

# SC SURVEY

## Indiana School Counselor Survey Results Summary 2019-20



September 2020





# A Summary of the Results

## Indiana Department of Education School Counselor Survey

### Survey Respondents

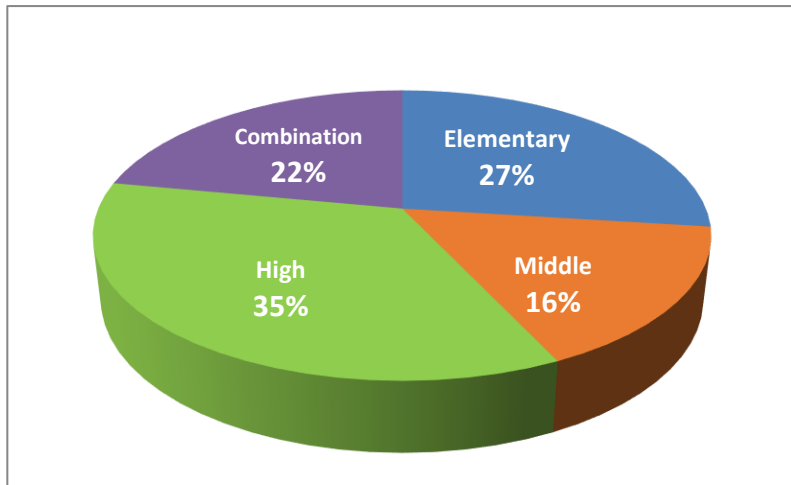
A total of 101 Indiana school counselors, grades K-12, completed the Indiana school counselor survey in the fall of 2019. The survey has been conducted with Indiana school counselors almost every fall since 2010 by the Indiana Department of Education.

More high school counselors completed the survey in 2019 than counselors at other grade levels (Figure 1). 81% of respondents (N=82) identified themselves as having the job title of “school counselor” or “guidance counselor;” and two respondents self-identified as school social workers.

Thirteen identified themselves as a director, coordinator or dean, five of whom were not licensed school counselors or social workers.

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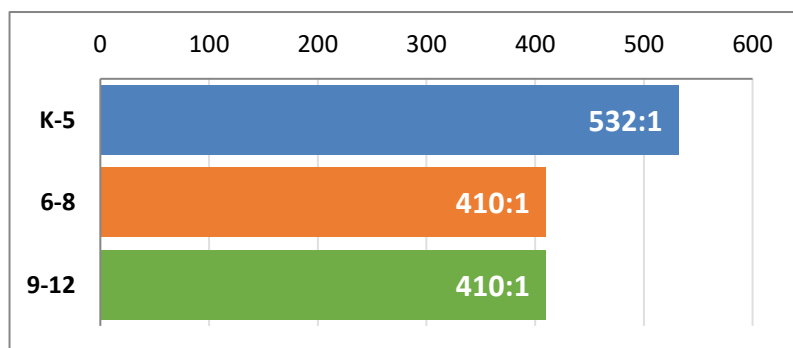
Figure 1. Respondents' Grade Levels



The licensure of respondents included two licensed teachers, a board-certified practitioner (unspecified), a licensed school psychologist, and a licensed school administrator. Other job titles included a college and career readiness counselor, a home school advisor, a student support advisor, and a school counseling graduate student who is a licensed teacher.

Respondents averaged 11 years of work experience in their positions. There was little variation among the different grade/building levels, with secondary (middle and high school) having a slightly higher number of years at an average of 12 years versus elementary and combined grade/building levels at 10 years each.

Figure 2. Student to Counselor Ratios by Grade Level



### Student to Counselor Ratios

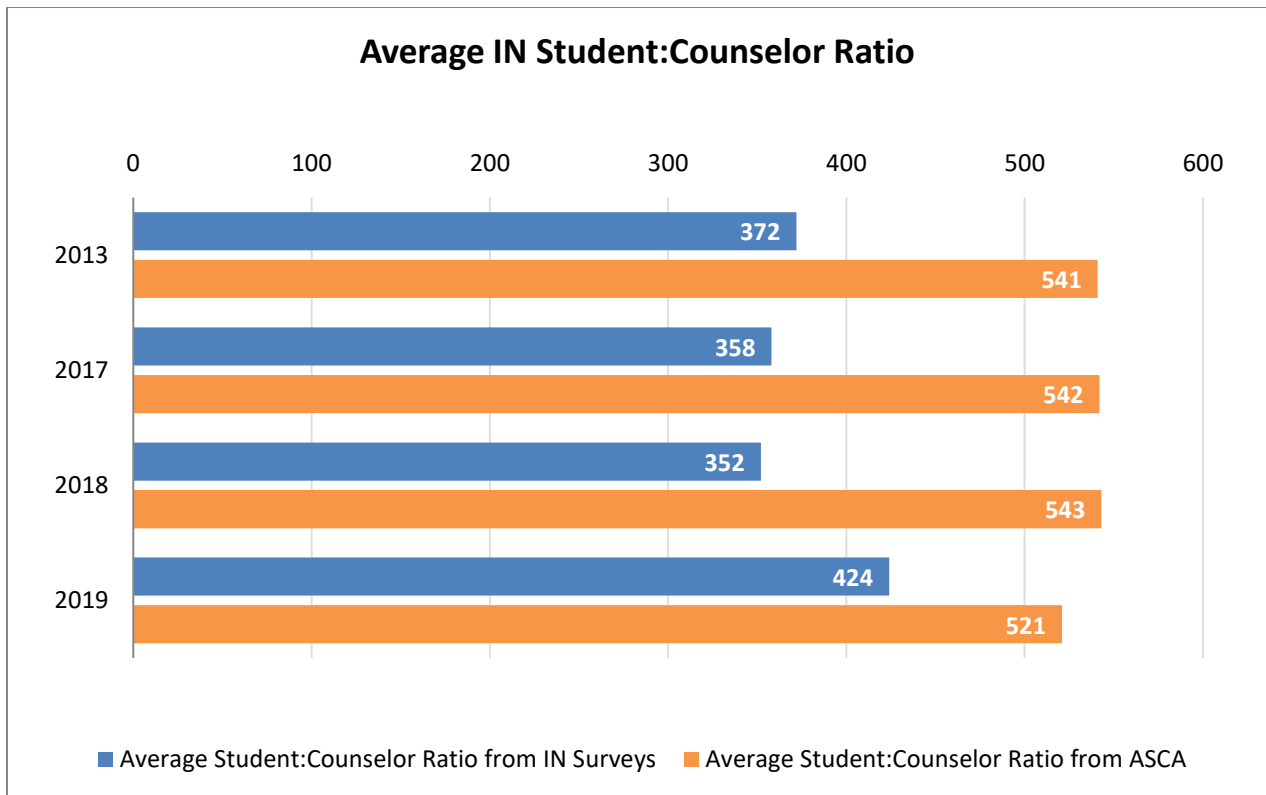
As in past surveys, average student to counselor ratios reported by respondents were much higher at the elementary school level (since many school districts do not have elementary school counselors) than at middle school and high school

levels (Figure 2). Survey respondents reported an average student-to-counselor ratio of **424:1** across all grade levels, the highest reported student to counselor ratio in the survey’s history, indicating a 20% increase in average student to counselor ratios in one year. The lowest ratio – 90:1 – was that of a high school college and career readiness counselor, while the highest ratio – 2,200:1 – was from an elementary school counselor.

*2019 student-to-counselor ratios were the highest reported in the survey’s 10-year history.*

The higher average student to counselor ratios reported in 2019 may be due in part to the lower number of survey respondents than in previous years, but no other reasons are apparent from the results. Interestingly, calculations by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) for Indiana in 2019 indicated a decrease in average student to counselor ratios by approximately 22 students from the previous year (Figure 3).

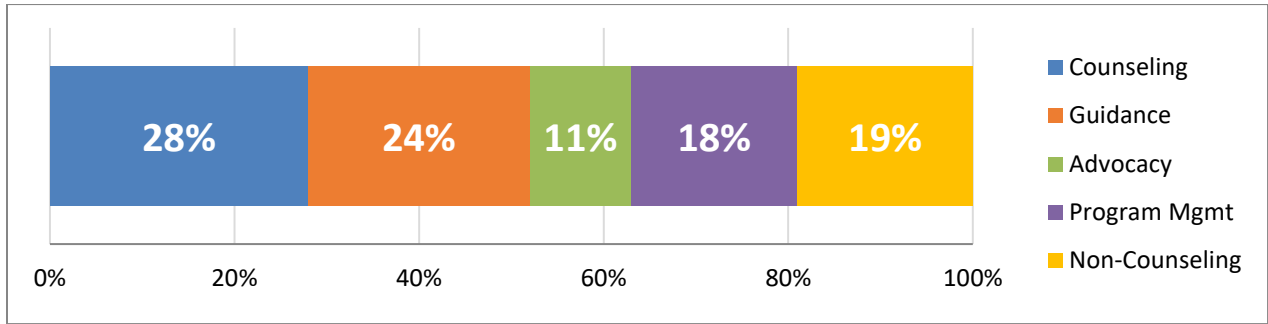
Figure 3. Average Indiana Student to Counselor Ratios – Survey versus ASCA



### School Counselor Time Use

When survey respondents were asked to estimate their average time use during the school year according to the five program categories identified in the Indiana Program Standards for School Counseling, time spent in counseling and guidance activities comprised more than 50% of school counselors’ time (Figure 4).

Figure 4. School Counselor Time Use

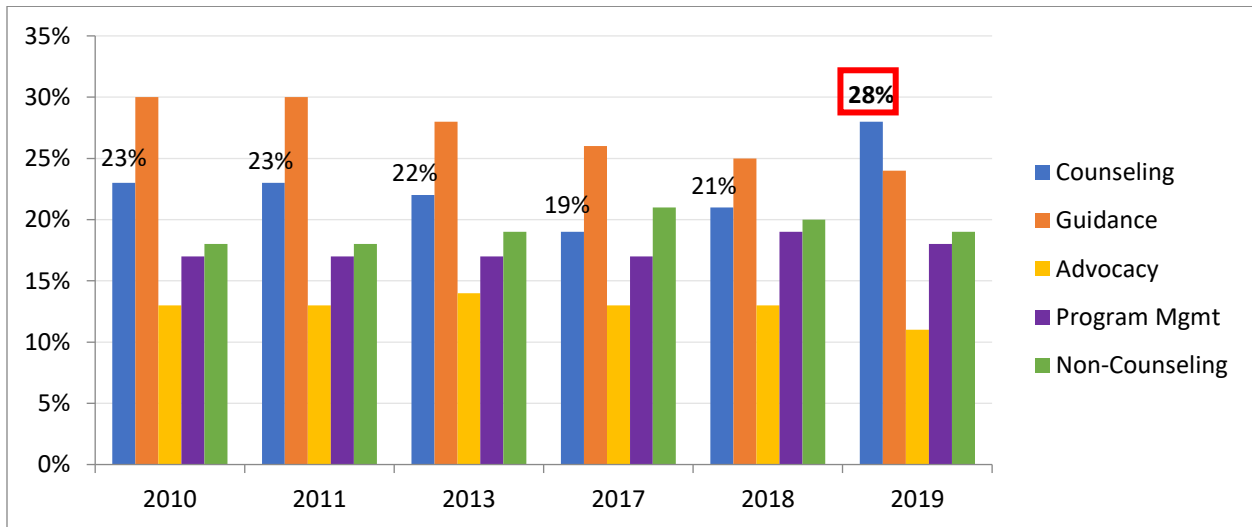


Definitions of the time use categories include:

- Counseling – Helping students with social-emotional or personal issues that interfere with learning
- Guidance – Supporting student academic achievement, scheduling, and career and postsecondary planning
- Advocacy – Promoting high achievement, decreasing barriers to learning, and supporting evidence-based best practices
- Program Management – Behind-the-scenes work supporting the counseling program’s goals such as creating lesson plans, answering emails, and meeting with parents
- Non-Counseling – Clerical and supervisory tasks unrelated to the counseling program

The overall average percentages of time use provided by respondents in 2019 were almost identical to the year before with one exception counselors reported spending roughly 5% more time in the area of student counseling last year than the year before. In fact, the percentage of time reported to have been spent in student counseling in 2019 was the highest percentage reported by the state’s counselors on this survey in the last 10 years (Figure 5).

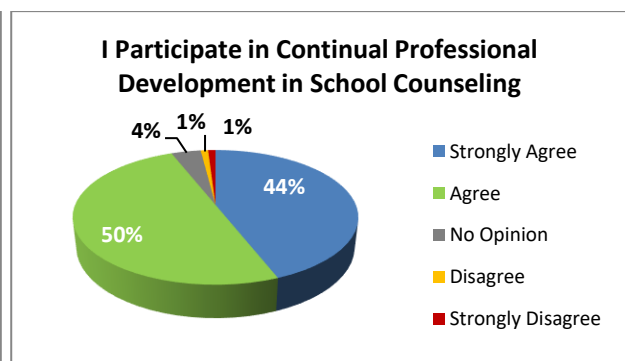
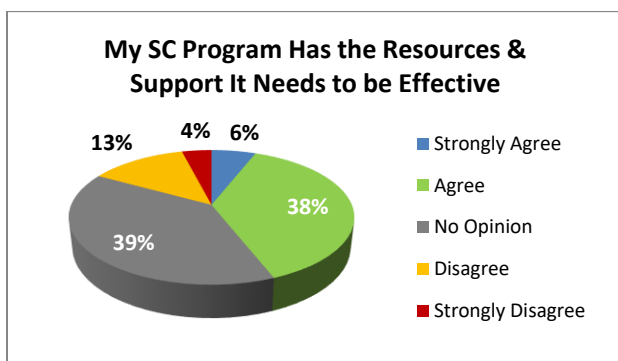
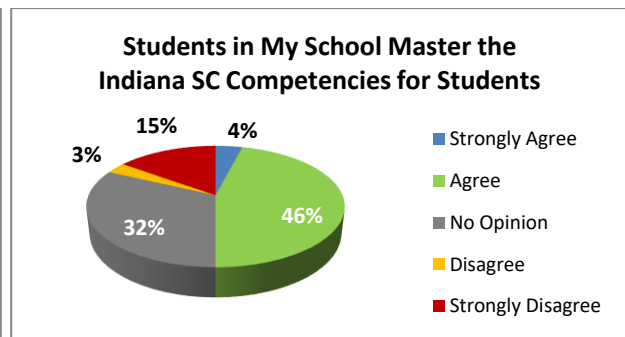
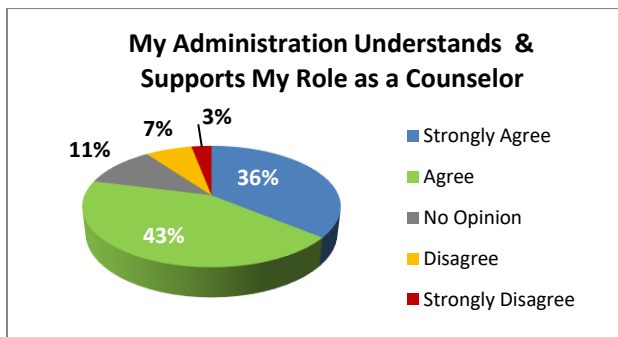
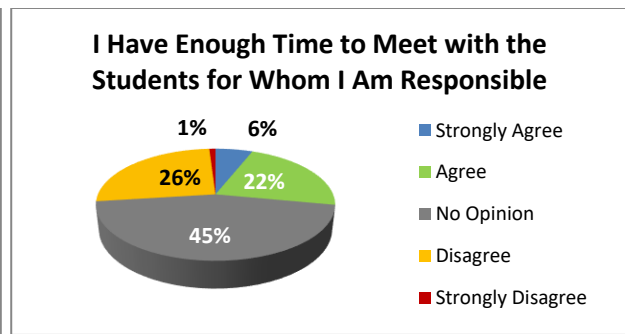
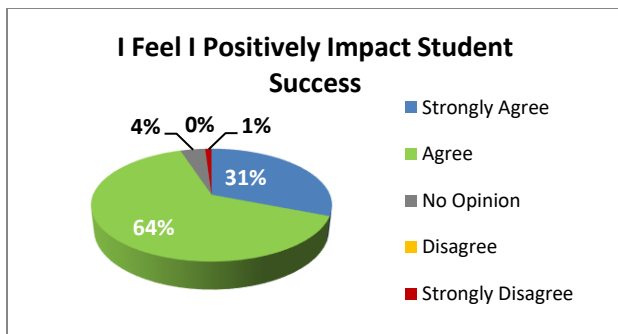
Figure 5. Distribution of School Counselor Time Use Since 2010

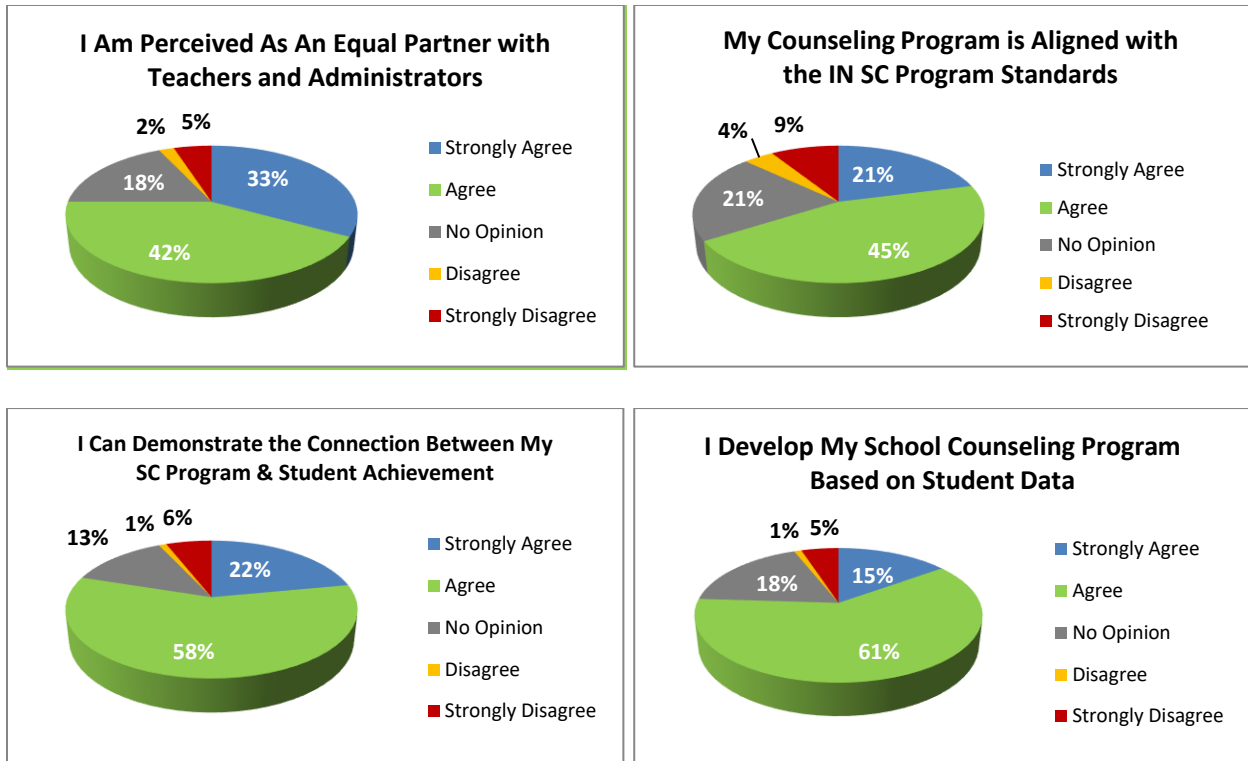


While the trend shows time spent in Guidance activities slowly lowering over the last decade, Counseling activities have jumped since 2018 according to the survey. This may be attributed to the Indiana Department of Education’s release of new Social-Emotional Competencies in this period in addition to multiple professional development opportunities and resources for school counseling programs provided by the Department.

### School Counselor Perceptions

As in previous years, survey participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with several perception statements. The responses presented in the following pie charts rank responses from Strongly Agree and Agree (blue and green) to Strongly Disagree and Disagree (red and yellow). Gray represents “no opinion.”





### Methods of Evaluation

Most school counselors responding to the survey are evaluated using the state’s RISE rubric or the rubric and process provided by the Indiana School Counselor Association (ISCA) and Indiana Department of Education.

- 27 – RISE School Counselor Evaluation
- 12 – ISCA/DOE Sample Evaluation
- 6 – Standards for Success
- 1 - ASCA
- 1 – Professional School Services Personnel Effectiveness Rubric
- 1 – The corporation's teacher evaluation tool
- 1 – Unsure - 1st year here
- 1 – We are not evaluated

### Member of Professional Association

Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated they were a member of one or more professional association with memberships to the Indiana School Counselor Association (ISCA) and ASCA ranking highest.

- 33 – ISCA/ASCA
- 25 – Not a member of a professional association (25/101)
- 14 – ISCA
- 10 – ASCA
- 7 – IACAC (2 said IACAC/NACAC)

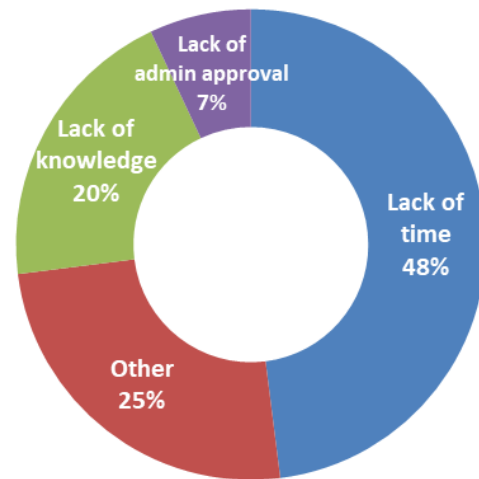
- 5 – ISCA/NACAC
- 4 – ISCA/IACAC
- 2 – ISCA/ASCA/NASW
- 1 – ASCA/NBCC

### Gold Star School Counseling

Eighteen percent of respondents claimed they had achieved the Gold Star recognition though the majority of respondents (82%) are not Gold Star schools. Key reasons cited for not seeking Gold Star included the following (Figure 6):

- 48% (34 of 71 responses) said a lack of time
- 17% (14 out of 71) said a lack of knowledge about the process
- 7% (5 out of 7) cited a lack of support or approval from their administrators.

Figure 6. Reasons for Not Pursuing Gold Star



Four schools indicated they were either seeking or in the process of seeking the American School Counselor Association’s Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) status. Twenty-five percent of respondents listed other reasons for not pursuing Gold Star including that Gold Star is not elementary-friendly, too many hoops to jump through with little resulting or sustained change for the school counseling program, and the difficulty of getting all stakeholders on board.

### Programs/Resources of Value

Survey respondents shared the following resources that they considered valuable:

- Youth Leadership Team, Trauma Informed Care and Relationship professional development, Developmental Asset initiatives
- Resources from Dr. Desautels educational neuroscience research
- An ASCA coach for implementing the ASCA National Model toward Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) status
- The Hope Squad - Holly Steiner
- We have several new programs on mindfulness and trauma-informed practices. We are seeing a positive impact on our discipline data, student well-being, and on our teachers. I would love to share what we are doing! Contact person: Trudi Wolfe.

### Professional Development Topics of Interest

The largest number of open-ended responses from the survey related to professional development. The topics listed below provide insight into what resources and information Indiana school counselors say they want most:

- Analyzing data; Data collection and use



- Building a district-wide comprehensive school counseling program
- School counseling PLCs
- Equity and Inclusion
- Trauma-informed schools; Trauma Informed Care, art therapy; How to help students that experienced trauma, changing the emotional climate of the school
- Raising academic achievement
- Meeting the behavioral change needs of students through accommodations in the classroom
- Restorative Justice best practices; Restorative Practices, autism and working with students to improve their academics, trauma and ACES and how to use the information with teachers to give them strategies to help students in class, MTSS and how to implement it, the use of therapy dogs and how to implement a program
- LGBTQ advocacy at the elementary level
- Classroom push-in techniques
- Support for teachers
- Role advocacy
- Dual credit credentialing solutions, career pathway tracking strategies, best practices from other counselors
- I would like more professional development for administrators to understand what counselors should be doing and how it negatively affects a school when they are used as secretaries instead of counselors.
- Though I participated in one of the DOE MTSS sessions, I would like continued training on Best Practices and possibly a 2nd level MTSS PD.
- Panel sessions of best practices throughout the state. I attended an IASB session in January where Noblesville, HSE, Jennings County and other schools shared best practices of what they have done in their schools to provide safe, secure and supportive learning environments. I would love to see sessions like this available relating to Mental Health best practices throughout the state.
- Effective & Innovative ways to serve all students (despite the large counselor/student ratios)
- Graduation requirements
- Mental health topics including suicide, self-harming, etc
- Trying to build student knowledge of self-care and SEL quick tips, further SEL training, how to keep students who want to move to other schools because parents let the students make the school choice, SEL, Classroom lessons re: social/emotional learning; How to implement SEL school-wide
- Grief in elementary aged students
- Trauma informed practices, setting boundaries,
- Mindfulness
- Trauma

*“If multiple non-counseling duties were taken off of my plate - I could implement many programs that I have collecting dust.”*

- Self-care
- Anything I can use at my 3 title schools
- trauma based counseling, de-escalation strategies, social emotional classroom lessons for elementary, small group activities and programming
- Data
- Finding college financial aid. Finding ways for students to successfully complete the Post Secondary Competencies section of the grad pathways.
- changing proposed graduation requirements
- I would love to bring back the Elementary School Counselor retreat!!! I got so many good ideas from that!
- Teacher, counselor Mental Health Collaboration
- Social Emotional Learning for High Schools
- Defiance and non-compliance in the elementary years
- Perkins V, Graduation Pathways, INTERS, SEL, Erins Law, Bullying
- Career-Technical-Education
- Trauma
- Ethics for School Counselors
- Trauma
- How to apply what neuroscience tells us to daily interactions/supports with students to maximize the effect of the intervention.
- PD relating to using academic data to drive school counseling programs to be more effective at serving the whole child- mental, social emotional, academic, and physical well-being

### **Additional Comments**

Survey respondents provided many additional comments at the end of the survey related to a variety of topics:

- In our district counselors have strong support from building level administrators. However our leadership and support at the district level is non-existent. Social workers are valued more highly while counselors are looked to primarily for master scheduling and testing.
- I would really like to see someone advocate for schools being REQUIRED to pay school counselors for their Master's Degree level education. Dual credit teachers are now guaranteed to make more because they have to hold a Master's Degree. However, many school counselors in our state make bachelor level pay because no one is holding the state accountable to make legislation require us to be compensated. We are the only professionals in schools required to have a Master's Degree, but not required to be compensated for it. Why?
- Would love to see more advocacy to promote the 1:250 counselor/student ratio.
- Having a document that explains license renewal requirements, including all necessary requirements would be great. What I am seeing about licensure is confusing to me. In addition, explaining the different types of licenses would be great.
- Can an IDOE SEL course be added?

- My position includes the duties of a school counselor and assistant principal. I am expected to fulfill the role of administrator when the principal is occupied or out of the building which includes assigning discipline. These duties interfere with my ability to implement a comprehensive school counseling program.
- We have too many kids on our caseload. In our corporation, we have no one person in charge of all the state mandates so we are scrambling to figure out what to implement, how to implement it, etc. We are given so many more tasks and responsibilities that have nothing to do with a school counselor.
- My program has disappeared in the last two years. All I do is coordinate sped, 504, and other responsibilities. I am not allowed to take instructional time away for any lessons or activities. I used to have a strong program and now I just attend meetings and react to crisis students, when I have time. I don't help meet any of my standards unless it is through bulletin boards I put up. Our behavior issues have dramatically increased and less learning is happening (in my opinion) but admin considers all social-emotional learning as "extra" and not needed. It is horrible to feel like I am doing a terrible job every day.
- I would love for you to be an advocate to getting testing off the plates of School Counselors. Also, things like being a registrar. I am a highly educated professional with many years of experience and I am considering leaving my life's work because I hate being in charge of testing so much. We are the only position in schools that can't do their actual jobs.

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