A Closer Look at the **Principal-Counselor Relationship**

A Survey of Principals and Counselors

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A Survey of Principals and Counselors

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A Project of:
The College Board
American School Counselor Association
National Association of Secondary School Principals

Why Survey Principals and Counselors on the Principal-Counselor Relationship?

School principals and school counselors have something in common: both want to see students succeed. And although their individual roles and responsibilities are very different, both principals and counselors face difficulties and challenges in their efforts to improve student outcomes within the school. When principals and counselors can work effectively together, their efforts stand a far better chance of making a difference and helping all students achieve.

It was the recognition of the importance of the principal-counselor relationship that brought together the College Board, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the American School Counselor Association. Our three organizations believe that understanding the principal-counselor relationship can lead to more effective practices for both principals and counselors, which in turn can lead to better educational outcomes for all students.

In the summer of 2008, we designed a survey that asked both principals and counselors to tell us their views on the principal-counselor relationship, including what they considered to be the most important aspects of an effective relationship between principals and counselors; whether they thought those aspects were present in the principal-counselor relationships in their school; what counselors should spend their time on in order to improve student outcomes and what counselors actually spend time on; and their general thoughts about barriers to an effective principal-counselor relationship and the relative roles of the principal and the counselor in education reform efforts.

We hope that by sharing the results of the survey in this booklet we can inspire principals, counselors and other educators to examine the principal-counselor relationships in their own schools and determine how they might be able to best help each other work together effectively to improve the educational outcomes for all students.

What Information Is Included Here?

This booklet summarizes the results of the survey in the following sections:

- **Survey Participants** — A brief explanation of to whom the survey was sent, and who returned it.
- **Most Important Elements and Biggest Barriers to a Successful Principal-Counselor Relationship** — Results from a ranking item and an open-ended question on what principals and counselors considered to be the most important elements of a successful principal-counselor relationship that improves student outcomes, and what they said were the biggest barriers to collaboration between principals and counselors.
- **Perceptions of Respondents' Own Principal-Counselor Relationship** — Results from rating items and an open-ended question on the importance of elements in the principal-counselor relationship and the presence of these elements in the principal-counselor relationships within respondents' own schools.
- **Views on Counselors' Activities and Improving Student Outcomes** — Results from rating items on the importance of certain activities for improving student outcomes versus principals' and counselors' perceptions of how much time counselors spend on these activities.
- **Biggest Challenges for Equity** — Results from a ranking item on which gaps between student subgroups are in greatest need of being addressed in respondents' own schools.
- **Roles of the Principal and Counselor in Education Reform Efforts** — Results from open-ended questions on the most important role for principals and counselors in education reform.

Survey Participants

In the summer of 2008, the College Board, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the American School Counselor Association designed a Web-based survey on the principal-counselor relationship. Invitations to take the survey were sent to 16,901 individuals: 4,846 principals from NASSP membership lists; 4,772 counselors from ASCA membership lists; and 7,283 individuals who had attended counseling workshops at the College Board the previous fall.

A total of 2,386 people responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 14 percent.

Responses were weighted by reported school enrollment to be reflective of the national distribution of school size. After removal of 86 weighted respondents who did not identify themselves as being either a principal, an assistant principal, a counselor, or a building-level director of school counseling, this resulted in a total weighted group of 343 principals and 1,957 counselors.

Both principals and counselors had most often been working in their positions between three and nine years. The majority were at public high schools, and around one-third of both principals and counselors were at Title I schools. Around a quarter of respondents came from urban schools, while the remainder were fairly evenly split between suburban and rural schools. Most often, respondents reported that less than 60 percent of their students were bound for college (either a two-year community college or a four-year college/university). Overall, around one-fifth of respondents' schools had student populations where 75 percent or more of the students were nonwhite.

Table 1: Survey Participant Demographics

School Type		% of Principals	% of Counselors	% Overall
Time in current position	Less than 3 years	27%	25%	25%
	3-9 years	44%	38%	39%
	10-20 years	23%	26%	25%
	More than 20 years	6%	12%	11%
Type of school	Middle school	18%	23%	22%
	High school	55%	54%	54%
	Combined/Other	28%	23%	24%
Enrollment*	Fewer than 500	54%	54%	54%
	500-1,499	31%	31%	31%
	1,500-2,499	12%	12%	12%
	More than 2,500	3%	3%	3%
Public vs. private	Public	85%	84%	84%
	Private/Other	15%	16%	16%
School location	Urban	24%	26%	26%
	Suburban	30%	37%	36%
	Rural	46%	38%	39%
Title I	Yes	31%	38%	37%
	No	69%	62%	63%
Percent of college-bound students	Less than 60%	42%	41%	41%
	60%-79%	28%	26%	26%
	80% or more	30%	33%	33%
75% or more of students nonwhite	Yes	12%	21%	20%
	No	88%	79%	80%

* Because survey responses were weighted by enrollment so as to reflect the national distribution of school size, these percents are equal for principals and counselors.

A complete breakdown of the demographics of survey participants and their schools is given in Table 1.

Most Important Elements and Biggest Barriers to a Successful Principal-Counselor Relationship

Ranking the Importance of Elements in the Principal-Counselor Relationship

Principals and counselors were asked to rank, by level of importance, the following four elements in the principal-counselor relationship:

- **Communication** — Provides opportunities for sharing information, contributing ideas, and providing input for student and schoolwide strategies related to improving student outcomes.
- **Collaboration** — Shared participation and contribution in decision making and the development and implementation of student and schoolwide strategies to improve student outcomes.
- **Respect** — An environment where the principal's and counselor's work and opinions are supported and valued.
- **Shared vision** — A mutually agreed upon direction and ideal for student success.

Key Finding: Principals and counselors agreed about which elements are most important in the principal-counselor relationship for improving student outcomes.

Both principals and counselors ranked **communication** and **respect** as the two most important elements in the principal-counselor relationship. Principals most frequently gave communication the highest ranking while counselors most frequently gave respect the highest ranking.

Key Finding: When giving examples of what they meant by good communication and high levels of respect in their later responses to the survey's open-ended questions, principals and counselors tended to focus on different things.

- Principals more often mentioned the quality of the communication while counselors more often mentioned the frequency of the communication.
- Principals more often mentioned respect for their vision and goals while counselors more often mentioned personal respect for themselves and their expertise.

Barriers to Collaboration

An open-ended question asked: *What is the biggest barrier to effective collaboration between counselors and principals in terms of education reform efforts?*

Key Finding: Time was most frequently mentioned as being the biggest barrier to collaboration by both principals and counselors.

Examples of what principals said:

—*We don't have enough time in the day.*

—*Too much to do; not enough time and not enough personnel.*

—*Daily decisions that have huge impact tend to get made too quickly, without time for the principal and the counselor to talk it through together. Time just needs to slow down a bit so the decisions can be shared.*

—*Time without interruptions.*

—*We are all very busy doing our individual job descriptions. It's difficult to schedule time to collaborate with each other.*

—*Most counselors are not used properly. Most are glorified record keepers rather than change agents. Counselors should not be schedule oriented, but student success oriented. Counselors should be the link between academic success and applying knowledge to real-life experience.*

—*Lack of trust and willingness to change.*

—*Lack of time to collaborate and communicate and dream the bigger programs that would lead to increased student success.*

Examples of what counselors said:

—*Too much to do, and not enough time to do it!*

—*Time. Both counselors and principals are overwhelmed with job requirements.*

—*A lack of understanding of the issues that [both counselors and principals] face in their positions.*

—*Lack of time to really sit down and concentrate on these issues.*

—*Trust — many counselors are afraid of trusting the principal with their ideas because a counselor's job is at the mercy of the principal. Many feel they shouldn't rock the boat.*

—*The biggest barrier is [lack of] time to collaborate during the work day.*

—*Invalidation of feelings or beliefs.*

—*Principal does not understand the role of the counselor. He does not know what we do or are capable of doing.*

—*The biggest barriers to collaboration between counselors and principals in our building are time and lack of a shared vision.*

Perceptions of Respondents' Own Principal-Counselor Relationship

Ratings of the Importance and Presence of Elements of the Principal-Counselor Relationship

Principals and counselors were asked to rate 10 specific elements in terms of the extent to which they are important for an effective principal-counselor relationship to improve student outcomes. Ratings were made on a 5-point scale ranging from "not important" to "extremely important." They were then asked to rate the extent to which each of these elements is present in the principal-counselor relationships in their own school. These ratings were made on a 5-point scale ranging from "not present" to "extremely present."

Table 2 shows the 10 elements, the average rating of importance given by principals and counselors, the average rating of the extent to which the element is seen as present within the principal-counselor relationships in respondents' own schools, and the gap — the difference between the average importance rating and the average presence rating for each element when the presence rating is subtracted from the importance rating.

Key Finding: When asked to rate the extent to which elements of an effective principal-counselor relationship are present in their own school, principals rated important elements as being present more often than did counselors.

- Principals and counselors rated all 10 elements as being both important and present (averaging above 3 on the 5-point scales).
- **Principals** tended to rate the elements as being **more present** than did counselors.
- Overall, **principals had a better match** between their perceptions of the importance of these elements and their perceptions of the extent to which they are present in the principal-counselor relationships within their own schools. When elements were rated as important, principals tended to rate them as being more present than did counselors.

The two elements rated highest in importance for principals and counselors, respectively, are bolded in Table 2. Both principals and counselors gave their two highest importance ratings to "**mutual trust** between the principal and counselors" and "**mutual respect** between the principal and counselors."

Overall, counselors tended to rate the elements as being more important than did principals. Only one element was rated higher in importance by principals than by counselors; this was "**a shared vision on what is meant by student success**."

The two elements with the largest gaps — the difference between how important they are and how present they are in the principal-counselor relationships within respondents' own schools — are shaded in the table. The larger a gap, the worse the match between the rating of how important an element is and the rating of how present it is — larger gaps indicate situations where a more important element is seen as being less present. For principals, the two largest gaps were "**a shared vision on what is meant by student success**" and "**a shared vision on what is meant by equity** and academic success for all students." For counselors, the two largest gaps were **"mutual trust between**

the principal and counselors" — also considered the most important element — and **"shared decision making** on initiatives that impact student success."

"**Shared decision making** on initiatives that impact student success" also had the largest difference in presence ratings between principals and counselors, with counselors rating it as being less present than principals. "**Open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making**" had the second-largest difference in presence ratings, with counselors again rating it as being less present than principals. Overall, these two findings suggest a general difference in perceptions between principals and counselors

Table 2: Ratings of the Importance of 10 Elements of an Effective Principal-Counselor Relationship and How Present Each Element Is in Respondents' Own Schools

	Principals			Counselors		
Element of an Effective Principal-Counselor Relationship	**Importance**	**Presence**	**Gap**	**Importance**	**Presence**	**Gap**
Open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making	4.52	4.15	.37	4.64	3.58	1.06
Opportunities to share ideas on teaching, learning and schoolwide educational initiatives	4.24	3.92	.32	4.28	3.39	.89
Sharing information about needs within the school and community	4.39	3.97	.42	4.51	3.51	1.00
Counselor participation on school leadership teams	4.29	4.01	.28	4.38	3.56	.82
Shared responsibility in the development of goals and metrics that indicate success	4.12	3.67	.45	4.14	3.14	1.00
Mutual trust between the principal and counselors	**4.78**	**4.25**	**.53**	**4.85**	**3.75**	**1.10**
A shared vision on what is meant by student success	4.70	4.05	.65	4.59	3.61	.98
Mutual respect between the principal and counselors	**4.77**	**4.33**	**.44**	**4.84**	**3.82**	**1.02**
Shared decision making on initiatives that impact student success	4.23	3.90	.33	4.40	3.32	1.08
A shared vision on what is meant by equity and academic success for all students	4.47	3.91	.56	4.48	3.48	1.00
Overall Average	4.45	4.02	.44	4.51	3.52	1.00

Importance and presence ratings were made on a 5-point scale: 1 = not important/not present, 3 = moderately important/moderately present, 5 = extremely important/extremely present. Gap = average importance minus average presence; larger gaps indicate elements that were rated as relatively more important but relatively less present. Bold text = most important items; shaded text = largest gaps.

on decision making in their own schools, with principals seeing counselors as having more input than counselors saying they have.

Spotlight on Title I Schools with College-Going Students:

A total of 38 principals and 303 counselors who answered the rating items identified themselves as being at Title I schools where 60 percent or more of the students are expected to go on to college. Table 3 shows the 10 elements, the average rating of importance given by these 38 principals and 303 counselors, the average rating of the extent to which the element was seen as present within the principal-counselor relationships in these respondents' own schools, and the gap — the difference between the average importance rating and the average presence rating for each element.

- The elements "**mutual trust** between the principal and counselors" and "**mutual respect** between the principal and counselors" were rated as being the most important elements by both principals and counselors in these successful Title I schools, just as they were with the overall group. In addition, "**open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making**" tied with "**mutual trust**" for second most important element among principals.

- In the overall group, the element that was rated by counselors as being most important — "**mutual trust** between the principal and counselors" — was also the element with the largest gap for counselors, meaning that while it was rated as being relatively more important, it was also rated as being relatively less present. However, among these successful Title I schools the most important elements did not have the largest gaps, meaning they were not seen as being relatively less present.

- While again principals tended to have a better match between importance and presence than did counselors, the average gaps were smaller for both principals and counselors in these successful Title I schools than in the overall group. Thus, the match between how important an element was seen as being and how present it was seen as being was better in these schools than it was in the overall group.

Improving the Relationship

An open-ended question asked: *If you could change one thing about the relationship between the principal and counselors in your school that would lead to an improvement in education reform efforts, what would you change?*

Key Finding: When asked what one thing they would change that would lead to an improved principal-counselor relationship in their own schools, both principals and counselors most frequently mentioned **communication**. The second most frequently mentioned element by both was **respect/understanding** (respecting and/or understanding what the other person does).

Examples of what principals said:

—*Attend weekly meetings with the counselors to better understand their perspective.*

—*More open communication that is truly focused on helping students.*

—*Making sure that we are all involved in the decision-making process that leads to increased student achievement.*

—*A shared vision.*

—*Build the respect, trust and understanding between the two groups.*

—*Ensuring that counselors' voices are heard in the school.*

—*I would hope for a more open and honest professional relationship that allows for an equal exchange of information and opinions that is not skewed by the authority of the principal.*

—*I have a great relationship with the counselors in my school. My lead counselor has 30 years of experience and I frequently look to her for help and support. If counselors feel they are a part of student success then they work very hard and take pride in what they do.*

—*Rid the counselors of the fear and mistrust they have toward the principal.*

Table 3 — Title I Schools with College-Going Students: Ratings of the Importance of 10 Elements of an Effective Principal-Counselor Relationship and How Present Each Element Is in Respondents' Own School

	Principals			Counselors		
Element of an Effective Principal-Counselor Relationship	**Importance**	**Presence**	**Gap**	**Importance**	**Presence**	**Gap**
Open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making	**4.65**	**4.47**	**.18**	4.70	3.70	1.00
Opportunities to share ideas on teaching, learning and schoolwide educational initiatives	4.25	4.07	.18	4.36	3.50	.86
Sharing information about needs within the school and community	4.33	4.09	.24	4.62	3.59	1.03
Counselor participation on school leadership teams	4.12	3.95	.17	4.42	3.67	.75
Shared responsibility in the development of goals and metrics that indicate success	4.12	3.77	.35	4.28	3.35	.93
Mutual trust between the principal and counselors	**4.65**	**4.48**	**.17**	**4.85**	**3.91**	**.94**
A shared vision on what is meant by student success	4.59	4.22	.37	4.69	3.79	.90
Mutual respect between the principal and counselors	**4.68**	**4.60**	**.08**	**4.86**	**3.94**	**.92**
Shared decision making on initiatives that impact student success	4.28	4.01	.27	4.45	3.48	.97
A shared vision on what is meant by equity and academic success for all students	4.34	4.00	.34	4.54	3.65	.89
Overall Average	4.40	4.17	.24	4.58	3.66	.92

Importance and presence ratings were made on a 5-point scale: 1 = not important/not present, 3 = moderately important/moderately present, 5 = extremely important/extremely present. Gap = average importance minus average presence; larger gaps indicate elements that were rated as relatively more important but relatively less present. Bold text = most important items; shaded text = largest gaps.

Examples of what counselors said:

—*Respect and communication level has to be there for effective collaboration.*

—*Mutual respect and consistent communication about students.*

—*Create an atmosphere that has mutual trust and respect.*

—*I believe we have the same vision, but I would like to see more open communication.*

—*I would like to see the respect I believe I have earned for my experience, expertise and professionalism. There needs to be more trust, communication and collaboration between all counselors and administration.*

—*It is very important for the principal to be a strong educational leader/visionary. I feel respected and supported by my principal and that has a huge*

impact on my ability to do my work with students and parents.

—*The relationship with my principal is solid. She not only listens to our advice, she seeks it out.*

—*There needs to be mutual trust and respect for each other's job. If one feels the other does not support him/her, very little will get accomplished.*

Views on Counselors' Activities and Improving Student Outcomes

Ratings of the Importance and Time Spent on Counselors' Activities for Improving Student Outcomes

Principals and counselors were asked to rate 13 counselor activities in terms of how important they are for improving student outcomes. Ratings were made on a 5-point scale ranging from "not important" to "extremely important." Both principals and counselors agreed that the two most important activities are "**helping to promote student personal growth and social development**" and "**helping students with career planning**."

Key Finding: Principals and counselors agreed about which activities are most important for a counselor to engage in to improve student outcomes.

Principals and counselors were then asked to rate the 13 counselor activities in terms of how much of counselors' time is spent engaging in them within their own schools. Ratings were made on a 5-point scale ranging from "**no time**" to "**extreme amount of time**."

Table 4 shows the 13 activities, the average rating of importance given by principals and counselors, the average rating of the amount of time counselors spend engaging in them within respondents' own schools, and the gap — the difference between the average importance rating and the average time rating for each activity when the time rating is subtracted from the importance rating. The larger a gap, the worse the match between the rating of how important an element is and the rating of how much time is spent on it — larger gaps indicate situations where a more important element has less time being spent on it.

Key Finding: While both principals and counselors agreed that supportive administrative tasks are less important for counselors to engage in to improve student outcomes, principals rated these tasks as taking up less of counselors' time while counselors rated them as taking up more of their time.

Three activities had negative gaps for counselors, which means those activities were rated as being relatively less important while taking up relatively more time. These three activities, which were all rated by counselors as taking more than a moderate amount of their time (above 3 on the 5-point scale) and being of less than moderate importance for improving student outcomes (below 3 on the 5-point scale) were:

- "**Doing supportive administrative tasks** such as clerical tasks and record keeping."
- "**Serving as coordinator/facilitator for standardized tests** given in the school."
- "**Doing scheduling tasks** such as creating a master schedule, processing schedule changes and maintaining student transcript information."

Principals and counselors agreed on four activities as being of more than moderate importance for improving student outcomes (above 3 on the 5-point scale) while engaging less than a moderate amount of time (below 3 on the 5-point scale). Thus, both principals and counselors saw these items as being relatively more important with relatively less time being spent on them:

- "**Using vertical teaming to ensure that students entering high school are prepared** to enroll in rigorous and challenging course work."
- "Developing schoolwide strategies to **increase the number of students enrolled in honors and/or advanced courses** (IB, AP® or dual enrollment).
- "Implementing schoolwide strategies to **increase graduation rates** in the school."

- "**Helping parents and families of first-generation students learn about college** and what it takes to get there."

The two activities rated as highest in importance by principals and counselors are bolded in the table; the two activities with the largest gaps between importance and time are shaded in the table, and the three less important activities where counselors said they spend more time (negative gaps) have bold italic text in the table.

Table 4: Ratings of the Importance of 13 Counselor Activities for Improving Student Outcomes and How Much Time Counselors Spend Engaging in Them Within Respondents' Own Schools

	Principals			Counselors		
Counselor Activity	**Importance**	**Presence**	**Gap**	**Importance**	**Presence**	**Gap**
Using vertical teaming to ensure that students entering high school are prepared to enroll in rigorous and challenging course work.	3.85	2.68	1.17	3.77	2.34	1.43
Developing schoolwide strategies to increase the number of students enrolled in honors and/or advanced courses (IB, AP or dual enrollment).	3.62	2.43	1.19	3.59	2.28	1.31
Implementing schoolwide strategies to increase graduation rates in the school.	3.99	2.84	1.15	4.17	2.72	1.45
Helping to promote student personal growth and social development.	**4.27**	**3.69**	**.58**	**4.51**	**3.68**	**.83**
Helping to create a college-going culture within the school.	4.10	3.27	.83	4.10	3.38	.72
Helping students with career planning.	**4.31**	**3.43**	**.88**	**4.38**	**3.38**	**1.00**
Advocating for schoolwide strategies that address equity and access issues for underserved students.	4.04	3.00	1.04	4.24	2.93	1.31
Helping parents and families of first-generation students learn about college and what it takes to get there.	4.09	2.82	1.27	4.29	2.98	1.31
Doing supportive administrative tasks such as clerical tasks and record keeping.	2.96	2.90	.06	***2.24***	***3.59***	***-1.35***
Serving as coordinator/facilitator for standardized tests given in the school.	3.48	3.23	.25	***2.26***	***3.43***	***-1.17***
Providing interpretation of test results that can be used in academic planning.	4.00	2.98	1.02	3.72	3.10	.62
Doing scheduling tasks such as creating a master schedule, processing schedule changes and maintaining student transcript information.	3.56	3.36	.20	***2.76***	***3.72***	***-.96***
Helping students in the college planning and application processes.	4.19	3.59	.60	4.37	3.59	.78
Overall Average	3.88	3.09	.79	3.72	3.16	.56

Importance and time ratings were made on a 5-point scale: 1 = not important/no time, 3 = moderately important/moderate amount of time, 5 = extremely important/extreme amount of time. Gap = average importance minus average time; larger gaps indicate elements that were rated as being relatively more important while being engaged in for relatively less time. Negative gaps indicate elements that were rated as being relatively less important while being engaged in for relatively more time. Bold text = most important items; shaded text = largest gaps; bold italic = negative gaps.

Biggest Challenges for Equity

Principals and counselors were asked to rank six areas where there may be gaps between subgroups in terms of which are in greatest need of being addressed in their own schools:

- graduation rates
- dropout rates
- state test scores
- college-going rates
- college entrance examinations
- honors, AP and/or IB participation

Key Finding: Both principals and counselors saw state test scores as the area where gaps between subgroups most needed to be addressed in their schools.

Both principals and counselors most frequently ranked "**state test scores**" as the number one area that needed to be addressed. The next most frequent item to receive the highest ranking from principals was "**honors, AP and/or IB participation**," while for counselors it was "**dropout rates**."

Roles of the Principal and Counselor in Education Reform Efforts

Key Finding: When asked about the roles of principals and counselors in education reform efforts, both principals and counselors tended to say that the **role of the principal is to be a leader** and the **role of the counselor is to be an advocate.**

Role of the Principal

An open-ended question asked: *What do you think is the most important role of the principal in education reform efforts?*

Examples of what principals said:

—*To be the leader in a reform effort and have others hopefully share the vision and help carry out the reform.*

—*To lead! The principal needs to be looking forward and setting a path of where we are going.*

—*Guiding stakeholders in creating a shared vision.*

Examples of what counselors said:

—*Leadership and communication.*

—*To take the lead in creating effective research-based solutions and follow through on consequences for staff who are not following through with the strategies.*

—*Creation of a schoolwide culture and a "team" among staff. Be a leader.*

Role of the Counselor

An open-ended question asked: *What do you think is the most important role of the counselor in education reform efforts?*

Examples of what principals said:

—*Advocate for the best interests of the students.*

—*Support the learning environment and help students understand that the choices they make now do shape their future.*

—*The counselors are an important link between students, parents and staff. Their engagement and knowledge of the process is vital.*

Examples of what counselors said:

—*Meeting with the students and planning their future educational and career goals.*

—*Communication between parents, teachers, students and administrators.*

—*Working as a team on the administrative staff to provide the best policies for the school and thus the students and their parents.*

Conclusion

Principals and counselors who responded to the survey were very similar in how they saw the principal-counselor relationship, agreeing on which elements are most important for a successful relationship to improve student outcomes. They also agreed on which activities are most important for counselors to engage in to improve student outcomes. While there were some differences in perceptions, particularly in terms of how much time counselors spend on less important activities, it is encouraging that the basic priorities of both principals and counselors were so well aligned.

- Principals and counselors both ranked **communication** and **respect** as the two most important elements in the principal-counselor relationship.
- Principals and counselors both saw **time** as being the biggest barrier to collaboration between them.
- Principals had a better match between their perceptions of how important an element is to a successful principal-counselor relationship and the extent to which they saw that element as being present in the principal-counselor relationships within their own schools. When elements were rated as important, principals tended to rate them as being more present than did counselors.
- When asked what one thing they would change that would lead to an improved principal-counselor relationship within their own schools, both principals and counselors most frequently mentioned **communication**, followed by **respect/understanding**.
- Principals and counselors agreed that the most important activities for a counselor to engage in to improve student outcomes are helping to promote student personal growth and social development, and helping students with career planning.
- While both principals and counselors agreed that supportive administrative tasks are less important for counselors to engage in to improve student outcomes, principals saw these tasks as taking up less of counselors' time than counselors said they took.
- Both principals and counselors saw state test scores as the area where gaps between subgroups most needed to be addressed in their schools.
- When asked about the roles of principals and counselors in education reform efforts, both principals and counselors most often said that the role of the principal is to be a leader and the role of the counselor is to be an advocate.

As with all survey results, these findings should be viewed in terms of who was sent the survey (in this case, members of large professional organizations and people who had attended a College Board workshop) and the factors that might have influenced an individual to be more likely to respond (for example, perhaps principals who care a great deal about the principal-counselor relationship were more likely to fill out the survey). While we cannot say that these results would hold true for every principal and counselor, we can say that they held true for our respondents, who were from a diverse range of schools. In addition, because our respondents were associated with NASSP, ASCA and the College Board, they may actually be more likely to be positioned to be leaders among their peers.

It is our hope that the findings from this survey will help principals, counselors and all educators to examine their own principal-counselor relationships and their own perceptions, and work together toward improved success for all students.

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