As World War I and II were underway, vocational guidance was used to identify the areas of the military where young men would excel (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2003).

The school counseling profession has changed throughout the years. Historical events, such as World War I, the Great Depression, and Acts of Congress have facilitated the evolution of school counselors. Additionally, there are numerous key figures and organizations that have had critical roles in the evolution of school counseling. Frank Parsons, E. G. Williamson, and the American School Counseling Association have made great impacts on the profession.

***Frank Parsons.*** Although Frank Parsons was educated as an engineer, he became known as the father of vocational guidance (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). Parsons was interested in social reform and became concerned that society, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was not doing enough to help the youth with growth and development (Erford, 2011). Parsons worked with youth and saw the need for everyone to have an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as applied to vocational aspirations. By being aware of one's personal characteristics, an individual could develop greater self-awareness and find a path in life that leads to both personal and vocational fulfillment. To carry this idea to fruition, Parsons founded the Bureau of Vocational Guidance. The Bureau trained men to be counselors in various schools, YMCAs, and businesses (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012).

Parsons' work created a significant amount of interest in an increasingly technological world from both higher education institutions, such as Harvard and the National Manufacturers Association. Higher education, and manufacturers needed to fit people into new technological industries and in 1913 his work resulted in the founding of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) (Shertzer & Stone, 1976). The NVGA lobbied for the development of comprehensive high schools that would teach vocational trades.

Their lobbying efforts with congress resulted in the Smith-Hughes Act, formally known as the National Vocational Education Act. United States legislation, adopted in 1917, that

provided federal aid to the states for the purpose of promoting precollegiate vocational education in agricultural and industrial trade and in home economics. Included in this legislation was the provision for vocational advisors (vocational counselors) who would use the Parson Model to help place students in vocational course work that fit with their aptitudes, interests, and abilities (Shertzer & Stone, 1976). The next great stride for the profession came during World War I.

***World War I.*** During World War I and the Great Depression, the term vocational counselor became more common in educational settings. New vocational aptitude tests and intelligence tests were developed around this time (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). The use of the tests in vocational guidance became invaluable. High school students and returning military personnel were able to have a more focused career and educational path that centered around their strengths, weaknesses, and interests.

***The Great Depression.*** The Great Depression cause a nationwide unemployment crisis of disastrous proportions. Franklin Roosevelt's institution of the Works Product Administration (WPA) that built everything from post offices to the Hoover Dam, put America back to work. However, for the WPA to find the best fit between person and occupation, the United States Department of Labor tasked the newly formed U.S. Employment Service to construct a General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) that would attempt to fit person to occupation. A major contributor to the growth of this national vocational counseling program in the 1930s was the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Employment Stabilization Research Institute which it established. This institution's "Dust Bowl empiricism" was a major contributor to building tests and vocational counseling protocols into what would become known as Trait and Factor theory (Gilliland, James, & Bowman, 1989). One of the major contributors to that approach was

E. G. Williamson who soon moved the approach to the educational and vocational problems of students (Williamson & Biggs, 1979).

***E.G. Williamson.*** E. G. Williamson was a leader in moving the counseling profession away from just vocational counseling. He saw the importance of Parsons' work and took it a step further. He provided one of the first theories of counseling psychology by developing the idea of trait-theory of personality. When counselors provide treatment to a client, the counselor needs to take into account a comprehensive view of the client's personality and characteristics including personal and occupational interests and aptitudes (Williamson, 1939; Williamson & Biggs, 1979). Williamson wrote the first book on school counseling entitled *How to Counsel Students: A Manual of Techniques for Clinical Counselors* (Williamson, 1939). The National Defense Education Act also furthered the development of what is now known as school counseling (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012).

***National Defense Education Act.*** In 1958 the United States passed the National Defense Education Act. This Act was passed in response to Russia launching Sputnik I (Erford, 2011). The United States government grew concerned that students were not academically able enough in math and science to maintain a competition with other countries. The National Defense Education Act had major implications for vocational guidance. NDEA increased funding to local schools. Part of the funding had to be used to hire more secondary school counselors (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). The secondary school counselors were expected to have specialized training in vocational guidance, knowledge of college admission, and counseling skills. More students enrolled in college with the additional support of vocational and academic counseling from these NDEA school counselors. Seeing the importance of secondary school counselors also led to the

expansion of positions to middle and elementary schools (Erford, 2011). Indeed, the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 increased the number of elementary school counselors.

***Elementary and Secondary Education Act.*** The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed in 1965. The bill was part of President Johnson's "War on Poverty." This piece of legislation addressed the issue of inequality in education. The law provided extra funding and programming for impoverished schools. Through these funds, more school counselors were placed in Title I (high poverty) schools (Jennings, 1995). As school counseling became a larger career field, organization of the profession and advocating for legitimacy became important. On a national level, the American School Counseling Association became the organization to lead the push for professionalization of school counseling by attempting to clearly define the role and function of school counseling.

### **American School Counseling Association**

**The beginning of ASCA.** In 1951 the NVGA's increase in membership and its increasing professional diversity resulted in the formation of the American Personal and Guidance Association (APGA) which formed a number of divisional organizations (Shertzer & Stone, 1976). No identified school counselor organization existed when it was initially formed. It was felt, however, that there was a need for a professional stand-alone school counselor organization. Thus, The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) came into existence in 1952 (ASCA, 2003). The organization assisted in defining the role of school counselors along with advocating and promoting the profession. ASCA, among its many roles as the professional organization for school counselors, provides counselors with national standards and ways to create a comprehensive counseling program (ASCA, 2003).

**Defining the role of counselor.** As early as 1974, a national discussion about defining the roles of school counselors started occurring. Stanley Baker (1974) explored school counselor effectiveness, specifically focusing on the job roles of counselors. Interestingly enough, Baker's primary grievances are arguments school counselors today are still fighting. For example, Baker contends that administrators need to ensure that the primary duty of counselors is counseling. He warned against counselors performing too many administrative tasks. Unfortunately, thirty-five years later, counselors continue to define their roles within schools and advocate for the ability to perform the tasks they are trained to do. School counselors continue to struggle with job ambiguity and confusion, due to misunderstandings among important stakeholders about their roles (Bardhoshi, Schweinle, & Duncan, 2014; Holman & Grubbs, 2018; Holman, Nelson, Watts, 2019). Additionally, Baker (1974) argued that school counselors are not in a position to forcefully stand up for themselves because of the inherent power differential within the counselor-administrator relationship. Therefore, counselors are often taken advantage of and used ineffectively because it is assumed they will do whatever the administrator wishes. This power differential is not something to overlook and the concept needs to be applied to the current study in regard to charter school administration and counselors.

Within one school day, counselors may be asked to perform dozens of tasks unrelated to school counseling. Often administrative tasks or clerical tasks are given to school counselors (Bardhoshi, Schweinle, & Duncan, 2014; Holman & Grubbs, 2018; Holman, Nelson, Watts, 2019). It is important to understand school counselor roles and to consider how administrators perceive the importance of these positions. In an article by Beale and McCay (2001), hiring practices of school counselors were examined and advice was conveyed to administrators regarding critical counseling skills necessary to be successful. The authors suggested that

administrators ensure school counselors are well versed in crisis intervention in addition to daily classroom interventions when dealing with low-achieving students and ones with behavioral issues. Administrators are likely to overlook these seemingly obvious job requirements because it is assumed that school counselors would know how to deal with these situations. Depending on the background, years of experience, and type of environment that the counselor is coming from; the counselor may be out of practice or have no knowledge in dealing with behavioral issues or crisis situations. ASCA has helped counselors unify the professional and define roles and function more clearly (Carey & Dimmitt, 2008).

**National model.** The ASCA National Model (2003; 2012) was created to provide a blue print for school counselors to help design their school counseling programs. Musheno and Talbert (2002), further the idea with the *Transforming School Counseling Initiative* (TSCI). The authors believe school counselors are under appreciated and through a more focused counseling program, it is possible for school counselors to gain respect from coworkers and still have a significant impact on the students. TSCI partially focuses on the collaboration with coworkers in the local school environment and with the community. Through meetings and communication with various stakeholders, interventions for students involve the school counselor and others. A variety of people have input in the student's wellbeing, including the student. Additionally, school counselors will be aware of local resources that can enhance the counseling program (Musheno & Talbert, 2002). TSCI also encourages counselors to consider leadership roles at the school and in the community.

Gathering data and assessing how it can propel the school counseling program is critical for accountability. The ASCA National Model (2012) requires that all activities are informed by data gathered and evaluated in both formative and summative assessments (Young &

Kaffenberger, 2018). Musheno and Talbert (2002) give the example of attendance rates and how counselors can analyze data to provide more focused interventions on increasing school attendance. The outcome data can serve as proof to administration, the district, and stakeholders that the counseling program is effective. School counselor preparation programs need to teach students the importance of a data driven program (Wilkerson & Eschbach, 2009)

**Preparation programs.** School counselor preparation programs are the first step in defining school counseling roles. It is important to evaluate preparation programs, so it will be known what school counselors are trained to do. It is irresponsible, but not unexpected, to have school employees, and most particularly school counselors, performing duties in which he or she is not trained (Goodman-Scott, 2015). Hayes and Paisley (2002) proposed that preparation programs transform orientations from individual to system. The authors argued that counselors need to be defined within the context of the system and that job duties need to be seen within the context of the district. There is a significant difference between school counselors and clinical counselors and that difference needs to be considered during training programs. Overall, Hayes and Paisley (2002) propose training programs become more functional and provide students with real-world applications instead of a large focus on theoretical concepts (Hayes & Paisley, 2002).

### **American School Counselor Association National Model**

In March of 2001, a groundbreaking initiative was brought forth to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2013). The idea of a national school counseling program model was developed. The model was envisioned as a guide for school counseling programs across the nation. Counselors would need to tailor the model to their school needs, but overall the model should be able to be implemented in any school. The model provides an “organizational framework and accountability system to determine how well students have met the standards or



have achieved intended outcomes.” (ASCA, 2012) The purpose of the National Model is to unify the counseling profession and to also set expectations for school counseling programs across the country.

**ASCA system levels.** There are four system components to the ASCA National Model for school counseling programs. They are foundation, management, delivery, and accountability systems (ASCA, 2003; ASCA, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011). All of the components are interconnected and help to reinforce each other. Each system was created with overriding themes in mind. ASCA identified four themes that should be interwoven in each system in order for an effective counseling program to be carried out (ASCA, 2012).

**ASCA themes.** The four themes are leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systemic change (ASCA, 2003; ASCA, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011). Leadership refers to the idea that counselors should be primary advocates for all students in the school and ensuring that the students receive the best education possible. Advocacy means that counselors work in the best interest of students and address the needs of not only the individual student, but also the entire student body (ASCA, 2005; ASCA, 2003; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011). Counselors have a special role at the school that enables them to work with all students and can advocate change for all students. In order to successfully execute this overwhelming job, counselors need to collaborate and team with stakeholders. Developing relationships with students, parents, teachers, support staff, and community members is crucial.

The final theme, which encompasses the goal of the counseling program, is systemic change. The idea is that school counselors need to support all students. The role is no longer about just helping various individual students. Counselors need to analyze data and find ways to impose systemic change so there are long-term solutions to issues standing in the way of

students' success in and outside of the classroom (ASCA, 2005; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012).

These themes need to be kept in mind when looking at the four systems that comprise the ASCA National Model.

***Foundation.*** The first component of the ASCA National Model is the foundation (ASCA, 2012). The foundation is a critical piece of the model. It sets the basis for the rest of the program. The foundation is the plan for what students will know and what outcomes will be seen as a result of the implementation of the school counseling program. The foundation should incorporate the beliefs and philosophy of the program as well as its mission (ASCA, 2012). Additionally, the ASCA National Standards and competencies need to be adhered to. There are three domains outlined by ASCA, academic, career, and personal/social. These domains need to be incorporated into the foundation of the program (ASCA, 2005; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012).

***Delivery.*** The second element of the ASCA National Model is the delivery system (ASCA, 2012). This element addresses how the program will be executed. There are four areas that need to be considered according to ASCA when implementing the program. Guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and systems support (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). The guidance curriculum is created for the entire school. Lessons that build character, develop career interest, and provide academic skills are a large part of any school counseling program. Individual student planning refers to activities involving helping individual students with future planning. Activities can range from career guidance to scheduling courses for academic success. Responsive services are prevention and intervention services. This area includes any immediate or future needs of students from referrals to community services to conflict resolution. Finally, the last area of the delivery system component is systems support. School counselor activities such as professional development, testing, consultations all fit in this

category (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2003; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). All four of these areas are necessary to carry out the ASCA National Model as intended for the delivery system component (ASCA, 2012).

**Management.** The third element of the ASCA National Model is management systems (ASCA, 2012). This is an important component for effective delivery of the entire school counseling program. It is the organizational piece. Management systems include everything from defining job responsibilities to when they will be performed to analyzing data to ensure an effective program (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012).

**Accountability.** The last component of the ASCA National Model is accountability (ASCA, 2012). Accountability is what many principals and district leaders look for in regard to performance evaluations (Stone & Dahir, 2011). They want to know what it looks like when a counselor is performing his or her job satisfactorily. Student performance standards allow counselors to track their progress with the program. It is also a critical part in evaluations for school counselors (Dimmit, 2009). School counselors are able to use the feedback to adjust and grow their counseling program (Stone & Dahir, 2011).

**ASCA standards and outcome data.** School reforms across the country demand outcomes that can be tracked with quantitative data. Teachers have been given much guidance as to how to structure their classes and the expected outcomes. School counselors, however, have fallen into a less defined area (Dimmit, 2009). While outcomes need to be based in data, how to do this and what data to use has been unclear. The ASCA National Model, however, attempts to provide clarity on the matter. Each school district and each school within that district is different, so school counselors need to use the ASCA National Model as a starting point and figure out how to make the model fit within the context of their school (ASCA, 2012).

In addition to the four components of the ASCA National Model, there are standards for school counselors to follow (ASCA, 2012; Campbell & Dahir, 1997). The standards are a guide to show what knowledge and skills students should develop from a school counseling program. There are three domains for the standards: academic, career, and personal/social development. Each domain is divided into competencies and indicators (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). By following the standards in the ASCA National Model, school counselors have a plan laid out for them. It should be the driving force behind any school counseling program that follows the ASCA National Model (Gysbers & Lapan, 2003). There are resources available to help counselors create this type of comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2003; ASCA, 2012). Many states and districts require school counselors to follow these standards. In summation, the ASCA National Model is a clear way to evaluate school counselors and for school counselors to evaluate themselves (Dimmit, 2009).

One of the most important results of the ASCA National Model is that it allows school counseling programs to be outcome oriented (Dimmit, 2009). Every task a school counselor does in his or her day should fit within the confines of the model and therefore can be linked to student outcome data (ASCA, 2012). School counselors are able to prove, with data, that what they do is important and has a significant, positive influence on the students (Gysbers & Lapan, 2003). The National Model also gives clarity to others in the school and various stakeholders as to what tasks school counselors perform. School counselors are also able to see what it is that they do during the school year and their strengths and weaknesses in the various components (ASCA, 2005; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). Having to train school counselors to use the American School Counselor Association National Model requires counselor education programs to be outcome oriented and evidenced based in training school counselors. To ensure that

happens, counselor education programs need to train school counselors in a common set of educational standards.

### **Importance of the Study**

This study is significant because the American School Counselor Association National Model is used as the standard for public school counseling programs across the nation (ASCA, 2003). Charter schools are based on the idea of innovation and educational reform (NAPCS, 2018). In doing that, job roles are often times redefined. ASCA's National Model is in place to unify the school counseling profession and bring uniformity to the job role as well as provide a framework for a comprehensive school counseling program. This study will evaluate the job roles of school counselors in a sampling of charter schools. It will also investigate job function, both actual and preferred, as reported by the school counselor. The study will compare and contrast the role and function of school counselors in various types of charter schools and with varying experience.

Charter Schools are a recent education reform, with many aspects unstudied. Using the ASCA National Model as the baseline, research will be conducted to see how closely school counselors in charter schools follow the National Model. School counselors have an important role in education. Research on the role and function of school counselors in charter schools needs to be conducted to gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences of the role and function in various charter schools throughout the country. The American School Counselor Association places great importance on the National Model and without research on the role and function of school counselors in charter schools, there is no way to know what school counseling services over 3 million students across the country are receiving.

## **Research Questions**

Based on the foregoing discussion of the philosophy, standards, and history of charter schools and the birth and evolution of school counseling, the following research questions are proposed:

1. Is there a difference between the actual role and the preferred role of school counselors in charter schools as measured on the SCARS?
2. Does the actual role of school counselors in charter schools differ from the ASCA National Model?
3. Do licensed and unlicensed school counselors employed in charter schools differ in their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
4. Is there a difference between elementary, middle, and high school counselors in charter schools with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
5. Is there a difference between school counselors in charter schools working in Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
6. How do school counselors in charter schools describe evaluation their comprehensive school counseling program for effectiveness?

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms will be used throughout this study. The definitions of the terms are as follows:

*Charter schools:* Charter schools are public schools, independent of traditional district school boards. Parents, teachers, community members, educators to provide students with an alternative to private and public schools form these schools already in existence. Charter schools

are independent of many bureaucratic regulations, which allows for innovative educational practices. Charters are held to high standards and are required to participate in state testing and follow federal guidelines in regard to accountability (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2018).

*Traditional Public Schools:* Kindergarten through twelfth grade education is available to all children at tax-payer expense. Students are assigned a certain school in their school district to attend. Students and families may opt out of their traditional public school to attend, private, charter, magnet, optional, or another alternative school setting.

*School counselors:* School counselors are trained counselors specializing in educational settings. Generally, school counselors work in elementary and secondary schools to help students with emotional, behavioral, and social issues. School counselors also focus on career and educational programming (ASCA, 2012).

*American School Counselor Association National Model:* The American School Counselor Association is a professional organization that unifies and advocates for the school counseling profession. As part of the unifying process, the organization developed a National Model. The National Model provides a blueprint for counseling programs across the country (ASCA, 2012). The Model has standards and domains that lay out what an ideal school counseling program should look like.

*Comprehensive School Counseling Program-* Based on the ASCA National Model, a school counselor creates a counseling program that helps all students succeed. The program is data driven with measurable outcomes that align with the mission of the school (ASCA, 2012).

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **Introduction**

Charter schools have become a mainstream educational reform in the past two decades. There is a limited amount of research on the effectiveness of charter schools due to the schools being relatively new. Most of these studies compare charter schools to local public schools. A few of the studies disaggregate the data further by evaluating specific types of charter schools, exploring the management of charter schools, or the instructional style. Most of the research is qualitative and focused on individual schools. In this chapter, the literature on charter school effectiveness will be reviewed. There is almost no research on school counselors in charter schools. As charter schools develop, the role and function of school counselors will also evolve. There is an adequate amount of literature on school counselors in general and on the importance of character education, which is an important aspect of a school counselor's job and often a focus in charter school curriculum. That research will be included in this chapter.

#### **Charter Schools**

In a study conducted by Nathan Gray, *School Choice and Achievement: The Ohio Charter School Experience* (2012), Gray assesses the result of competition from charters on the local public school system. Charters are frequently regarded as a way to implement many school reform ideas, such as longer school days, longer school years, and performance based incentives for teachers. Studies focus on how well the school reforms are working in charters and improving student performance on standardized tests. Gray, instead, explores how the competition affects the local public school system. Ohio is chosen as the geographical location in which to conduct the study because Ohio law allows for liberal expansion of charter schools.



Ohio's charter school law passed in 2003 created school choice for many areas, not just poor performing school districts. Gray was able to analyze the systematic effects of charter schools because of the complications traditional public schools in Ohio face by the new idea of increased school choice competition. Gray states, "If schools do not at least feel a threat from competition, then much of the theory surrounding charter schools and other accountability measures are seriously flawed and policies should change" (2012). Gray is of the belief that the educational system works similarly to business. Competition is a motivator to improve. Through school choice, the traditional public school system will need to make reforms in order to remain competitive.

Gray (2012) states, "introducing school choice into the educational system through charter schools is hypothesized to yield two distinct types of effects on academic achievement: participant effects and systematic effects." Participant effects refer to the individual achievement of students who attend the charter school. Systematic effects refer to the impact charter schools have on the educational system as a whole. The results suggest that the school choice competition provided because of charter schools have had a positive effect on the achievement of traditional public schools in Ohio. The author concludes that consequences and incentives are motivators for schools.

### **Progressive School Movement and the Charter School Movement**

Matthew Welch (2011) conducted a comparison study of charter schools and schools in the 1930s and 1940s that participated in the Eight Year Study. The Eight Year Study was conducted during the Progressive Era. Thirty schools were given the ability to be as innovative as possible. The idea was schools that were given total freedom to educate students however they decided would provide insight and inspiration to all public schools. The hope was that new ideas

would be developed and the educational system as a whole would progress. Much like charter schools in this era, the idea does not always become reality. Many issues arose in the Eight Year Study and many issues continue to arise for charter schools that make innovation difficult.

Welch (2011) hypothesizes that even though charter schools have autonomy, many of them are not as innovative in practice as they state in theory. Charter schools stem from the idea that “current public school policy and reform debates often connect freedom and innovation, seeking to equate new ideas and educational progress with the obliteration of standardization and bureaucracy” (Welch, 2011). Through limited government control, charters are thought to put school reforms into action. Charters often rely on extended school days, extended school years, and merit based pay for teachers (Pogrow, 2006). Charters rarely have unionized teachers, so school leaders have the freedom to make the decisions in the school without regulations from the government, but also without push back from teacher organizations (Jochim & Lavery, 2019; Welch, 2011).

**School reforms.** A cornerstone for charter schools is freedom to be creative with the curriculum and how material is taught to students (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005). Charter school students are tested with state tests to ensure students and teachers are meeting federal standards. In doing so, the creativity for curriculum is often stifled (Welch, 2011). Welch also discovered that the curriculum does not deviate much from traditional public schools due to several variables that are not often taken into account when conceptualizing charter schools.

Many charters, when first starting, have a limited budget. Budget constraints can force charters to have a skeletal staff and limited instructional resources (Goodridge, 2019; Turnamian, 2011). Reforms such as small classroom sizes or individual instruction may not be plausible due to staffing issues. Charters that are part of a larger network of charter schools, however, such as

Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), have an abundance of resources (Angrist et al, 2010; Tough, 2012). Schools with larger budgets often choose to spend the money extending the school year or school day, provide experiential learning opportunities, or give bonuses to high performing teachers (Angrist et al, 2010). Budgets are another area where differences between various charter schools are highlighted (Angrist et al, 2010; Turnamian, 2011).

Additionally, school reforms are risky. Many charter school boards are hesitant to approve reforms that have not been thoroughly researched. Innovation is stifled when data is required to back up the reform before it is allowed to be implemented. Peter Turnamian spent years leading the charter school movement in Newark, New Jersey. He now advocates against charter expansion and claims there is a significant amount of corruption on charter school boards. As Turnamian (Tough, 2012) states:

I worry that if charter schools are allowed to expand without higher levels of accountability, they will further fracture and dilute the problems of our public education system. Worse, these problems will be masked by hundreds of small Boards of Trustees created to govern individual charter schools. Charter schools are not miraculously immune to the governance issues that have been known to plague traditional public schools. The governance structure of charter schools is just as vulnerable to cronyism and political corruption as the traditional public school system (p. 137).

Parents tend to question reforms that cannot be backed up with data. Welch found that parental and cultural beliefs in what the educational system should look like hindered the Eight Year Study schools. The same can be found in charter schools. It is difficult to enact reforms when school stakeholders are not on board (Welch, 2011).

**Benefits of charter schools.** Charter schools, however, do add value to educational reform, especially when the traditional public school for the area served is underperforming (Glazer et al., 2019; Urban Charter School Study, 2015). Charter schools frequently offer a smaller school setting for students. Edith Barrett found in her study, *Evaluating Education Reform: Students' Views of Their Charter School Experience* (2003), that students enjoy school more when they connect with adults in the school. When a student feels supported and wanted, he or she is more likely to stay in school and able to face challenges that would otherwise throw the student off the graduation track. Students who stated they were satisfied with the charter school experience, felt this way because of connections made with teachers (Barrett, 2003). Some traditional public schools are not able to offer small classes. If a charter school is able to, the experience for students seems to be overwhelmingly positive (Yoder & Rooney, 2007). School counselors can have a major impact on this aspect of the school experience. If counselors in charter schools have great access to students and are able to spend a significant portion of the time in direct contact with them, students may very well be more satisfied with their school experience.

Charters are given freedom to create new school programming (Merseeth, 2009). This includes roles being defined differently from traditional public schools and distributing decision-making powers to various school stakeholders. Gross (2011) finds that due to extreme pressure from local, state, and federal entities to perform well, many charters employ practices consistent with what is being done in public schools (Yoder & Rooney, 2007). While innovation is the ideal, charters are expected to show immediate positive results with students. Charter schools are often hesitant to get creative with educational reform (Welch, 2011). There is not much room for

failure, which leads school leaders to play it safe academically. Thus, in practice, charters may not have as much freedom as the public is led to believe (Gross, 2011).

Another example of the freedom charter schools have is with hiring practices. In almost all states, charters have to abide by state law when hiring and therefore have to ensure teachers are highly qualified and licensed to teach (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005; Wei et al., 2014). A current popular educational reform in charter schools is to look for experts in various professional fields and persuade them to change careers to teaching (Yoder & Rooney, 2007). Gross finds this hotly debated tactic is not always possible because of licensing issues, but also because of financial restraints of charters. Budgets in charters tend to be unstable compounding the reasons why potential teachers may not want to risk working in charters (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005; Wei et al., 2014).

Many charters schools place great importance on time spent in the classroom. By extending the school day and the school year, students are able to receive more instruction, which can include circling back to review information not previously mastered, hitting all the state benchmarks, and extending the learning. The Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University published the Urban Charter School Study in 2015. Using information from the National Charter School Study the Center published in 2013, the Urban Charter School Study (2015) identified 41 urban regions and provided an in-depth analysis of the charter school performance in those cities related to the traditional public schools. Of the regions studied, for the 2011-2012 school year, “charter students received 58 additional learning days in math and 41 additional learning days in reading relative to their TPS peers.” The Center for Research on Education Outcomes found that while quality of instruction is important, quantity of instruction

is a critical part of urban charter schools. An increased amount of time students spent in schools was found to yield positive results (Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2015).

Greater demands placed on teachers, however, increases teacher turnover (Fusco, 2017). In Mark Fusco's article, *Burnout factories: The Challenge of Retaining Great Teachers in Charter Schools* (2017), he describes his experience teaching in an academically successful charter school in New York City. Teachers worked hard, worked long hours including weekends, and benefits such as retirement accounts were not as good as traditional public schools. Fusco noticed the majority of teachers would leave after two or three years. Students were discouraged because they were unable to develop lasting relationships with teachers. Administrators were frustrated because they would spend a significant amount of time recruiting highly qualified teachers, developing teaching skills, and mentoring teachers (Fusco, 2017). To address the high turnover rate, administrators sent out a survey identifying barriers for teachers and over the years have worked to address solutions to the main reasons for teachers leaving. The school has improved the bonus structure, developed grants for teachers to be more innovative in their teaching practices, decreased school hours, and provided more opportunities for teachers to get involved in the school such as athletic programs and clubs. Administrators have seen far less turnover since the reforms and additional benefits have been introduced (Fusco, 2017). Fusco discusses how other charter schools have also developed creative incentives to combat high teacher turnover rates while continuing to offer students a high quality education. The incentives include higher teacher salaries, allowing teachers a few days off a year to schedule doctor appointments, on-site daycare, and improved worker benefits (Fusco, 2017).

**Charter School Outcome.** Scott Imberman in an article entitled, *Achievement and Behavior in Charter Schools: Drawing a More Complete Picture* (2007), examined how charter

schools effect students in the long-term and weighed the costs of this movement against the outcome data. Imberman (2007) found that students made some behavioral improvements while enrolled in the charter school, but that the improvements were not long-term. When students returned to their traditional public school, any behavioral progress made was lost. As for academic achievement, there were mixed results. Imberman makes the argument that for the fastest growing educational reform strategy in operation today, there are very few results indicating additional funds should be spent supporting charter schools. Further, his study is one of the few looking at differences between startup charters and conversion charters.

Conversion charters are schools acquired by a charter school administration. Many times, in conversion charters, students are zoned to the school (Glazer et al., 2019). Therefore, conversion charter schools are not always about school choice, but rather about reform strategies. Startup charters are about school choice and reform strategies. They are started by a group of reformists who believe they have ideas that can better the educational choices available to the local community (Imberman, 2007). By showing how little data there is to support the charter school movement, Imberman brings to light one aspect of why charter schools evoke so much controversy. The movement, in general, is only beginning to have long-term studies showing the impact it has on students. Additionally, there is a great breadth of charter school types, so it is difficult to compare or speak to the movement as a whole, when individual schools and state laws are diverse.

The Center for Research on Education Outcomes published the National Charter School Study in 2013. In the study, some of the concerns brought up by Imberman (2007) are addressed. The diversity of charter schools across the country is a barrier for a large scale study. Researchers collecting data were unable to conclude if charter schools are a successful

educational movement or a failure. This study looks at 27 states and disaggregates the data based on state laws. Additionally, the analysis uses student demographics such as race, economic status, English Language Learner status, Special Education status, and years of enrollment in a charter school.

In the book *Charter Schools: Hype or Hope*, Jack Buckley and Mark Schneider (2007), highlight the inconsistencies from one charter school to another. The book focuses on charter schools in the Washington, DC area. Some of the charter schools studied are successful, while others fail miserably. Overall, the authors find charter schools do not have the data to support the claim that they are engaging in positive school reform. Buckley and Schneider reiterate Imberman's (2007) claim that there is too little data on charter schools despite the movement growing rapidly. According to Buckley and Schneider, (2007) the available data shows students who attend charter schools do not outperform students who attend traditional public schools. The authors are clear in saying charter school education varies greatly. There are outliers on both ends of the success spectrum. The conclusion for Buckley and Schneider is that charter schools are not doing any harm to students, but charter schools are not meeting their goals and expectations (2007). Further complicating the ability to evaluate outcomes, are the variety of charter schools in existence. Following are some of the different types of charter schools now operating.

**Conversion versus startup.** Conversion charters were once traditional public schools, but changed to charter schools. The conversion can happen one grade level at a time or all at once. Conversions usually take over the facility and may retain some faculty. Startup charters are new schools that require new facilities, new faculty, and new students. Many conversion charters decide to take over one or two grade levels in a school, instead of the entire school all at once.



Each school year, the charter school will take over an additional grade level, until the charter school controls the entire school (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005; Glazer et al, 2019). Startup charter schools may also choose to develop the school over time. It is a frequent practice for startups to open a school with one or two grade levels and grow over time (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005).

**For-profit versus non-profit charter schools.** Another distinguishing feature of charter schools is if they are for-profit or non-profit schools. The majority of charter schools open across the country are non-profit schools. Several states do allow for-profit charter management companies to open schools. Approximately 15% of charter schools across the country are managed by for-profit organizations (NAPCS, 2018). For-profit schools are not popular in public opinion and are one of the reasons charter schools are a controversial educational reform. For-profit charter schools exist on the theory that schools would be more effective if they were run like businesses (King, 2007; Singleton, 2017). For-profit schools focus on where money needs to be spent and cut down on inefficient spending. When an organization is able to open several charter schools, that helps to reduce cost per school because many of the larger expenses can be used in numerous schools (i.e.- curriculum). While it is often difficult to understand what is going on in the for-profit charter organizations because many are private organizations, there are mixed results as to their success. The largest for-profit charter management company, Edison, closed schools across the country and now only manages a handful because it was challenging and ultimately not profitable to run schools under various state laws and regulations (Morley, 2006).

### **Disaggregated Data on Charter Schools**

Evaluating the success and failures of charter schools is a complicated process. Charter schools strive to be innovative, but many are still in their formative years and have not been able

to demonstrate the entire vision of the school. Positive results are expected quickly. Additionally, charter schools are frequently studied together, when many of them are unique. Richard Buddin and Ron Zimmer (2005) in their study, *Student Achievement in Charter Schools: A Complex Picture*, divided charters into four categories and evaluated the clusters instead of charters as a whole. The clustered groups are: Conversion charters, startup charters, charters that rely on classroom instruction, and charters that educate mostly outside the classroom.

In California, there are two types of instruction charter schools use, classroom instruction and non-classroom setting instruction. Schools that use classroom instruction are similar to traditional schools. Curriculum in these schools will be similar to one another and more similar to traditional public schools. Schools that have non-classroom instruction are non-traditional schools. These are schools where students spend a significant portion of time outside of the classroom. Examples include online schools, homeschooling, or independent studies. In order for California to classify schools as non-classroom instruction, students must be outside of the classroom 20 percent of the time (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005).

Buddin and Zimmer's (2005) study is relevant and important to the existing literature on charter schools because they disaggregate the data differently than most studies. Startup charters and conversion charters face different sets of obstacles and therefore may expect different results. Students spending the school day in classroom-based instruction are more traditional than the non-classroom instruction. The purpose of much of the research on charters is to discover how effective charter schools are and if this is a positive reform.

Built into the statistical analysis performed by Buddin and Zimmer (2005) were the student's background, school specific effects, and grade cohort. In summary what they found when these variables were factored into achievement is when compared to traditional public

schools, charter school students had slightly lower test scores than similar students at traditional public schools.

Specifically, students attending conversion charter schools showed slightly higher results on reading scores and slightly lower scores on math than students in a traditional public school. Students in startup elementary charter schools scored 5 to 7 percentage points lower than traditional elementary school students from similar backgrounds. High school students attending charter schools had lower reading and math scores than high school students in traditional public schools (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005).

When Buddin and Zimmer (2005) looked into the type of instruction (classroom and non-classroom based), the importance of separating charters into categories becomes clear. Students attending non-classroom based instructional conversion and startup charters had significantly lower reading and math scores than students in traditional charter schools. Students, however, attending classroom based instruction conversion and startup charters were equivalent to traditional public schools.

This study shows the importance of differentiating charter school types in order to have the most accurate data when assessing the status of charter schools. This study also shows the complexity of assessing charter schools. When attempting to evaluate school reforms, it is critical to look at the particular reform and not generalize. Additionally, this study shows why one charter school may be successful while another one is not.

### **Charter Management Organizations**

In the article, *Charter Management Organizations and the Regulated Environment: Is It Worth the Price?*, Joan Goodman (2013) analyzes the implications of Charter Management Organizations (CMO) on the educational landscape of the nation. She states CMOs are

“characterized by centralized management teams that shape and supervise clusters of schools.” Goodman points out that while there is diversity among CMOs, most ascribe to a set formula. CMOs believe in strict, no excuses environments. Behavior is a focus with the understanding that learning is optimized when distractions are minimized. Goodman’s study is of particular interest because the majority of charter school studies focus on academic achievement. While academic data cannot be overlooked, Goodman is interesting in studying how CMOs work on a daily basis instead of only looking at long term results. She observes that the ridged, controlled environments are wonderful for many students, but not for all. Most CMOs open in urban, poor areas. The environment at CMO run charter schools is a drastic change from not only the students former schools, but from any environment the student has been exposed to. As a result, many students who start at a CMO run charter school are unable to finish the year. Therefore, academic results of CMO run charter schools are not always comparable to the local public school. The charter schools have students attending who are willing to conform to a controlling environment and those who are not willing to do so are not asked back to the school. Goodman notes students who do attend the charter schools learn in environments free of violence and many distractions. They may not have access to extracurricular activities traditional public school students do, but for many the benefits out way the negatives (Goodman, 2013).

In *Unlocking the Secrets of High-Performing Charters*, James Peyser (2011) also examines charter schools that are a part of a Charter Management Organization. CMOs oversee operations and Peyser looks specifically at the Charter Management Organizations supported by NewSchools Venture Fund. To measure success, Peyser studies schools the CMOs that NewSchools Venture Fund supports and compares them to traditional, local public schools. Statewide assessments are used to compare traditional, public schools and the charter schools

(Peysner, 2011). The CMOs studied manage charter schools serving mostly low income, high-needs students. These charter school demographics match those of the comparison group of regular public school students (Peysner, 2011).

Peysner found that half of the Charter Management Organizations funded by NewSchools Venture fund were outperforming their local school district counterparts. These charter schools had an average proficiency rate (met the state performance benchmark) of 15 percent higher (Peysner, 2011). Proficiency rates were 5 to 15 percent higher than the local district in 20 percent of the CMOs. Another 20 percent of the CMOs were scoring around the same as the local district. The remaining CMOs were performing worse than the local district (Peysner, 2011). Perhaps even more significant is charter schools within the same Charter Management Organization varied significantly with test scores.

Another important factor in the success of charter schools explored by Peysner is attrition of students. He found charter schools (within the CMOs studied) with the lowest rate of student turnover had higher test scores. An analysis of the data shows students who stay in the charter schools run by CMOs funded by NewSchools Venture Fund make greater gains than their local school district counterparts. (Peysner, 2011) Peysner points to the idea that when students have the consistency of one school for many years, students perform better on state assessments. Additionally, Peysner surmises, when parents place students in a high performing school, they are less likely to move the student, which seems to be beneficial for both the student and the school. (Peysner, 2011)

### **State Charter School Legislation**

Charter school laws are defined by the state as opposed to federal regulations. As a result, states have the ability to control charter schools within their state. State laws can vary widely.

Renzulli and Roscigno (2005) in their article, *Charter School Policy, Implementation, and Diffusion Across the United States* looked at state regulations and how state laws effect one another. More specifically the authors analyzed interstate dynamics and how adjacent states influenced regulations within a region.

Renzulli and Roscigno (2005) found that states next to a state with strong charter school laws were significantly more likely to have a charter school law. Interestingly, a state with a strong charter school law did not effect the legislation in the region, only the adjacent states. The authors concluded the primary reason for the influence on adjacent states was simply the visibility of charter schools. When a state has a large number of charter schools, the adjacent state sees the schools and is more likely to adopt charter school legislation itself. Once the charter schools are not as visible, the laws of other states are not effected (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005). Additionally, the states adjacent to a state with strong charter school laws will not necessarily adopt strong laws themselves. The study found the states often times will adopt weak legislation, but will adopt legislation nonetheless.

The reason states enact charter school legislation is more than just a neighboring state enacting strong charter school laws. While visibility of other state's charter schools seems to be an influence in passing charter school legislation (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005), it arguably is not a motivating factor for creating charter schools. Barghaus and Boe (2011) in their article *From Policy to Practice: Implementation of the Legislative Objectives of Charter Schools* researched the motivation behind enacting charter school laws and when charter schools exist do they meet those expectations. The authors identified several key objectives states have when passing charter school legislation. The top objectives included more options for classrooms and schools

(as in special programming instead of a traditional school curriculum), allow teachers to have more influence over decision-making, and to give schools freedom from state and district policies.

Barghaus and Boe found charter schools actually do often meet the objectives. It was found that eighty-six percent of public schools had a traditional program and curriculum. Charter schools, by comparison, only had fifty-four percent of schools with a traditional program and curriculum. Charter schools met the objective of creating a more unique school program.

Teachers were found to have slightly more influence over decision-making when they worked in charter schools as opposed to their traditional public school counterparts. Additionally, charter school teachers reported having more control over their own classrooms than traditional school teachers. The results also showed charter school principals were under significantly less influence from the school district than traditional school principals. The main objectives for creating charter school legislation were met as reported in the results of this study. Interestingly though, Barghaus and Boe reported that while objectives for the charter schools were met, student achievement did not improve over traditional public schools (2011). The authors suggested charter school success, possibly, should be evaluated not only on student achievement, but other outcomes such as graduation rate, parental involvement, and behavior (Barghaus & Boe, 2011). All of these additional outcomes would be significantly impacted by the role of a school counselor.

In the study, *Innovative Education? A Test of Specialist Mimicry or Generalist Assimilation in Trends in Charter School Specialization over Time* (Renzulli, Barr, & Paino, 2015), the authors examine innovation in charter schools. The authors define innovative charter schools as schools that have a specialization or work with a special population that varies from what traditional public school programming offers. Findings from the study show that state

charter school laws impact innovation in charter schools. The authors note, “findings indicate that more restrictive charter school laws actually lend themselves to more specialization than do permissive laws” (Renzulli et al., 2015). While charter school advocates fight for broad charter school state laws, Renzulli, Barr, and Paino (2015) argue that if charter schools are an educational reform bringing new ideas and programming to public education, laws need to be restrictive. The laws need to be written in such a way that supports school specialization and values unique ideas instead of permissive laws that result in charter schools reproducing traditional public schools. State charter school laws dictate what charter schools will look like in the state and are a powerful force in educational reform (Renzulli et al., 2015).

### **School Counselors in Charter Schools**

**Role and function of school counselors.** The role and function of school counselors is often determined by the administration in a particular school. Traditional public school teachers have accountability measures such as district counseling supervisors, comprehensive school counseling plans, and regular evaluations. Nevertheless, the job role and function can vary from school to school (Fitch & Marshall, 2004). To collect process data on what a school counselor does in a typical school day, Jenna Scarborough (2005) developed an instrument, The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS). The scales align to the ASCA National Model. School Counselors are asked to rate on a frequency scale how often each action is performed and then how often he or she would prefer to perform each action. An example is “attend professional development activities” (Scarborough, 2005). A counselor will indicate how often he or she actually performs the task and then indicate how often he or she would like to perform the task. The 48-item survey is divided into five subgroups. Reliability and validity were



established for the subscales. “Non-school counselor program” items had moderate reliability (Scarborough, 2005).

In another study using the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005), Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) analyzed the differences between school counselors’ actual activities and their preferred activities. Additionally, the authors examined the factors that keep school counselors from performing the duties he or she would prefer to be doing. Interestingly, school counselors’ preferred activities on the rating scale closely aligned to the ASCA National Model and what is known to be a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012). School counselors recognize what they should be doing in school and what is the best practice, but it is often difficult to put the plan into action. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) found that elementary school counselors’ actual activities most closely aligned to their preferred activities. High school counselors’ were the least likely to engage in activities that they preferred to be doing. The authors also found that years of experience as being a school counselor impacted implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. The more years of experience a school counselor has the more likely he or she is carrying out a program that he or she would like to be doing and the more likely it is closely aligned to the ASCA National Model. Results also showed that school counselors who felt supported by their administrators performed actual tasks similar to their preferred tasks (Scarborough, 2008). School counselors need support to implement a comprehensive school counseling program.

**Role of school counselors in charters.** A search of the literature on school counselors in charter schools found insufficient research on the topic. School counselors have been absent from many conversations about school reform and have not been the focus of studies (House & Hayes, 2002). As House and Hayes (2002) states, “the omission of school counselors from

school reform efforts is an enormous mistake, especially when school counselors hold the keys to many students' dreams and aspirations." The research found, focused on college counselors. College counselors are high school counselors specifically tasked with preparing students for college (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011). Exploring the role and function of college counselors in a charter high school provides insight into the organizational structure of charter schools and will thus be discussed in this section.

**High school college counselors.** In the article *College Counseling in Charter High Schools: Examining the Opportunities and Challenges* (2008), Farmer-Hinton and McCollough studied the counseling department at one charter high school. Glenn Hills College Preparatory Charter High School had eight counselors. All counselors were considered college counselors. Each counselor is assigned a grade level and worked with the same caseload all four years of high school and for the first year of college. The college counselors were responsible for the role of school counselor as well because the college counselors believed there was a disconnect when students had too many people involved in different aspects of their education. The college counselors, therefore, were knowledgeable about all aspects of the student and were the adult students would go to for all their needs. This was a unique role and function for a college counselor, but due to autonomy of charter schools, the school defined job roles as they saw fit. Therefore, Glenn Hills did not have any school counselors, but had eight college counselors (Farmer-Hinton and McCollough, 2008).

In a mixed methods case study, Farmer-Hinton and McCollough conducted a total of 22 interviews about the counseling program with the counselors. Senior surveys, focus groups with senior students, and faculty interviews were also used to provide insight into the college counseling program at the school. The authors found the charter school was able to provide

school-based social capital in regard to college, which was not possible at other local high schools in the same region. Social capital, in this study, was defined as “the norms and information channels available to improve college access through social relationships” (Farmer-Hinton & McCollough, 2008). By integrating the idea of college into all aspects of the school day, students who came into the charter high school with little exposure to college, would gain the knowledge necessary to be socially and academically college ready. College counselors at this particular charter school discussed the evolution of the school counseling and college counseling program. None of the counselors were trained high school counselors. Their backgrounds were varied and included work in college admissions and social work. The counselors stated that during the first years of the charter school, there were many roles they had to assume outside of counseling. In doing so, the college counselors did not provide much college counseling or academic support and found themselves in a position of reactively providing counseling services. As the school developed and the organizational structure was revised, college counselors were able to focus on college mindsets and academics as well as providing for social, emotional, and behavioral needs (Farmer-Hinton and McCollough, 2008).

In the article, *Social Capital and College Preparation: Exploring the Role of Counselors in a College Prep School for Black Students* (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006), the authors focused on how school counselors are “institutional change agents.” Farmer-Hinton and Adams, study the same high school that Farmer-Hinton and McCullough examined in the article, *College Counseling in Charter High Schools: Examining the Opportunities and Challenges* (2008).

Counselors at Glenn Hills College Preparatory High School took on a combined role of school counselors and college counselors. As Famer-Hinton and Adams discuss (2008), the counselors chose to combine the two jobs for consistency and for the chance to become more familiar with

the students. The authors focus on social capital and how school counselors are integral in impacting students. Most of the students at the studied high school lived below the poverty level and would be first generation college students. The counselors were charged with the job to help all students have a college mindset and then also help with the transition to college.

The school was successful in their mission. For the first graduating class, 61% of the students were accepted to a four-year or two-year institution. Only 16% of these students entered the Glenn Hills reading on or above grade level. The study found “students benefited from school-based social capital that allowed them access to counselors who provided resources to assist with their college plans” (Hinton-Farmer & Adams, 2008). The college acceptance rate was significantly more successful than the local public schools in the area that had a far higher student to counselor ratio (Hinton-Farmer & McCollough, 2006).

### **Advocating for School Counselors in Charter Schools**

**Character education.** William Bennett was Secretary of Education from 1985-1989, serving under President Ronald Reagan (Lemming, 2001). He was a controversial figure due to his outspoken nature. Bennett was a huge proponent of character education and considered it one of his main focuses while in office (Lemming, 2001). He even published a collection of stories, *The Book of Virtues* (1996), to help children develop strong morals. Bennett is credited with making character education relevant to schools. While he advocated for it almost thirty years ago, character education in schools has gained popularity over the past fifteen years (Prestwich, 2004).

Character education is an important aspect of all school counseling programs. Depending on the grade level the amount of time a school counselor spends on character education changes (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). Dollarhide and Saginak (2012) estimate that high school

counselors spend around 15 percent of their time on the character education curriculum. Whereas elementary school counselors may spend as much as 50 percent of their time delivering character education. Many of the character education programs require school wide involvement, such as parent workshops, bullying awareness programs, Red Ribbon Week, or Advisory programs.

While all schools with comprehensive school counseling programs have character education, almost all of the most successful charter schools have an extensive character education program (Merseeth, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Charter schools often have extended school days and extended school years allowing for more flexibility in the curriculum and additional support courses. Character education is frequently integrated into the school culture and curriculum (Merseeth, 2009).

**Personal and social development in charter schools.** As James Peyser (2011) describes in his article exploring successful Charter Management Organizations, “the highest performing CMOs in the NewSchools portfolio tend to be those that have embraced a ‘no excuses’ approach to teaching and learning” (Peyser, 2011). Sarah Cohodes has similar findings in her article, “Charter Schools and the Achievement Gap” (2018). While most charter schools do not show significantly different outcomes from traditional public schools, charter schools that have a no excuses policy do produce large academic gains. As schools move towards that approach, it is important to fight for personal and social development and comprehensive school counseling programs to still be included in charter school curriculums.

Paul Tough’s book, *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* (2012) is becoming part of the reform landscape in some charter schools. Tough’s previous book, *Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada’s Quest to Change Harlem and America* (2008), focused on the Harlem Children’s Zone. It is a successful charter school that set in

motion many reforms in Harlem and eventually New York City (which has an impressive charter school movement) (Tough, 2008). Assumedly, because of Tough's knowledge of charters, many are becoming aware of his research on personal and social development.

In Tough's new book (2012), he argues that what matters most in life in order to succeed is personal and social development. Academics will only get people so far. It is non-cognitive skills, specific character traits that need to be developed in order for a student to be guaranteed success. Tough examines work being done in Martin Seligman's lab at the University of Pennsylvania. Seligman established the positive psychology movement and currently is working on the importance of specific character traits as tied to success.

The superintendent of the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) schools in New York City became interested in this same subject. KIPP is a network of charter schools across the country, some being part of a Charter Management Organization. KIPP in New York City (along with a prestigious private school in New York City) decided after a visit to Seligman's lab that certain character traits are so important they send home report cards with grades related to academics and report cards to let parents know how students are doing on these specific character traits. (Tough, 2012) The dean of students at KIPP stated in Tough's book (2012),

What is going on in character conversations like that one isn't academic instruction at all, or even discipline; it's therapy. Specifically, it's a kind of cognitive behavioral therapy, the very practical, nuts-and-bolts psychology technique that provides the theoretical underpinning for the whole positive psychology field. The kids who succeed at KIPP are the ones who can C.B.T. themselves in any moment. (p. 52)

With renewed focus on the importance of personal and social development, school counselors have a large role to play in charter schools. Thus, understanding what goes on in counseling programs from one charter school to the next is not only interesting, but it could provide valuable reform ideas.

Sociologist, Joanne Golann, spent 18 months conducting ethnographic fieldwork at a “no excuses” charter school. In her article “The Paradox of Success at a No-Excuses School” (Golann, 2015), she raises interesting questions about the popular urban reform model. The school where Golann conducts her research is set up similarly to the KIPP school where Tough (2012) conducted his research. Dream Academy students are academically successful under the no-excuses model, but Golann observes that students at the school are not developing the skills and behaviors needed to succeed in college and a middle-class environment (2015). Personal and social development is second to closing the achievement gap and raising test scores. Golann argues that a no-excuses environment creates worker-learners instead of lifelong learners. Teachers constantly reinforce to students the importance of following authority and are taught in a highly rigid environment. As an unintended consequence, students are not able to express their opinions, question authority, learn to be assertive, or fully develop noncognitive skills (Golann, 2015). Golann discusses that adding character education to the curriculum is not sufficient enough to help the students develop important soft skills to succeed in the broader academic and working world. Golann (2015) states “my study suggests that what students learn from school rules and social interactions may be more influential than what they learn from targeted lessons on character.” This study highlights the difficult balance of closing the achievement gap and developing skills within students to be successful beyond test scores.

Elias, DeFini, and Bergman (2010), conducted a study entitled, *Coordinating Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) Initiatives Improves School Climate and Student Learning*. Focusing on 600 school districts in New Jersey, the authors found the importance of character education programs not only on student wellbeing, but also in outcome data. The authors state, “students carry emotional burdens with them and are not willing or able to turn their attention to academic learning when the environment of the school is tense, demanding without being supportive.” Carrying out a successful character education program in a school requires hard work. Teachers across New Jersey complained initially about how teachers did not take character education seriously and therefore students did not take the lessons seriously. In order for character education to make a difference, the authors found that the entire school had to buy in to the program. The staff needed to understand the importance of character education and they also needed to have clear leaders to implement the program. The more organized the program, the more likely it was to be taken seriously and the lesson to be implemented appropriately.

### **School Counselor Effectiveness**

School counselor effectiveness has been a point at issue for decades. Ever since the occupation’s conception in the 1950s, counselors have been discussing job effectiveness and creating working models as to what effectiveness looks like (Brott, 2006; Rowe, Murphy, & De Csipkes, 1975;). Forty-four years ago, Rowe, Murphy, and De Csipkes (1975) surveyed studies exploring the concept of counselor effectiveness. Overall, there was no consensus as to how to operationalize the term. It was seen as a subjective, personal term meaning something different to each person. Rowe, Murphy, and De Csipkes (1975) cited an interesting study by Steffle, King, and Leafgren (1962), where counselors would nominate one another as being effective.



When asked, counselors had various versions of what they thought effectiveness encompassed. As mentioned earlier, Baker (1974) discussed effectiveness decades ago. In that study, the counselors Baker surveyed defined effectiveness as changing a client's status quo. The idea of change needing to occur is an important component to the counselor-student relationship. This definition also affords the counselor the ability to have measurable data. Brott (2006) looked specifically at school counselor effectiveness and measurable accountability data. Having a data driven, effective counseling program starts with training programs and is an ongoing process through the years as a practitioner (Brott, 2006). The ASCA National Model (2012) requires comprehensive school counselor programs to be data driven. School counselor effectiveness can no longer be the abstract concept it once was. One way to improve school counselor effectiveness is to start with school counselor preparation programs.

## **CACREP**

Accreditation allows prospective students and employers to evaluate school programs and provide consistency in the information students will learn through those programs. Employers can more accurately assess the readiness of prospective employees (Beale & McCay, 2001). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the accrediting body for graduate programs in several counseling fields, including addiction, career, clinical mental health, marriage and family, school counseling as well as student affairs, college counseling, and counselor education and supervision (CACREP, 2012).

CACREP accreditation ensures programs have been evaluated and meet the standards set by the organization (CACREP, 2012). In doing so, school counselors build a professional identity in their role and function, much like programs that adhere to the American School Counseling Association National Model and standards (American School Counselor Association,

2005). One of the core values of CACREP is “advancing the counseling profession through quality and excellence in counselor education.” (CACREP, 2012) Both organizations want to advance the counseling profession. Through advertising and advocating for the counseling profession, the organizations are doing just that.

**School counselor preparation programs.** School counselor preparation programs have had to evolve over time with the changing demands of the job. As Hayes and Paisley (2003) state, “The majority of school counselor education programs have adopted a mental health orientation that reflects little concern for how school counselors address the academic achievement of students.” The education and training a future school counselor receives during his or her preparation program will be the foundation of his or her career. Strengthening school counselor preparation programs will lead to more effective school counselors (Hayes & Paisley, 2003; Rowe, Murphy, & De Csipkes, 1975).

### **Summary**

Charter schools are a relatively new innovation in education (Yoder & Rooney, 2007). Some charter schools are impressively successful while others fail within a year or two of opening (Buckley & Schneider, 2007). The structure of charter schools varies greatly. From start-up charter schools, to conversion charter schools to ones operated by charter management organizations to instructional and non-instructional, there is significant diversity under the categorization of charter schools (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005; Peyser, 2011). Within individual charter schools there is also much diversity (Merseeth, 2009).

Welch (2011) draws a comparison between the progressive era schools and charter schools today. Charter schools may be able to learn from mistakes and successes of the progressive era schools. Both charter schools and progressive era schools have encountered

similar challenges such as parent involvement and community support. Changes in education are often met with resistance. One way to counteract the resistance is through transparency and research.

Additionally, the progressive era was based on the idea of educating the whole child (Welch, 2011). Character education is an integral part of developing a well-rounded student. School counselors are deeply involved in personal and social development. A significant portion of a school counselor's time is devoted to carrying out a character education program (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). There are many facets involved in the program and may include school wide programming as well classroom guidance (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). As part of the innovative education of charter schools, schools are looking towards personal and social development as a way to create a positive, productive school culture (Merseeth, 2009). As stated in the research by Elias, DeFini, and Bergman (2010), students struggle to concentrate on academic work when they are charged with the burdens of emotional, social, or behavioral distress. Charter schools are generally serving high poverty areas (Glazer et al., 2019; Yoder & Rooney, 2007), which tend to carry a unique set of emotional and social challenges in students. While school counselors in charter schools are not often mentioned in books and research, they are undeniably an important group in the success or failures of a charter school.

Research on school counselors in charter schools is almost nonexistent. Seeing as how character education and developing a well-rounded student are priorities for charter schools (Merseeth, 2009; Tough, 2012), it is interesting that the little research done has focused only on college counselors in charter schools (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2008; Farmer-Hinton & McCollough, 2006). In those studies, the college counselors had small caseloads, but were charged with great responsibility in carrying out both a college counseling curriculum as well as

the traditional school counseling job duties (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2008; Farmer-Hinton & McCollough, 2006). Using the ASCA National Model as a baseline, the role and function of these college counselors is unique.

Thus, there would appear to be a natural need to explore the role and function of elementary, middle, and high school counselors in charter schools. This study will identify the role and function of school counselors in charter schools and their possible unique role and function within their alternative educational settings. School counselors, in particular, have not been studied in these particular schools. In this study, charter school counselors will not be judged in comparison to school counselors in local public schools. Therefore, school counselors in charter schools will be reviewed in relation to the American School Counseling Association National Model and in relation to each other.

### **Problem and Purposes Overview**

School counselors have an important role in education and should not be overlooked when studying school reforms. Gaining insight into how school counselors in charter schools function helps demystify what goes on in charter schools and encourages collaboration in the profession. The principal purpose of the study is to explore the role and function of school counselors in charter schools and evaluate how their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model. The American School Counselor National Model is used as the standard for school counseling programs across the nation (ASCA, 2012). It is not known how closely school counselors in charter schools follow the ASCA National Model. The role and function of school counselors in charter schools is an area that has not been sufficiently researched, but could have significant implications for the profession and educational reforms. With around 3 million students enrolled in charter

schools across the country (NAPCS, 2018), it is imperative to know the services these students are receiving.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the foregoing discussion of the philosophy, standards, and history of charter schools and the birth and evolution of school counseling, the following research questions are proposed:

1. Is there a difference between the actual role and the preferred roles of school counselors in charter schools as measured on the SCARS?
2. Does the actual role of school counselors in charter schools differ from the American School Counselor National Model?
3. Do licensed and unlicensed school counselors employed in charter schools differ in their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
4. Is there a difference between elementary, middle, and high school counselors in charter schools with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
5. Is there a difference between school counselors in charter schools working in Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
6. How do school counselors in charter schools describe evaluating their comprehensive school counseling program for effectiveness?

## **Chapter 3:**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter details the population sample, methodology, design, research questions, and limitations of the study. Data collection and data analysis was explored. Instrumentation techniques of this study are detailed.

#### **Population and Sample**

The demographic questionnaire and the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005) were accessed through Qualtrics. The study examined school counselors in three states in the Southeastern Region of the United States. The states included in the study were Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee. Kentucky and Alabama would have been included in the study, but neither had a charter school at the time of the study in the state despite having charter school laws. Combined, there were well over 800 charter schools in Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee (NAPCS, 2018). While not all charter schools had a school counselor (and many schools would have more than one), there was a sufficient number of participants for the purpose of this pilot study.

The charter school laws and demographics vary greatly for the states included in this study. For example, Florida had the third largest charter school population in the country with almost 300,000 students attending a charter school in the 2016-2017 school year (NAPCS, 2018). Florida allowed for-profit charters whereas the other states do not. Tennessee had a significantly smaller charter school student population than Florida with about 30,000 students enrolled in the 2016-2017 school year. Tennessee, however, had well-established charter schools with some existing for sixteen years (NAPCS, 2018). Georgia was chosen for the study because

it was one of the first states to enact charter school laws, doing so in 1994. There were about 85,000 students enrolled in Georgia charter schools during the 2016-2017 school year (NAPCS, 2018). The states researched had loose charter school laws, allowing rapid growth and little district oversight. Additionally, the states allowed charter schools autonomy to run the schools as the charter school provider chooses (NAPCS, 2018).

Counselors were not excluded if they were unlicensed or did not receive training from a CACREP institution. If the charter schools had labeled someone as a school counselor, he or she were included in the study. Counselors had an opportunity to participate in the survey if they chose. The demographic information provided more detailed information about the sample. It was a convenience, nonprobability sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Research Design**

This study used a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, survey design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A quantitative design was chosen due to the absence of research on this subject. A general overview of the subject was necessary because the topic had not been previously investigated. Developing a better understanding of the role of school counselors in charter schools will then provide a starting place for additional research to be conducted (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001). A review of the literature revealed no prior research on the daily roles and functions of school counselors in a charter school or how that role aligns with the ASCA National Model sets as a standard for comprehensive school counseling programs. The survey was non-experimental because the researcher was interested in what was currently going on in charter school counseling programs. Additionally, a survey design was chosen because “a survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population or tests for associations among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that

population” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher was examining a sample of the population and to identify trends, opinions, and associations.

### **Instrumentation**

A quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, survey design was used for the current research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The principal purpose of the study was to evaluate the role and function of school counselors in charter schools and to explore if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model.

The data was collected using a demographic questionnaire and the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005). The demographic questionnaire was created by the present researcher in conjunction with a faculty subject matter expert, see Appendix A. It was sent via email to charter school counselors in states in the Southeastern Region of the United States. Contact information for school counselors was found through school webpages and through the help of statewide charter school organizations. All information was kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and was used solely for the purposes of research.

The demographic questionnaire was brief, containing fourteen questions, included for the purposes of understanding who is completing the questionnaire and the SCARS. Questions were multiple choice; three involved a yes/no response and eleven questions have more options available. There are three categories of questions: counselor experience, current charter school information, and counselor qualification. The questions pertaining to counselor experience were used to answer one of the primary research questions.



In 2005, Janna Scarborough published the article, *The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An Instrument for Gathering Process Data*. Scarborough developed an instrument, the SCARS, to collect process data to explore what activities school counselors do in a day, see Appendix B. Additionally, the self-reporting instrument measures not only what the school counselor does in a day, but how much time is spent on these activities, as well as the preferred activity and time desired to spend on those activities. The items within the measurement align with the ASCA National Model. Using a verbal frequency scale, the SCARS was designed for “perceived ease, comprehensiveness, and flexibility” (2005).

The SCARS is divided into five subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, and other activities. There are 48 items in the entire instrument with anywhere from thirteen to seven items in each subscale. Scarborough states, “task statements were developed to reflect the activities subsumed under the four major interventions described by ASCA (1999) and The National Model for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2003)” (2005). For each item, the participant will use the following scale: 1= never, 2= rarely, 3= occasionally, 4= frequently, or 5= routinely. The participant, using that scale, will rate each activity twice. Once indicating what he or she actually does in a day and then again to indicate what he or she would prefer to do in a day. An example of an item under the subscale Counseling Activities is:

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>COUNSELING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns		

An example of an item under the subscale Consultation Activities is:

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES</b>		
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior		

An example of an item under Curriculum Activities is:

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES</b>		
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students		

An example of an item under Coordination Activities is:

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>COORDINATION ACTIVITIES</b>		
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program		

An example of an item under “Other” Activities is:

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>“OTHER” ACTIVITIES</b>		
Participate on committees within the school		

Reliability and validity of the SCARS has been established by Scarborough through factor analysis and Cronbach's coefficient alpha (2005). The following chart shows the Cronbach's alpha for each intervention category and scale:

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Prefer</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	.93	.90
<b>Coordination</b>	.84	.85
<b>Counseling</b>	.85	.83
<b>Consultation</b>	.75	.77
<b>Other</b>	.84	.80

Additional analyses were performed, including correlations and between group differences, to further establish construct validity. The author analyzed grade level differences, counselor experience, and actual and preferred activities (Scarborough, 2005).

The purpose of developing the instrument was to help school counselors with accountability. According to Scarborough's webpage with The University of Massachusetts, the SCARS has been used across the country, in Germany, and Puerto Rico for various projects (2018). The process data gathered from the SCARS, Scarborough states has helped in creating school counseling plans, advocating for school counseling positions, examining school counselor effectiveness, and other related purposes since it's development in 2005. As far as this researcher knows, the SCARS has not been used for the purpose of studying school counselors in charter schools. The instrument has good validity, reliability for the intervention subscales. Additionally, it is easy and quick to use (Scarborough, 2005).

## Data Collection Procedures

The researcher implemented an administration process similar to Salant and Dilman's administration process (1994) suggested by Creswell & Creswell (2018). Instead of mailing questionnaires, however, all communication was done via internet. Web based questionnaires were chosen due to budget constraints and email provided a direct method of contacting potential participants. Any mailings would be mailed to the school and handled by multiple sources before (hopefully) getting into the school mailbox or office of the school counselor.

Research regarding the use of web-based surveys has been equivocal. In the study, *A Comparison of Web and Mail Response Rates* (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004), web surveys were found to elicit a response slightly lower to that of postal mail surveys. The average age of participants was significantly lower on web surveys than those participating in mailed surveys. Evans and Mathur (2005), found several advantages of online surveys when reviewing literature on the subject matter. Advantages included a faster response time with online surveys, low cost, convenience for the participant, and easy of data analysis. The study found mixed results for response rates on online surveys versus mailed surveys. The authors, however, did indicate that participation rates for online surveys are increasing.

Publicly available email addresses for school counselors in charter schools in the chosen states in the Southeastern Region of the United States were collected from district websites. Once the emails were organized in a database created by the researcher, the email inviting the school counselors to participate in the study were forwarded. The recruitment email detailed the purpose of the study, ethical considerations, as well as the importance of the study to the charter school community and a link to the demographic questionnaire and the survey (Appendix D). A week later, a follow up email was sent with a link to the demographic questionnaire and the

SCARS as a reminder of the ongoing study. A third, and final email was sent out to all school counselors in charter schools two weeks after the second email. This was the final opportunity for school counselors to participate in the study. Administration took a total of three weeks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used in support of several of the research questions. Measures of central tendency such as mean, standard deviation, range, and variance provide important information about what school counseling programs in charter schools look like and if the programs follow the ASCA National Model. Additionally, descriptive analytics were used to investigate the relationship between counselor experience (including education, years of work, and licensure status) and the degree to which the school counselor implements the ASCA National Model. For the purpose of this study, descriptive statistics were used to “calculate values that represent certain overall characteristics of a body of data” (Williams, 1992). ANOVAs were used to analyze between group differences. Differences between the Actual scale and the Preferred scale were analyzed as well as differences between counseling grade levels (elementary, middle, and high) and between states.

**Power analysis for sample size.** A priori power analysis was conducted to determine sample size using G\*Power Version 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). For Research Question 4, if the assumed effect size is approximately 0.01, a sample size of  $n = 90$  was acceptable. For Research Questions 1, 3, and 5 if the assumed effect size is approximately 0.01, a sample size of  $n = 74$  would be considered acceptable.

## **Scope and Limitations**

This research was conducted with the purpose of gaining insight into the role and function of school counselors in charter schools. The goal was to explore how closely school counselors in charter schools follow the American School Counselor Association National Model and how similar or different the roles are across charter schools. As seen in the literature, charter schools vary immensely in student performance outcome data, structure of the school, management, and staffing. As this new type of school emerges, evolution will take place. Learning from others working in similar circumstances will help strengthen and improve the school counseling profession. The American School Counseling Association and the National Model was built to support all school counselors, not just counselors in traditional public schools. In order to fulfill that mission, it is imperative to understand what occurs in this new subset of schools and understand how best to support those counselors.

Biases exist in all research and this study is no different. An issue that arises with self-reporting instruments or questionnaires is the influence of social desirability. This is the idea that people will answer based on what they think will make them look good, not what is accurate. By having the ratings anonymous, this should negate the social desirability effect (McLeod, 2008). Since there was nothing to gain from answering questions a certain way, the participants feel free to answer honestly. Another major limitation is the geographical scope of this pilot study. Drawing participants only from the southeastern United States may preclude generalization to school counselor in charter schools across the country.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate if school counselors in charter schools have a consistent role and function and if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012). Using a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, survey design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) data was collected over a period of twenty-six days. Data was analyzed with SPSS 26.0 to answer six primary research questions using descriptive statistics and ANOVA.

#### **Demographic Items**

There are over 800 charter schools combined in Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida (NACSP, 2018). The number of school counselors in charter schools in these states is unknown. Publicly available email addresses were accessed for school counselors in charter schools in these three states. Originally, 470 emails were sent out. Twenty-five emails were returned as undeliverable and subsequent study invitations were not sent to these addresses, resulting in 445 potential participants. One hundred and thirteen school counselors replied (25% response rate). Three submitted responses were left blank and twenty-three completed only the demographic questionnaire. Eighty-seven respondents completed the demographic questionnaire and the School Counselor Ability Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005) resulting in a useable response rate of 19.5%. Of the 87 responses, 79 school counselors answered all questions on the SCARS survey. Average values were input in order to account for missing data (Schafer & Graham, 2002).

For the demographic questionnaire item asking participants to indicate the State in which he or she worked, 58 (66.7%) worked in Florida, 17 (19.5%) worked in Georgia, and 12 (13.8%) worked in Tennessee (Table 1)

Table 1

*Frequencies of States*

<i>State</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Florida	58	66.7%
Georgia	17	19.5%
Tennessee	12	13.8%
Total	87	100%

A variety of age ranges were reported with the majority of school counselors falling into two categories. School counselors reported 2 (2.3%) as 25 years old or younger, 10 (11.5%) as 26-34 years old, 32 (36.8%) as 35-44 years old, 34 (39.1%) as 45-54 years old, and 9 (10.3%) as 55 or older. These statistics are shown in Table 2.



Table 2

*Frequencies of Ages*

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<25	2	2.3%
26-34	10	11.5%
35-44	32	36.8%
45-54	34	39.1%
55>	9	10.3%
Total	87	100%

School counselors identified as overwhelmingly female, 83 (95.4%) with only 4 (4.6%) identifying as male. No participants responded as identifying their gender as “other.”

The participating school counselors reported a range of years of experience as a school counselor. There were 15 (17.2%) school counselors reporting only 0-1 year of experience. The largest group reported as having 2-4 years of experience, 28 participants (32.2%). There were 22 (25.3%) participants with 5-9 years of experience. There were also 22 (25.3%) participants with over 10 years of experience as a school counselor. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Frequency of Years of Experience*

<i>Years of Experience</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0-1	15	17.2%
2-4	28	32.2%
5-9	22	25.3%
10>	22	25.3%
Total	87	100%

Participants represented every grade level, elementary, middle, and high school. Many of the participants reported working in more than one school level. There were 40 (30.5%) school counselors working at the elementary level. There were 58 (42.8%) working at the middle school level and 35 (26.7%) working at the high school level. The frequency and percentage are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Frequencies of Grade Levels*

<i>Level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Elementary	40	30.5%
Middle	56	42.8%
High	35	26.7%
Total	131	100%

Participants overwhelmingly reported their highest degree as a Master’s Degree, 71 (81.6%). Two (2.3%) participants reported their highest degree as a Bachelor’s Degree. There were 11 (12.6%) participants with an Educational Specialists Degree and 3 (3.5%) with a Doctoral Degree. This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

*Frequencies of Highest Attained Degrees*

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Bachelor’s	2	2.3%
Master’s	71	81.6%
Educational Specialist’s	11	12.6%
Doctoral	3	3.5%
Total	87	100%

The majority of the participants have a degree in School Counseling, 68 (78%). With only 19, (22%) having a degree in an area other than School Counseling. Many participants reported having degrees in multiple areas, 38 (44%). A teaching degree was the second more frequent degree, 21 (24.1%). Sixteen (18.4%) have a degree in Clinical Mental Health, 14 (16.1%) have a degree in Social Work, 5 (5.7%) have a degree in Community Agency Counseling, and 1 (1.1%) has a degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Additionally, no one indicated None of the Above. There were 11 (12.6%) participants who indicated having “other” as a degree.

Many of the participants were licensed in more than one area, 23 (26.7%). The majority of participants reported being licensed school counselors, 59 (68.6%). Sixteen, (18.6%)

participants were licensed in an area other than school counseling and 11 (12.8%) participants indicated they are not licensed in any area. Twenty-three participants (26.7%) reported being licensed teachers. Eight (9.3%) participants were licensed social workers. Clinical mental health licensure was held by 7 participants (8.1%). Other licensure was reported by 6 (5.8%) participants.

Participating school counselors were members of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and their local state counseling association. No counselors reported being members of the Association for Adolescent and Child Counseling (ACAC).

Table 6

*Frequencies of Professional Association Memberships*

<i>Professional Associations</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
ASCA	39	39%
ACAC	0	0%
State Counseling Association	20	20%
None of the Above	41	41%
Total	100	100%

The majority of participants responded that they were not the first school counselors at their current charter school. Only 23 (26.4%) reported being the first counselor at their school. While 64 (73.6%) of respondents reported not being the first counselor at their school.

Forty-eight participants responded to the demographic questionnaire item regarding if he or she had worked in a school that was not a charter school. Thirty-nine participants did not respond to the question. The low response rate possibly indicates confusion about the question.

Twenty-eight (58.3%) school counselors indicated that yes, he or she had previously worked in a school that was not a charter school. Additionally, 20 (41.7%) school counselors indicated that he or she had not worked in a school other than a charter school.

The demographic questionnaire included items inquiring about the charter schools themselves. There are different types of charter schools, including conversion charter schools (schools that existed as local public schools and were then taken over by charter schools). Of the 87 respondents, 14 (16%) indicated working at a conversion charter school. The majority, 73 (84%), did not work at a conversion charter school.

Another type of charter school is a for-profit charter school. Of the 85 respondents, only 13 (15.3%) worked for a for-profit charter school. The majority, 72 (84.7%), of school counselors work in a non-profit charter school. This is seen in Table 4.8.

For the demographic questionnaire item regarding the amount of years a charter school has been open, the majority of participants, 44 (50.6%), responded that their school has been open for 10 or more years. Only 2 (2.3%) indicated their school has been open 0-1 years. Twelve (13.8%) have been open 2-4 years and 29 (33.3%) schools have been open 5-9 years. This is shown in Table 7.

Table 7

*Frequencies of Years Charter Schools Have Been Open*

<i>Years</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0-1	2	2.3%
2-4	12	13.8%
5-9	29	33.3%
10 or more	44	50.6%
Total	87	100%

**Research Question One**

Research question one asked, is there a difference between the actual role and the preferred role of school counselors in charter schools as measured on the SCARS? Table 8 illustrates the mean and the standard deviation of the Actual and Preferred scales of the SCARS. The Actual scale has an overall mean of 2.70 (SD = 0.52), reporting that school counselors in charter schools rarely to occasionally perform the tasks listed in the SCARS. The Prefer scale has an overall mean of 3.29 (SD = 0.55), indicating that school counselors in charter schools would prefer to occasionally to frequently perform the tasks listed in the SCARS.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of the Overall SCARS Score*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Actual	87	2.70	0.52
Prefer	87	3.29	0.55

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of the Actual and Prefer scale on the SCARS. The first ANOVA compared the means of the total score for each scale. There was a significance effect of the type of scale on the score at the  $p < .05$  level  $F(1, 173) = 52.83, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.24$  (Table 9). The effect size is large.

Table 9

*ANOVA of the Actual and Prefer Scales*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	173	52.83	0.24	0.000

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

To further answer Research Question one, an analysis of the subgroups, Counseling Activities, Consultation Activities, Curriculum Activities, Coordination Activities, and Other Activities, is needed (Table 10). For the Counseling Activities subgroup, the Actual scale mean was 3.13 (SD = 0.66) and the Prefer scale mean was 3.67 (SD = 0.66). There was a significant difference between the two groups  $F(1, 173) = 29.4, p = 0.000$  (Table 11). For the Consultation Activities subgroup, the Actual scale mean was 3.16 (SD = 0.75) and the Prefer scale mean was 3.48 (SD = 0.67). There was a significant difference between the two groups  $F(1, 173) = 8.86, p = 0.003$ . For the Curriculum Activities subgroup, the Actual scale mean was 2.31 (SD = 1.11) and the Prefer scale mean was 3.54 (SD = 0.94). There was a significant difference between the two groups  $F(1, 173) = 61.74, p = 0.000$ . For the Coordination Activities subgroup, the Actual scale mean was 2.58 (SD = 0.69) and the Prefer scale mean was 3.56 (SD = 0.76). There was a significant difference between the two groups  $F(1, 173) = 79.34, p = 0.000$ . For the Other Activities subgroup, the Actual scale mean is 2.39 (SD = 0.62) and the prefer scale mean is 2.17

(SD = 0.59). There is a significant difference between the two groups  $F(1, 173) = 6.11, p = 0.014$ .

Table 10

*Comparison of Means of the Actual and Prefer SCARS Subgroup Scales*

Subgroup	Actual Scale		Prefer Scale		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Counseling	3.13	0.66	3.67	0.66	.000
Consultation	3.16	0.75	3.48	0.67	.003
Curriculum	2.31	1.11	3.54	0.94	.000
Coordination	2.58	0.69	3.56	0.76	.000
Other	2.39	0.62	2.17	0.59	.014

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Table 11

*ANOVA of the Actual and Prefer SCARS Intervention Scales*

Scale	df	F	$\eta_p^2$	p
Counseling	173	29.42	0.15	0.000
Consultation	173	8.86	0.05	0.003
Curriculum	173	61.74	0.26	0.000
Coordination	173	79.34	0.317	0.000

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

### Research Question Two

Research question two asked, does the actual role of school counselors in charter schools differ from the American School Counselor National Model? The School Counselor Ability



Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005) is aligned to the American School Counselor National Model. The intervention subgroups contain statements depicting best practices for school counselors (ASCA, 2018). The intervention subgroups included counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum. The intervention subgroups did not include “other” activities. The “other” activities scale measures how much time and what activities school counselors are doing that are not counseling-related duties.

Table 12 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the Actual scale on the SCARS as rated by school counselors in charter schools. Higher scores would indicate the school counselor’s comprehensive school counseling program is closely aligned to the ASCA National Model. Lower scores would indicate the school counselor’s comprehensive school counseling program is not closely aligned with the ASCA National Model. Each intervention subgroup is within the “occasionally” or “rarely” range on the scale. Counseling Activities were performed occasionally with a mean of 3.13 (SD = 0.66). Consultation Activities were performed most often with a mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.75) indicating counselors occasionally to frequently perform these tasks. Curriculum Activities were performed rarely with a mean of 2.31 (SD = 1.11). School counselors reported performing tasks related to Coordination Activities (M = 2.58, SD = 0.69) rarely to occasionally.

Table 12

*Descriptive Statistics of SCARS Intervention Subgroups*

<i>Intervention Subgroup</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling	87	3.13	0.66
Consultation	87	3.16	0.75
Curriculum	87	2.31	1.11
Coordination	87	2.58	0.69
Total	87	2.77	0.62

**Research Question Three**

Research question three asked, do licensed and unlicensed school counselors employed in charter schools differ in their implementation of the ASCA National Model? Participants who indicated having a school counseling license SCARS scores were compared to participants' SCARS scores who indicated not having a school counseling license. Using Qualtrics, the data for each group was filtered out from the entire data set. The individual scores of each SCARS question were used for the analysis. Table 13 shows the number of school counselors in each group responding to the SCARS, the mean, and standard deviation of the SCARS scores of licensed school counselors and unlicensed school counselors. Licensed school counselors were more likely to perform tasks on the SCARS ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ) than their unlicensed school counselor peers ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was completed to compare the means of licensed school counselors and unlicensed school counselors at the  $p < .05$  level  $F(1, 86) = 1.68$ ,  $p = .198$ , the difference is not significant (Table 14).

Table 13

*Comparison of Means of Licensed School Counselors and Unlicensed School Counselors*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Licensed School Counselors	60	2.73	1.45
Unlicensed School Counselors	27	2.57	1.41

Table 14

*ANOVA of Licensed and Unlicensed School Counselors SCARS Total*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	86	1.68	0.019	0.198

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

When only intervention subgroups' scores are compared, licensed school counselors perform the tasks related to the ASCA National Model more closely than unlicensed school counselors (Table 15). The mean for licensed school counselors when only looking at the intervention subgroup total is 2.82 (SD = 0.63), while the total for unlicensed school counselors in intervention subgroups is 2.68 (SD = 0.59). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was completed at the  $p < 0.05$  level  $F(1, 86) = 0.96$ ,  $p = 0.33$  is not significant (Table 16).

Table 15

*Comparison of Intervention Subgroup Means of Licensed and Unlicensed School Counselors*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Licensed School Counselors	60	2.80	1.42
Unlicensed School Counselors	27	2.66	1.38

Table 16

*ANOVA of Licensed and Unlicensed School Counselors Intervention Subscale Total*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	86	0.96	0.011	0.33

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

**Research Question Four**

Research question four asked, is there a difference between elementary, middle, and high school counselors in charter schools with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model? Elementary, Middle, and High school counselors' mean responses to the Actual scale on the SCARS were recorded and analyzed (Table 17). There were 40 elementary school counselors, 56 middle school, and 35 high school counselors who submitted responses to the SCARS. Forty of the 87 school counselors (46%) work in more than one school level (i.e.- elementary and middle; middle and high; elementary, middle, and high). Twenty-eight (70%) of elementary school counselors work in an additional school level. Forty (71%) of middle school counselors work in an additional school level. Sixteen (46%) high school counselors work in an additional school level. Elementary school counselors had the greatest mean score with 2.84 (SD = 0.59). Middle school counselors had a mean score on the SCARS Actual scale of 2.72 (SD = 0.54). High school counselors had a mean score of 2.50 (SD = 0.42). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was completed  $F(2, 130) = 3.83, p = 0.02$  and found to be significant (Table 18).

Table 17

*Comparison of Means of Grade Levels*

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Elementary	40	2.84	0.59
Middle	56	2.72	0.54
High	35	2.50	0.42

Table 18

*ANOVA of the Actual and Prefer Scale Total Between Grade Levels*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	130	3.83	0.056	0.02

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Additionally, an analysis of the SCARS subgroups was done within the grade levels (Table 19). Elementary school counselors had the highest mean scores in three intervention subgroup category (Counseling  $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ; Curriculum  $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ; Coordination  $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ). Middle school counselors had the highest mean score in the Consultation subgroup ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). High school counselors had the highest mean score in the “Other” activities scale which includes administrative activities, classroom coverage, and scheduling ( $M=2.47$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ).

Table 19

*Comparison of Subgroup Means by Grade Level*

<i>Subgroup</i>	<i>Elementary</i>		<i>Middle</i>		<i>High</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling	3.26	0.75	3.22	0.70	2.93	0.65
Consultation	3.23	0.79	3.26	0.75	3.09	0.84
Curriculum	2.83	1.20	2.28	1.14	1.77	0.82
Coordination	2.71	0.73	2.58	0.71	2.34	0.63
Other	2.22	0.63	2.32	0.66	2.47	0.64

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was performed for the total SCARS scores comparing the means between Elementary, Middle, and High school (Table 20). A significant difference was found  $F(2, 130) = 3.83, p = 0.02$  (Table 18). When a one-way between subjects ANOVA was performed for the intervention subgroups for the SCARS, comparing means between Elementary, Middle, and High school there was a significant difference between groups  $F(2, 130) = 5.39, p = 0.006$  (Table 20). More specifically, significant differences were found between grade levels in one of the intervention subgroups; Curriculum  $F(2, 130) = 9.05, p = 0.000$  (Table 20).

Tukey's post-hoc was performed to determine which groups had a significant difference between them. A significant difference was found between the mean scores of grade levels in one subgroup. In the Curriculum subgroup, a significant difference was found between Elementary ( $M = 2.83, SD = 1.20$ ) and Middle ( $M = 2.28, SD = 1.14$ ) and Elementary ( $M = 2.83, SD = 1.20$ ) and High ( $M = 1.77, SD = 0.82$ ). No significant difference was found between the

mean scores of the grade levels in the Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, and Other subgroup.

Table 20

*ANOVA of Intervention Subgroup Scores Between Grade Levels*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Total	130	5.39	0.078	0.006
Counseling	130	2.44	0.037	0.091
Consultation	130	0.56	0.09	0.561
Curriculum	130	9.05	0.124	0.000
Coordination	130	2.622	0.039	0.077

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

**Research Question Five**

Research question five asked, is there a difference between school counselors in charter schools working in Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model? Demographic information was collected from participants prior to completing the SCARS. Participants indicated what state he or she worked in. Using Qualtrics, data was disaggregated and responses were grouped by State, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee. Table 21 shows the mean of the responses on the Actual scale of the SCARS grouped by States. Georgia had the highest mean score on the Actual scale of the SCARS,  $M = 2.91$  ( $SD = 0.54$ ). Tennessee had a mean score of 2.90 ( $SD = 0.75$ ) and Florida had a mean score of 2.59 ( $SD = 0.43$ ). The mean scores fall within the performs tasks rarely to occasionally rating.

Table 21

*Comparison of Means by States*

<i>State</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Florida	58	2.59	0.43
Georgia	17	2.91	0.54
Tennessee	12	2.90	0.75

Due to an unequal distribution of participants among the states, responses from Tennessee and Georgia were combined to be compared with responses from Florida. There were 58 participants from Florida, 17 from Georgia, and 12 from Tennessee. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was performed for the total SCARS scores comparing the means between Florida and Georgia/Tennessee. The difference was found to be significant  $F(1, 86) = 7.58, p = 0.007$  (Table 22). The effect size is medium.

Table 22

*ANOVA of Total SCARS Scores Between States*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	86	7.58	0.082	0.007

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Descriptive statistics were also collected for the subgroups of the SCARS, disaggregated by State (Florida and Tennessee/Georgia). Counseling, Consultation, Curriculum, and Coordination comprised the intervention subgroups. “Other” activities were a non-intervention subgroup and included duties performed in a school but not necessarily a counselor-related duty.



For the Counseling subgroup, Tennessee/Georgia more closely aligned with the ASCA National Model with a mean score of 3.29 (SD = 0.66). Florida had a mean score of 3.04 (SD = 0.65) for the counseling subgroup. When a one-way between subjects ANOVA was performed for the counseling subgroup for the SCARS, comparing means between Florida and Tennessee/Georgia, there was not a significant difference between groups  $F(1, 86) = 2.54, p = 0.115$ . Comparing means between Florida and Tennessee/Georgia for the Curriculum and Coordination subgroups, were found to have significant differences, Curriculum  $F(1, 86) = 21.60, p = 0.000$  and Coordination  $F(1, 86) = 6.48, p = 0.013$ . The Curriculum subgroup had a large effect size, while Coordination subgroup had a medium effect size. A one-way between subjects ANOVA performed comparing means between Florida and Tennessee/Georgia found no significant difference for the subgroups Consultation  $F(1, 86) = .002, p = 0.966$  and “Other” activities  $F(1, 868) = 1.781, p = 0.182$ . All mean difference are significant at the 0.05 level (Table 23).

Table 23

*ANOVA Comparison of All Subgroups Between States*

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Counseling	86	2.54	0.029	0.115
Consultation	86	0.002	0.000	0.966
Curriculum	86	21.60	0.203	0.000
Coordination	86	6.48	0.071	0.013
Other	86	1.129	0.013	0.291

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

## Research Question Six

Research question six asked, how do school counselors in charter schools describe their comprehensive school counseling evaluation program for effectiveness? In the subgroup Coordination Activities, there are five statements that assess how, and to what degree, school counselors evaluate their comprehensive school counseling program. The means and standard deviations of those statements are listed in Table 24. School counselors occasionally ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) are involved in coordinating and maintaining a comprehensive school counseling program. They rarely to occasionally ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ) keep track of how time is being spent on the function performed.

Table 24

### *Mean Scores of Program Evaluation Statements*

<i>Program Evaluation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	84	3.38	1.32
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	83	2.69	1.54
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	84	2.20	1.36
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	81	2.37	1.26
Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	87	2.46	1.35

## **Summary**

Results of the demographic questionnaire and School Counselor Ability Rating Scale were presented in this chapter. School counselors working in charter schools in Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee were invited to participate in the study. The purpose of this study was to explore if school counselors in charter schools have a consistent role and function and if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012). Six research questions were answered using descriptive statistics and ANOVAs. In chapter 5 findings will be further discussed, implications for practice will be considered, and recommendations for further research will be presented.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter findings of the demographic questionnaire and School Counselor Ability Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005) will be discussed. Implications for school counselors working in charter schools and for the school counseling profession will be presented. Additionally, recommendations for further research will be considered. The purpose of this study was to evaluate if school counselors in charter schools have a consistent role and function and if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012). The following six research questions were answered by the findings of the study and will be explored further in chapter 5:

1. Is there a difference between the actual role and the preferred roles of school counselors in charter schools as measured on the SCARS?
2. Does the actual role of school counselors in charter schools differ from the American School Counselor National Model?
3. Do licensed and unlicensed school counselors employed in charter schools differ in their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
4. Is there a difference between elementary, middle, and high school counselors in charter schools with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model?
5. Is there a difference between school counselors in charter schools working in Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee with regards to their implementation of the ASCA National Model?

## Summary of Findings

Significant findings that emerged from this study are: 1) There is a significant difference between the Actual and Preferred SCARS scales 2) School counselors reported performing tasks related to the ASCA National Model rarely to occasionally 3) There is not a significant difference between licensed and unlicensed school counselors working in charter schools 4) There is a significant difference between Elementary, Middle, and High school counselors on the Intervention subscale 5) A comparison of program implementation between Florida and Tennessee/Georgia programs found significant differences in two subgroups, curriculum and coordination 6) Program evaluation was reported to be done rarely to occasionally. These findings will be further discussed in this chapter.

**Research question one.** When analyzing the overall mean score, the Actual scale is lower than the Preferred scale (Table 8). There was a significant effect of the type of scale, Actual or Preferred, on the total score (Table 9). This finding indicates that school counselors would prefer to spend time doing activities that they are not actually able to perform or spend an adequate amount of time performing.

When the data was broken down into subgroups, it should be noted that the Other Activities group's mean scores was what brought the overall mean scores down (Table 10). School counselors would prefer to do less of the tasks not related to the ASCA National Model, but often asked of school counselors to help with the daily functioning of the school. An example of one of the tasks was, "perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty" (Scarborough, 2005). For this item, the Actual scale had a mean of 3.37 meaning it was performed occasionally to frequently (Appendix G). The mean score for this item on the Preferred scale was 2.15, indicating school counselors would like to perform this task rarely. There was a significant difference between the

Actual and Preferred scale in the Other Activities subgroup. It was however, important to note the mean for this subgroup was the only one on the Preferred scale with a rating of rarely instead of occasionally to frequently (Table 10).

When comparing means between the Actual scale and the Preferred scale on the Curriculum subgroup, the difference was found to be significant (Table 11). School counselors responded that they would like to spend significantly more time on curriculum related tasks than they currently are doing. All of the items in this subgroup involved classroom lessons. School counselors reported rarely conducting these classroom lessons, but would like to conduct them occasionally to frequently. More specifically, school counselors reported rarely ( $M = 2.40$ ) performing classroom lessons on the topic of conflict resolution on the Actual scale. School counselors also reported wanting occasionally to frequently ( $M = 3.73$ ) perform classroom lessons regarding conflict resolution.

The Coordination Activities subscale was also found to have a significant difference, between means of the Actual scale and the Preferred scale (Table 11). Coordination Activity items such as “inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school’ (Scarborough, 2005), had a sizable discrepancy in means from the Actual scale ( $M = 2.81$ ) and the Preferred scale ( $M = 4.02$ ). School counselors would like to perform this task frequently, but currently rarely do so. A task such as this one, would help build relationships with parents and promote the school counseling program at the charter school. Many of the items in this subgroup pertain to parent involvement and development and evaluation of a comprehensive school counseling program.

**Research question two.** The ASCA National Model is the standard for what a comprehensive school counseling program should be modeled after (ASCA, 2012). There are

four subgroups on the SCARS that combined construct the intervention activities. The intervention subgroup aligns with the ASCA National Model. The items participants rated are what should be done routinely to create an ideal comprehensive school counseling program. Participants in this study reported an overall SCARS intervention subscale score mean of 2.76 (SD = 1.41), which indicates rarely to occasionally performing the tasks aligning to the ASCA National Model. Curriculum and Coordination Activities subgroups had particularly low mean scores (Table 12).

One of the items with the highest mean Actual score was, “consult with school staff concerning student behavior” (Scarborough, 2005). The mean score on the Actual scale was 4.23, indicating school counselors perform this task frequently. A high mean score here could indicate that school counselors in charter schools are seen as experts in student behavior and behavior management and their feedback and intervention ideas are respected.

Another item with a high mean Actual score was “counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns” (Scarborough, 2005). The mean score for this item was 4.12, indicating school counselors perform this task frequently. Having direct contact with students is crucial to a solid comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012).

**Research question three.** One of the items from the demographic questionnaire inquired about licensure. Overall, 59 respondents (68.6%) stated they were a licensed school counselor. Eleven participants (12.8%) stated they were not licensed. The other respondents, 16 (18.6%) were licensed in other counseling areas, social work, or teaching. Some of the respondents were licensed in more than one area.

Licensed school counselors working in charter schools were more likely to perform tasks on the SCARS than their unlicensed school counseling peers. Both groups, however, performed

tasks on the SCARS rarely to occasionally (Table 13). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was completed to compare the means of licensed school counselors and unlicensed school counselors (Table 14). The difference is not significant. Analyzing only the intervention subscales on the Actual scale of the SCARS, findings are similar. Licensed school counselors are more likely to align their school counseling programs to the ASCA National Model than unlicensed school counselors working in charter schools when examining mean scores on the SCARS (Table 13). The difference was found to not be significant when comparing the means of the two groups on the intervention subscales (Table 16). This finding is important because it underscores that charter schools determine job role and function of school counselors regardless of formal training.

**Research question four.** When an analysis was conducted on the Actual scale comparing grade level means, a significant difference was found. Elementary school counselors had the greatest mean score, then Middle school counselors, and High school counselors had the lowest mean score (Table 17). A significant difference between grade levels was found (Table 18). More specifically on the intervention subscale Curriculum, significant differences were found between grade levels (Table 20).

When considering the mean scores of the intervention subgroups (Table 19), it appears as though elementary school counselors spend more time on direct student interventions. Elementary school counselors rated the Counseling Activity subgroup as occurring occasionally to frequently. Items in the Counseling Activity subgroup consist of direct counseling interventions (both group and individual) with students regarding various concerns and topics. It would also appear that high school counselors spend more time on non-intervention activities, such as scheduling and testing. Middle school counselors reported the highest mean score for a



subgroup for the Consultation activities. Consultation activities consist of assessing situations and discussing options with various adults to help a student. While important and part of the ASCA National Model (Dimmit, 2009), the Consultation Activity subgroup items do not involve direct contact with students. Additionally, the subgroup for high school counselors with the lowest mean score was Curriculum Activities. The items under the Curriculum Activities subgroup are all related to classroom lessons. Scarborough and Culbreth in their 2008 study, *Examining Discrepancies Between Actual and Preferred Practice of School Counselors*, found similar results between elementary and high school counselors. They stated that high school counselors often had a desire to spend more time doing intervention activities, but were unable to find the time. They did, however, note that even though it is typical for high school counselors to spend a significant amount of time on tasks found on the Other Activities scale, “the core interventions of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program are expected to be implemented at all school levels” (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Another important finding when analyzing the data by grade level, is the frequency of school counselors working with more than one school level. Forty of the 87 school counselors (46%) work in more than one school level (ie- elementary and middle; middle and high; elementary, middle, and high). Twenty-eight (70%) of elementary school counselors work with an additional school level. Forty (71%) of middle school counselors work with an additional school level. Sixteen (46%) high school counselors work with an additional school level. This is an area for further research. A comprehensive school counseling program is going to look different if a school counselor is working in both middle and elementary school grades than a school counselor work with only elementary. The job tasks would be more diverse and less time would be spent on a task if there are more grade levels to service.

**Research question five.** The three states that were included in this study were Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee. Florida had by far the most charter schools and ranks third in the nation for the number of charter schools (NACSP, 2018). Charter school counselors in Florida made up the majority of participants, with 58 (67%) completing both the demographic questionnaire and the SCARS. Georgia had 17 (19%) participants and Tennessee had 12 (14%) participants completing both the Demographic questionnaire and SCARS. The actual number of school counselors working in charter school in these states is unknown. The states being researched have loose charter school laws, allowing rapid growth and little district oversight. Additionally, the states allow charter schools autonomy to run the schools as the charter school provider chooses (NAPCS, 2018).

A comparison of means between the three states on the total SCARS score could not be done. The size of the groups were very unequal, which can affect the homogeneity of variance assumption. Analysis for the total SCARS scores comparing the means between Florida and Georgia/Tennessee was done. The difference was found to be significant (Table 22). When comparing means between State groups on individual subgroups for the Actual scale, however, there were two subgroups found to be significant, Curriculum and Coordination (Table 23).

Each state (and school district) has different requirements and expectations for school counselors. Even though charter schools work independent of the local school board and many oversight regulations, the schools are influenced by the surrounding local public schools and state regulations (Gross, 2011; Yoder & Rooney, 2007). Charter schools within a state would likely have more similarities with each other than with charter schools outside their state because of the state regulations and local public school influences. The findings indicate that school counselors in one state may have significant differences in completing tasks related to

curriculum and coordination than a school counselor in another state. Students who attend charter schools are required to participate in state issued standardized testing. These practices often drive the curriculum and how much time can be given to special programming such as school-wide events or classroom guidance lessons. These findings support the idea that school counselors in one state have significant differences for their role and function than school counselors in another state. The findings highlight how state education regulations influence charter schools.

**Research question six.** Under the Coordination Activities subgroup, there are five items that pertain to program evaluation. These items give insight into if and how school counselors in charter schools know if their comprehensive school counseling program is working and the interventions they are providing help the students they serve. The five items are 1) Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive counseling program 2) Keep track of how time is spent on the functions that you perform 3) Coordinate with an advisory team and analyze and respond to school counseling program needs 4) Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling 5) Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students.

School counselors reported that of the five evaluation items in the Consultation Activities subgroup, having a comprehensive school counseling program had the highest mean score of 3.38, occurring occasionally. School counselors also reported that of the five evaluation items, coordinating with a team to analyze the counseling program needs happened rarely with a mean score of 2.20. Under the accountability component of the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012), counselors should be constantly assessing their program and making adjustments to ensure the program is as effective as possible.

## **Implications for Practice**

There are over 6,900 charter schools across the country and over 3 million students attending charter schools (NAPCS, 2018). They have become a part of the educational landscape and while there is extensive research on charter school types and outcomes (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005; Gray, 2012; Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005; Turnamian, 2011; Welch, 2011) there is an absence of research on school counselors in charter schools. This study provides insight into the demographics of school counselors in charter schools and what they do (or do not do) on a daily basis.

When contemplating the findings from this study, it is not only important to analyze the data that the study provides, but to also consider the data the study does not provide. School counselors participating in the study reported a mean score of 2.70 on the SCARS scale representing actual job duties. This falls within the “rarely” to “occasionally” performs the task category. Evaluating the mean score for each individual item on the Actual scales reflects that only four scores that fell within the frequently performed range. None of the items on this scale were within the performs a task routinely range. The mean scores for the total Actual scale, intervention subgroup means, and for the individual items seem to indicate that the school counselors participating in this study either do not have the opportunity to spend much time on any one task or that what they are spending their time on was not an item on the survey. Regardless, the results of the SCARS create additional questions for future research.

Some of the leading implications for the school counseling profession from this study come from the demographic questionnaire. Since school counselors in charter schools are an unresearched area, there is no data available concerning who works in a school counseling role. As previously discussed, the demographic questionnaire revealed that only 68.6% of the

participating school counselors are actually licensed school counselors. While counselors who are licensed in Clinical Mental Health, Rehabilitation Counseling, or Social Work may be able to perform tasks related to counseling such as run data-driven, meaningful small groups, there may be tasks the counselors are unfamiliar with.

Similarly, school counselors who are not licensed school counselors, but are licensed teachers, may be proficient at classroom lessons, but lacking knowledge in another area. Additionally, only 39 respondents (39%) are members of the American School Counselor Association and 20 counselors (20%) reported belonging to their state counseling association. No one reported belonging to the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling (0%) and 41 respondents (41%) did not belong to one of the professional organizations. For school counselors who have not been through a school counseling program, are not licensed school counselors, and do not belong to a school counseling professional organization, it would be of interest to know how many have been exposed to and understand the American School Counselor Association National Model. The lack of knowledge about the ASCA National Model and what is the standard for a comprehensive school counseling program could explain low scores on the Actual scale and Preferred scale of the SCARS.

By understanding the American School Counselor Association National Model, school counselors can look for trends and ways to improve their own comprehensive school counseling program. For example, in the current study, school counselors noted actually performing classroom lessons on the topic of relating to others rarely ( $M= 2.33$ ), but would prefer to perform these lessons occasionally to frequently ( $M= 3.67$ ). In the subgroup Counseling Activities, there was an item that states, “counsel with students regarding relationships” (Scarborough, 2005). The Actual scale mean for this item is 4.06, indicating that school counselors perform this task

frequently. It would be interesting to see if school counselors engaged in preventative activities such as classroom lessons regarding relating to others, if they would need to spend as much time on intervention activities such as counseling students about relationships. The SCARS can be a powerful tool in assessing a program and understanding what is helping a comprehensive school counseling program and what could use improvement.

### **Recommendations for Research**

This study is the first study to focus on the overall demographics of school counselors in charter schools located in Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee and to investigate how closely school counselors in charter schools follow the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012). This study provides interesting findings, but also develops additional research questions for future studies.

The first recommendation for future research would be to expand this study to additional states. The pilot study focused on three states from the Southeastern region of the country. All three of the states chosen for this study have broad charter school laws and a relatively long history of established charter schools (NAPCS, 2018). Many states have charter school laws going back only a few years, therefore any charter schools in those states would still be in a developing stage (Renzulli et al., 2015). A longitudinal study would be useful to understand if and how role of school counselors in charter schools evolves over time. Developmentally, it would also be important to understand at what point in the creation of a charter school does the school leadership decide to hire a school counselor.

Another recommendation for future research would be to compare comprehensive school counseling programs of charter school counselors with comprehensive school counseling programs of school counselors in traditional schools. Investigating school counselors in

traditional public schools and school counselors in charter schools within the same school district would give specific insight into how similar or different the roles are. Additionally, investigating why the roles are different or why they are similar. Is it because of the charter school laws that allow for more autonomy or strict control from the governing body? Who is meeting the needs of their students and obtaining the quantifiable results from their interventions? By exploring these topics, the school counseling profession can grow and become more cohesive.

Additionally, as schools and educational practices begin to evolve with non-traditional schools such as charter schools, the role of school counselors may begin to expand and change. Counselor education programs may need to address this evolution as the programs prepare students to work in the professional school counselor field. Addressing the variety of school choices available and what job roles and functions may look like in those environments may be beneficial to students.

Similarly, the American School Counseling Association may need to consider the role and function of school counselors in charter schools. The number of charter schools continues to grow and the number of children attending charter schools increases every year (NAPCS, 2018). ASCA may need to advocate for school counselors working in charter schools so that administrators and charter school board members understand the important role and expertise school counselors bring to the educational environment. Without the advocacy and education about the purpose of school counselors, the job description and every day duties of school counselors may diverge from the ASCA National Model.

### **Limitations**

There were some limitations to this study. The most substantial limitation was the convenience sample. There was no database with information about school counselors in charter

schools. The state departments of education and state charter school organizations do not maintain records of how many charter schools employ school counselors or any contact information for those positions. Through the state department websites, charter school webpages were accessed and publicly available contact information for school counselors was collected. While this manual method was the best and most comprehensive method to obtain contact information for school counselors in charter schools, it is possible some school counselors were not contacted or did not receive the invitation to the study. Additionally, the population sample size is unknown because the number of school counselors employed in charter schools is not available.

Another limitation pertains to web-based surveys. 113 school counselors opened the survey upon receiving the email directing them to the Qualtrics website. Three people scanned the survey, but did not answer any questions. 110 started the demographic questionnaire, but only 87 continued on to the School Counselor Ability Rating Scale Survey. Of the 87, only 79 school counselors answered all of the SCARS survey. Because the participants' responses to the demographic questionnaire and SCARS survey were anonymous, it was not possible to contact the school counselors who started, but did not complete it. Included in the last mass email invitation for charter school counselors to participate in the study was a reminder to complete the study if previously started. Participants may have completed the demographic questionnaire and not realized that the SCARS was on another page. Evans and Mathur (2005) identified strengths and weaknesses of online surveys. "Respondent lack of online experience" and "impersonal" are two areas of weakness ascertained by the researchers. These areas of weakness were evident in this web-based survey.



Additionally, due to population size and that only three states were included in the study, the results may be hard to generalize. As previously stated, state laws shape charter schools and there is a varied array of state laws. Charter schools in Florida have great autonomy, can be for-profit, and can include online charter schools and therefore may be very different from charter schools in a state like Maryland where there is little autonomy, there are no for-profit charters, and online charter schools are not allowed (NAPCS, 2018). While this study gives insight into school counselors in charter schools, additional research is needed.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of school counselors in charter schools and to determine whether their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012). Using a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, survey design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) data was collected over a period of twenty-six days. Data was analyzed with SPSS 26.0 to answer six primary research questions using descriptive statistics and ANOVA.

The major findings of the demographic questionnaire indicate a need to include charter school counselors in professional development opportunities and to make an effort to include them in professional school counseling organizations. A large number of school counselors in charter schools are not licensed school counselors, do not have a degree in school counseling, and do not belong to a school counseling professional organization. There is a need for additional research on school counselors in charter schools across the country to further understand how to provide support for this section of the profession.

There were several major findings from the School Counselor Ability Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005). There was a significant difference between the Actual scale and Preferred

scale when analyzing the total means. When comparing the means of the intervention scales, there were significant differences in the scales for the Curriculum Activities and Coordination Activities. There was not a significant differences between licensed and unlicensed school counselors working in charter schools. Significant differences were found between elementary and high school when analyzing the intervention subgroups. Additionally, differences were significant when comparing means between states. The final major finding from the School Counselor Ability Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005) was that an evaluation of the school counseling program and interventions were done rarely to occasionally.

Additional research needs to be conducted regarding the role and function of school counselors in charter schools. Expanding this study to include other states and regions across the country is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the role of charter school counselors. A comparison of school counselors in charter schools and school counselors in traditional public schools, especially from the same school district, would provide insight into what comprehensive school counseling programs are attaining the results desired. Finally, research needs to be conducted regarding what school counselors in charter schools know about the American School Counselor Association National Model (2012).

The American School Counselor National Model (2012) helps to unify the school counseling profession and provides an approach to creating a comprehensive school counseling program that reflects the goals and purpose of school counselors. Even with an innovative approach to education, such as charter schools, the ASCA National Model will guide school counselors to create a data-driven, effective program (Dimmit, 2009). ASCA and the National Model was built to support all school counselors, not just counselors in traditional public schools. The School Counselor Ability Rating Scale can be used as a tool to evaluate programs

and ensure all components of a program are being implemented. The overall findings of this study suggest that these two resources may be of help to school counselors in charter schools when creating comprehensive school counseling programs.

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## Appendix A:

### Demographic Questionnaire

- My age group is:
  - Under 25 years old
  - 25-34 years old
  - 35-44 years old
  - 45-54 years old
  - 55 or older
  
- I identify as a:
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other
  
- I have been a school counselor for:
  - 0-1 years
  - 2-4 years
  - 5-9 years
  - 10 or more years
  
- I currently work in:
  - Florida
  - Georgia
  - Tennessee
  
- I have worked as a school counselor in a school that was NOT a charter school.
  - Yes
  - No

- I am the first school counselor at my current charter school.
  - Yes
  - No
  
- I currently work as a school counselor in a (mark all that apply)
  - Elementary school
  - Middle school
  - High school
  
- The charter school where I work has been open for:
  - 01- years
  - 2-4 years
  - 5-9 years
  - 10 or more years
  
- I work at a conversion charter school (a school that existed as a local school prior to becoming a charter school).
  - Yes
  - No
  
- My charter school is:
  - For-profit
  - Non-profit
  
- The highest degree I have completed is:
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Educational Specialist degree
  - Doctoral degree

- I have a graduate degree specializing in (mark all that apply):
  - School Counseling
  - Clinical Mental Health Counseling
  - Community Agency Counseling
  - Rehabilitation Counseling
  - Social Work
  - Teaching
  - Other
  - None of the above
  
- I am a licensed:
  - School Counselor
  - Clinical Mental Health Counselor
  - Social Worker
  - Teacher
  - Other
  - I am not licensed
  
- I belong to the following School Counselor professional organization(s) (mark all that apply):
  - American School Counseling Association
  - Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling
  - State School Counseling Association
  - None of the Above

## Appendix B:

### School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS)

Below is a list of functions that may be performed by school counselors.  
In Column 1, 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 would PREFER to perform each function.

Please place the corresponding number in each box.

Ratings: 1 = I never do this; I would prefer to never do this

2 = I rarely do this; I would prefer to rarely do this

3 = I occasionally do this; I would prefer to occasionally do this

4 = I frequently do this; I would prefer to frequently do this

5 = I routinely do this; I would prefer to routinely do this

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>COUNSELING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Counsel with students regarding person/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		

<b>CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES</b>		
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)		
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)		
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)		
Participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings		
<b>CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES</b>		
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students		
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work		
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc)		
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family/friends)		
Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues		
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution		
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse		

Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues		
<b>COORDINATION ACTIVITIES</b>		
Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or person/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 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		
Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)		
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs		
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives		



Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students		
Coordinate orientation process/activities for students		
<b>“OTHER” ACTIVITIES</b>		
Participate on committees within the school		
Coordinate the standardized testing program		
Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)		
Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)		
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty		
Schedule students for classes		
Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school		
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)		
Handle discipline of students		
Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school		

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 274-283.

## Appendix C:

### Permission to Use the SCARS

**From:** Scarborough, Janna L. <SCARBORO@mail.etsu.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 23, 2019 9:40:41 AM  
**To:** Allison Jane Grabias (agrabias)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] SCARS

Allison,

Thank you so much for reaching out and for your interest in the SCARS. You may use it as you describe. I do ask that the following be cited when using the instrument:  
Scarborough, J. L., & Culbreth, J. R. (2008). Examining discrepancies between actual and preferred practice of school counselors. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 86, 446-459.  
Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 274-283.

I wish you the best of luck on your work. Please let me know if you have questions.  
-Janna

*Janna L. Scarborough, Ph. D.*  
Associate Dean of Faculty and Academic Affairs  
Professor of Counseling and Human Services

**From:** Allison Jane Grabias (agrabias) [mailto:agrabias@memphis.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 23, 2019 10:23 AM  
**To:** Scarborough, Janna L. <SCARBORO@mail.etsu.edu>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] SCARS

Dr. Scarborough,

I am currently a doctoral student at The University of Memphis working on my dissertation. During my research, I came across your SCARS instrument and would love to use it in my study. I am looking at the job role and function of school counselors in charter schools. I plan on using the instrument unaltered, except that I will be emailing the rating scale to the school counselors instead of printing off a brochure.

Thank you so much for developing such a wonderful instrument!

Allison Grabias

## **Appendix: D**

Recruitment email

The University of Memphis

Role and Function of School Counselors in Charter Schools

My name is Allison Grabias and I am a doctoral candidate in The University of Memphis' Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Research Department. I am currently recruiting participants for my dissertation research regarding school counseling in charter schools.

Please click on the link below to start the survey. Please read over the consent form. Then, there is a demographic questionnaire followed by The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale. It should take about fifteen minutes in total to complete.

[https://memphis.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3reXqcP9OB1GVw1](https://memphis.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3reXqcP9OB1GVw1)

The data received from the surveys will help provide a better understanding of the job role and function of school counselors in charter schools. Every response is greatly appreciated!

Thank you for your help!

## **Appendix E:**

### **Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

#### **Role and Function of School Counselors in Charter Schools**

##### **WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?**

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the role and function of school counselors in charter schools. You are being invited to take part in this research study because of your job title as a school counselor in a charter school. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 100 people to do so.

##### **WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?**

The person in charge of this study is Allison Grabias of University of Memphis Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Research. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Zanskas. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

##### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate if school counselors in charter schools have a consistent role and function and if their role and function aligns with the primary components of the American School Counselor Association National Model.

By doing this study, we hope to learn about counseling programs in charter schools and what a school counselor in a charter school does on a daily basis.

##### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

Do not take part in the study if you are not identified as a counselor in a charter school.

##### **WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

The research procedures will be conducted online using Qualtrics. You will need to click on the link that will be emailed to you one time during the study. The visit will take about fifteen minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is twenty minutes.

##### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

You will receive an email introducing you to the research study. Please click on the link included in the email. The link will take you to Qualtrics, which is the platform used for the survey. The

first step will be to read the consent and agree to participate. Once that is electronically signed, you will be taken to the demographic questionnaire. Here there are eleven questions that will help the researcher understand who is taking the survey as well as aid in the analysis of the data. Next, you will take the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale. You will rate each statement from 1-5 stating the extent to which you do each activity indicated in the statement. Each statement will be rated twice. The first rating is what you actually do and the second rating is what you would prefer to do. There are 48 statements to rate. When that is finished, your participation in the research project is complete.

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?**

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

### **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

### **WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

We will make every effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the

combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

### **CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?**

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

### **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Allison Grabias at [agrabias@memphis.edu](mailto:agrabias@memphis.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

## Appendix F:

### IRB Approval

From: <[irb@memphis.edu](mailto:irb@memphis.edu)>  
Date: Wed, Mar 6, 2019 at 2:14 PM  
Subject: PRO-FY2019-412 - Initial: Approval - Exempt  
To: <[agrabias@memphis.edu](mailto:agrabias@memphis.edu)>, <[szanskas@memphis.edu](mailto:szanskas@memphis.edu)>

Institutional Review Board  
Division of Research and Innovation  
Office of Research Compliance  
University of Memphis  
315 Admin Bldg  
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

March 6, 2019

PI Name: Allison Grabias  
Co-Investigators:  
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Stephen Zanskas  
Submission Type: Initial  
Title: The Role and Function of School Counselors in Charter Schools  
IRB ID : #PRO-FY2019-412  
Exempt Approval: March 6, 2019

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

- 1 When the project is finished a completion submission is required
- 2 Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
- 3 When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
- 4 Human subjects training is required to be kept current at [citiprogram.org](http://citiprogram.org) every 2 years

For any additional questions or concerns please contact us at [irb@memphis.edu](mailto:irb@memphis.edu) or 901.678.2705

Thank you,  
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.  
Institutional Review Board Chair  
The University of Memphis.

## Appendix G:

### Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the SCARS

<i>1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = frequently 5 = routinely</i>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>PREFER</b>
<b>COUNSELING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Counsel with students regarding person/family concerns	M = 4.12 SD = 0.93	M = 4.37 SD = 0.83
Counsel with students regarding school behavior	M = 4.17 SD = 1	M = 3.77 SD = 1.13
Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues	M = 3.70 SD = 1.1	M = 3.49 SD = 1.10
Counsel with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	M = 4.06 SD = 0.89	M = 4.16 SD = 0.96
Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	M = 2.58 SD = 1.44	M = 3.89 SD = 1.05
Provide small group counseling for academic issues	M = 2.04 SD = 1.19	M = 3.38 SD = 1.16
Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	M = 1.96 SD = 1.23	M = 3.33 SD = 1.19
Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)	M = 1.38 SD = 0.69	M = 2.55 SD = 1.19
Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants	M = 3.64 SD = 1.17	M = 4.15 SD = 1.01
Counsel students regarding academic issues	M = 3.57 SD = 1.21	M = 3.83 SD = 1.03
<b>CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES</b>		
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	M = 4.23 SD = 0.96	M = 4.24 SD = 0.84



Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students	M = 2.77 SD = 1.07	M = 3.48 SD = 0.92
Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues	M = 3.23 SD = 1.21	M = 3.60 SD = 1.06
Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	M = 3.07 SD = 1.19	M = 3.40 SD = 1.09
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)	M = 2.76 SD = 1.50	M = 2.84 SD = 1.33
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	M = 3.01 SD = 1.25	M = 3.51 SD = 1.05
Participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings	M = 3.05 SD = 1.31	M = 3.41 SD = 1.21
<b>CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES</b>		
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students	M = 3.14 SD = 1.48	M = 4.12 SD = 1.05
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	M = 2.34 SD = 1.38	M = 3.52 SD = 1.26
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc)	M = 2.50 SD = 1.50	M = 3.78 SD = 1.17
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family/friends)	M = 2.33 SD = 1.43	M = 3.67 SD = 1.15
Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues	M = 2.22 SD = 1.41	M = 3.57 SD = 1.24
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	M = 2.40 SD = 1.37	M = 3.73 SD = 1.09
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	M = 1.50 SD = 0.86	M = 2.73 SD = 1.34
Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues	M = 2.01 SD = 1.22	M = 3.39 SD = 1.24

<b>COORDINATION ACTIVITIES</b>		
Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or person/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	M = 3.13 SD = 1.36	M = 3.52 SD = 1.24
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	M = 3.38 SD = 1.31	M = 4.38 SD = 0.93
Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	M = 2.81 SD = 1.11	M = 4.02 SD = 0.83
Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops	M = 2.02 SD = 1.15	M = 3.39 SD = 1.23
Coordinate school-wide parent education classes or workshops	M = 2.02 SD = 1.15	M = 3.21 SD = 1.24
Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	M = 2.49 SD = 1.22	M = 3.27 SD = 1.28
Inform teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	M = 2.87 SD = 1.12	M = 3.78 SD = 1.02
Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	M = 1.82 SD = 1.00	M = 2.84 SD = 1.34
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	M = 2.69 SD = 1.53	M = 3.30 SD = 1.51
Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)	M = 3.0 SD = 1.13	M = 4.10 SD = 0.92
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	M = 2.20 SD = 1.35	M = 3.83 SD = 1.02
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	M = 2.37 SD = 1.28	M = 3.75 SD = 1.07

Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	M = 2.46 SD = 1.31	M = 3.77 SD = 1.15
Coordinate orientation process/activities for students	M = 2.56 SD = 1.38	M = 3.22 SD = 1.22
<b>“OTHER” ACTIVITIES</b>		
Participate on committees within the school	M = 3.16 SD = 1.40	M = 3.26 SD = 1.24
Coordinate the standardized testing program	M = 2.10 SD = 1.55	M = 1.56 SD = 1.02
Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	M = 2.58 SD = 1.36	M = 3.63 SD = 1.16
Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	M = 2.55 SD = 1.57	M = 2.27 SD = 1.45
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	M = 3.37 SD = 1.70	M = 2.15 SD = 1.31
Schedule students for classes	M = 2.82 SD = 1.86	M = 2.70 SD = 1.55
Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school	M = 1.60 SD = 1.22	M = 1.43 SD = 1.02
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	M = 2.06 SD = 1.41	M = 1.62 SD = 0.95
Handle discipline of students	M = 2.20 SD = 1.31	M = 1.54 SD = 0.93
Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school	M = 1.49 SD = 0.88	M = 1.29 SD = 0.64

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 274-283.

## Appendix H:

### Tables

Table 1

#### *Frequencies of States*

<i>State</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Florida	58	66.7%
Georgia	17	19.5%
Tennessee	12	13.8%
Total	87	100%

Table 2

#### *Frequencies of Ages*

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<25	2	2.3%
26-34	10	11.5%
35-44	32	36.8%
45-54	34	39.1%
55>	9	10.3%
Total	87	100%

Table 3

*Frequency of Years of Experience*

<i>Years of Experience</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0-1	15	17.2%
2-4	28	32.2%
5-9	22	25.3%
10>	22	25.3%
Total	87	100%

Table 4

*Frequencies of Grade Levels*

<i>Level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Elementary	40	30.5%
Middle	56	42.8%
High	35	26.7%
Total	131	100%

Table 5

*Frequencies of Highest Attained Degrees*

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Bachelor's	2	2.3%
Master's	71	81.6%
Educational Specialist's	11	12.6%
Doctoral	3	3.5%
Total	87	100%

Table 6

*Frequencies of Professional Association Memberships*

<i>Professional Associations</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
ASCA	39	39%
ACAC	0	0%
State Counseling Association	20	20%
None of the Above	41	41%
Total	100	100%

Table 7

*Frequencies of Years Charter Schools Have Been Open*

<i>Years</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0-1	2	2.3%
2-4	12	13.8%
5-9	29	33.3%
10 or more	44	50.6%
Total	87	100%

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of the Overall SCARS Score*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Actual	87	2.70	0.52
Prefer	87	3.29	0.55

Table 9

*ANOVA of the Actual and Prefer Scales*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	173	52.83	0.24	0.000

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ 

Table 10

*Comparison of Means of the Actual and Prefer SCARS Subgroup Scales*

<i>Subgroup</i>	<u>Actual Scale</u>		<u>Prefer Scale</u>		<i>p-value</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Counseling	3.13	0.66	3.67	0.66	.000
Consultation	3.16	0.75	3.48	0.67	.003
Curriculum	2.31	1.11	3.54	0.94	.000
Coordination	2.58	0.69	3.56	0.76	.000
Other	2.39	0.62	2.17	0.59	.014

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ 

Table 11

*ANOVA of the Actual and Prefer SCARS Intervention Scales*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Counseling	173	29.42	0.15	0.000
Consultation	173	8.86	0.05	0.003
Curriculum	173	61.74	0.26	0.000
Coordination	173	79.34	0.317	0.000

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Table 12

*Descriptive Statistics of SCARS Intervention Subgroups*

<i>Intervention Subgroup</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling	87	3.13	0.66
Consultation	87	3.16	0.75
Curriculum	87	2.31	1.11
Coordination	87	2.58	0.69
Total	87	2.77	0.62

Table 13

*Comparison of Means of Licensed School Counselors and Unlicensed School Counselors*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Licensed School Counselors	60	2.73	1.45
Unlicensed School Counselors	27	2.57	1.41

Table 14

*ANOVA of Licensed and Unlicensed School Counselors SCARS Total*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	86	1.68	0.019	0.198

Note: \* $p < 0.05$



Table 15

*Comparison of Intervention Subgroup Means of Licensed and Unlicensed School Counselors*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Licensed School Counselors	60	2.80	1.42
Unlicensed School Counselors	27	2.66	1.38

Table 16

*ANOVA of Licensed and Unlicensed School Counselors Intervention Subscale Total*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	86	0.96	0.011	0.33

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Table 17

*Comparison of Means of Grade Levels*

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Elementary	40	2.84	0.59
Middle	56	2.72	0.54
High	35	2.50	0.42

Table 18

*ANOVA of the Actual and Prefer Scale Total Between Grade Levels*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	130	3.83	0.056	0.02

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ 

Table 19

*Comparison of Subgroup Means by Grade Level*

<i>Subgroup</i>	<u><i>Elementary</i></u>		<u><i>Middle</i></u>		<u><i>High</i></u>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling	3.26	0.75	3.22	0.70	2.93	0.65
Consultation	3.23	0.79	3.26	0.75	3.09	0.84
Curriculum	2.83	1.20	2.28	1.14	1.77	0.82
Coordination	2.71	0.73	2.58	0.71	2.34	0.63
Other	2.22	0.63	2.32	0.66	2.47	0.64

Table 20

*ANOVA of Intervention Subgroup Scores Between Grade Levels*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Total	130	5.39	0.078	0.006
Counseling	130	2.44	0.037	0.091
Consultation	130	0.56	0.09	0.561
Curriculum	130	9.05	0.124	0.000
Coordination	130	2.622	0.039	0.077

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Table 21

*Comparison of Means by States*

<i>State</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Florida	58	2.59	0.43
Georgia	17	2.91	0.54
Tennessee	12	2.90	0.75

Table 22

*ANOVA of Total SCARS Scores Between States*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Combined Analysis (all)	86	7.58	0.082	0.007

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Table 23

*ANOVA Comparison of All Subgroups Between States*

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Counseling	86	2.54	0.029	0.115
Consultation	86	0.002	0.000	0.966
Curriculum	86	21.60	0.203	0.000
Coordination	86	6.48	0.071	0.013
Other	86	1.129	0.013	0.291

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Table 24

*Mean Scores of Program Evaluation Statements*

<i>Program Evaluation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	84	3.38	1.32
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	83	2.69	1.54
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	84	2.20	1.36
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	81	2.37	1.26
Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	87	2.46	1.35